

AGENDA ITEM #2

MEETING: Planning and Community Development Committee

DATE: September 23, 2021

POSTING LANGUAGE: Briefing and possible action on the Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP) and Eviction Prevention Update. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Verónica R. Soto, Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services]

DEPARTMENT:

Neighborhood & Housing Services Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD:

Verónica R. Soto, FAICP, Neighborhood & Housing Services Department Director

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:

Citywide

SUMMARY:

Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP) and Eviction Prevention Update

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On April 23, 2020, City Council approved the creation of the Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP). The program provides eligible applicants rental, mortgage, and utility assistance.

The EHAP is administered by the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department (NHSD). As of September 13, 2021, the City has approved \$138.6 million in assistance to over 47,021 households seeking emergency rental, mortgage, and utility assistance.

The total budget for the EHAP is \$189.8 million. This includes Phases I-IV of the EHAP and the additional \$500,000 in TEMAP funding approved by City Council on September 16, 2021.

Current EHAP Budget by Phase:

Phase I approved April 23, 2020	\$25,553,016.00
Phase II approved June 4, 2020	\$26,944,551.00
Phase III approved September 17, 2020 amended January 21, 2020	\$34,311,149.00
Phase IV approved February 18, 2021 amended June 17, 2021	\$102,950,163.00
Total	\$189,758,879.00

As of September 13, 2021, the City has approved \$138.6 million in assistance to over 47,021 households seeking emergency rental, mortgage, and utility assistance.

The below chart provides the breakout by City Council District.

Emergency Housing Assistance Program				
CD	Avg AMI %	Approved	Avg HH Size	Approved \$
1	27.1	4,341	2	\$12,192,769.35
2	27.5	6,461	3	\$ 18,568,657.25
3	28.2	5,145	3	\$ 14,511,871.04
4	28.8	4,108	3	\$ 12,436,282.78
5	24.2	3,442	3	\$ 9,032,217.25
6	31.1	4,544	3	\$ 13,825,406.64
7	28.5	5,101	3	\$ 14,693,764.61
8	30.3	5,165	2	\$ 15,315,529.99
9	30.9	3,277	2	\$ 10,070,267.15
10	30.8	4,001	2	\$12,311,448.13
County	28.7	1,436	3	\$ 5,592,674.05
Totals		47,021		\$138,550,888.24

ISSUE:

Applicants seeking rental, mortgage and utility assistance are eligible for up to 9 months of assistance based on the following eligibility criteria utilized to determine assistance for the EHAP applicants, all applicants must:

- ☞ Reside within the San Antonio or Bexar County
- ☞ Provide documentation of hardship due to COVID-19
- ☞ Make less than 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI)

Assistance is tiered based on the applicant's AMI:

- ☞ If an applicant's income is at or below 50% AMI, the applicant is eligible for up to 9 months of rental or mortgage assistance and the current bill amount for utility bill (SAWS, CPS Energy, Internet) assistance.
- ☞ If an applicant's income is between 51% and 80% AMI, the applicant is eligible for up to 6 months of rental or mortgage assistance and the current bill amount for utility bill (SAWS, CPS Energy, Internet) assistance.

Eviction Intervention Efforts Update

On August 26th, the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) struck down a moratorium on evictions issued by the Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). This moratorium had been in effect for since September 4th, 2020 and required tenants who could not pay their rent to provide a declaration form to their landlord. Since this ruling, there is no longer a moratorium on evictions that applies in San Antonio.

Jurisdiction over evictions in Bexar County belongs to the Bexar County Justice of the Peace (JP) courts. Since the SCOTUS ruling, the courts have made some procedural changes to their eviction processes:

- 1) They are no longer including information about the CDC moratorium in their filing notices
- 2) They are no longer resetting cases where a CDC declaration form is presented.

Each of the five JPs are continuing to welcome the City's Eviction Intervention Team in their courtrooms. The team has been working closely with the Justices since June 2020 when they first began to re-open after public health emergency orders. The team is present in every hearing and offices out of the courts even when hearings are not in session to be accessible for landlords and tenants. The team makes referrals to EHAP, the Texas Rent Relief Program, Right to Counsel Program and other services as needed. They have achieved 1,037 dismissals and 1,472 resets of pending evictions.

The team continues to use weekly eviction filing data provided by the county to conduct outreach. This data has not shown a significant increase in filings since the moratorium ended.

On September 2nd, Council approved an application to the US Department of Housing & Urban Development's (HUD) Eviction Prevention Grant Program. Staff worked with our Right to Counsel partners Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA) and San Antonio Legal Services Association (SALSA) to develop a \$3,000,000 proposal to continue the work of the City's in-court housing navigators and place attorneys and paralegals in court. The application was submitted on Friday, September 10th.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.