



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:

Agenda Item Number: 31

Agenda Date: November 21, 2024

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Neighborhood and Housing Services

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Veronica Garcia, Director

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Texas RioGrande Legal Aid Agreement for Eviction Prevention Services

SUMMARY:

An ordinance authorizing the execution of a Professional Services Agreement with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid in an amount not to exceed \$100,000.00 for the term October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025, with options to renew for five, one-year terms, and a total contract amount up to \$600,000.00, inclusive of renewals.

Funding will support services for the Right to Counsel Program and other eviction prevention services, as reflected in the Scope of Work for services rendered during FY 2025. Funding is available from the General Fund FY 2025 Adopted Budget.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Right to Counsel (RTC) began as a pilot program in March 2020, with a recurring General Fund budget of \$100,000.00. Since March 2022, the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department (NHSD) expanded the RTC program in partnership with Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid (TRLA) with funding supported through a \$7.2 million grant from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) and a \$2.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of

Housing and Urban Development (HUD). As of October 31, 2024, both grants have concluded.

Since 2022, NHSD, in partnership with TRLA and other legal service providers, have provided referrals and support services to thousands of renter households. TRLA has provided over 400 households with legal assistance in the Bexar County Justice of the Peace Courts and has reached over 4,000 residents through court clinics and public, bilingual 'Know Your Rights' trainings.

In August 2024, NHSD applied for a new \$2.5 million, two-year HUD Eviction Protection Grant. Until the HUD grant is awarded, NHSD seeks to continue its partnership with TRLA through a new Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with an amount not to exceed \$100,000.00 for a one-year term with five optional, one-year renewals. The NHSD benefit navigators will also continue to provide on-site housing stability services at Bexar County Justice of the Peace Courts to support residents facing eviction.

ISSUE:

An ordinance authorizing the execution of a Professional Services Agreement with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid in an amount not to exceed \$100,000.00 for the term October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025, with options to renew for five, one-year terms, and a total contract amount up to \$600,000.00, inclusive of renewals.

Although the TDHCA and HUD Grants have concluded, addressing eviction challenges in San Antonio communities requires the continuation of legal aid services. To ensure continued delivery of legal services to income-restricted renters, NHSD recommends the authorization of a PSA with TRLA in the amount not to exceed \$100,000.00 for their services associated with the Right to Counsel Program and eviction prevention services reflected in the Scope of Work. This will result in free legal aid to nearly 330 renter households at or below 80% area median income.

ALTERNATIVES:

If this ordinance is not approved, NHSD will not have a PSA in place with TRLA to support Right to Counsel services. The NHSD benefit navigators will continue to provide on-site housing stability services, however, there will be a reduction of eviction prevention legal services available due to limited funding.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This ordinance authorizes the execution of a Professional Services Agreement with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid in an amount not to exceed \$100,000.00 for the term October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025, with options to renew for five, one-year terms, and a total contract amount up to \$600,000.00, inclusive of renewals.

Funding is available from the General Fund FY 2025 Adopted Budget. Funding for future years is contingent upon City Council approval of the annual budget and funds.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval.