



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Emily Weinstein
Interim Director,
Department of Housing &
Community Development

SUBJECT: Centro Legal De La Raza Grant
Agreement

DATE: September 11, 2023

City Administrator Approval 

Date: Sep 27, 2023

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That City Council Adopt a Resolution Awarding a Grant of \$1,000,000 for Tenant Legal Services and Emergency Financial Assistance to Centro Legal De La Raza, Inc.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

City Council approved the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-25 Biennial Budget on June 26, 2023 per Oakland City Council Resolution [No. 89804](#) C.M.S. Per Exhibit 1, Page six of twenty, Item #4 of Resolution 89804 C.M.S., that action included allocating \$1,000,000 to Centro Legal De La Raza for tenant legal services and eviction prevention. Eviction protection includes the range of legal services from negotiation with property owner through tenant representation at eviction proceedings.

The proposed legislation would authorize the City Administrator to execute a grant agreement between Centro Legal De La Raza, Inc and City of Oakland for FY 2023-24 for \$1,000,000.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

City Council approved the FY 2023-25 Biennial Budget on June 26, 2023, per Oakland City Council Resolution 89804 C.M.S. Under the FY 2023-25 Biennial Budget, City Council Resolution 89804 C.M.S. authorized a \$1,000,000 allocation for tenant legal services and eviction protection to be carried out by Centro Legal De La Raza. Said legislation does not provide a break-down of the \$1,000,000 allocation for Centro Legal between legal services and flexible financial assistance for eviction protections. Staff proposes alternatives provided in the following section of this report.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Since the Eviction Moratorium ended on July 15, 2023, there has been an increase in the increase in eviction filings. In the second quarter of 2023, according to Alameda County data, as of August 9, 2023, 164 eviction notice were filed for tenants in Oakland. This number is

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expected to rise significantly, making it imperative that tenants receive legal support and eviction defense.

Centro Legal de la Raza is a community organization providing much needed tenant eviction protection services to Oakland residents. Their services will help prevent displacement and homelessness using an array of tools including community outreach and education, legal representation, financial assistance to help the most vulnerable community members attain housing security. This work advances the Citywide priority of housing, economic, and cultural security. Centro Legal de la Raza and its partners Eviction Defense Center, East Bay Community Law Center, Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach and The Unity Council will provide services for low- and moderate-income Oakland residents so they can remain housed and do not experience homelessness.

The previous contract with Centro Legal for FY 2022-23, the funding was split between \$750,000 for tenant legal services and \$250,000 for emergency financial assistance. There is a greater need than resources for both tenant legal services and flexible emergency financial assistance (which can be used to catch up on rent) to support housing stability and prevent eviction.

For funding in FY23-24, staff has identified the following options for the \$1,000,000 to Centro Legal De La Raza be allocated as follows:

- 1) Funding Allocation Policy Alternatives for Council Consideration: Authorize the \$1M budget under the FY 23-24 grant agreement with Centro Legal De La Raza to be flexible to be used as needed for tenant legal services and/or flexible financial assistance; or
- 2) Authorize the FY 23-24 \$1M allocation to Centro Legal De La Raza to be budgeted in the same manner as the FY22-23 grant agreement with: \$750,000 for tenant legal services and \$250,000 for emergency financial assistance; or
- 3) Authorize the use of the \$1M allocated to Centro Legal De La Raza using a different formula per Council direction.

In consultation with Centro Legal, staff recommends City Council authorize option #1 which provides the maximum amount of flexibility in order to respond to tenants' needs by providing tenant legal services or emergency flexible financial assistance.

FISCAL IMPACT

Per the Fiscal Years 2023-25 Biennial Budget, \$1,000,000 has been allocated for Centro De La Raza (Fund 1870- Affordable Housing Trust Fund, Organization Number 89949, Account number 54912, Project Code 10007111-Tenant Legal Services) to support tenant legal services and eviction prevention.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

The City Council budget approval process included many opportunities for public engagement.

COORDINATION

The report was completed in coordination with the City Attorney's Office and Budget Bureau.

PAST PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Centro Legal was a critical partner during the eviction moratorium, providing critical information about tenant rights as well as administering Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) payments. Below in **Tables 1 and 2** describes the goals and performance of the contract for legal services and housing stabilization.

Table 1. ERAP Legal Services (2021-2022) Contract Goals & Performance

Objective	Goal	Actual
Assess 275 tenants for eligibility to receive housing stabilization services and legal services. Centro Legal and partner organizations shall work with each tenant receiving legal services to develop a list of action steps that either or both the Contractor and tenant will take to reduce tenants	275 clients	548 (199% of goal)
Serve 125 tenants by providing legal consultation for housing related problems such as resources and information about their legal options and rights	125 clients	350 (280% of goal)
Serve 150 tenants by providing legal representation for housing related issues	150	71 (47% of goal)*
Serve 200 tenants through outreach, education and housing counseling	200	127 (64% of goal)*

*Due to the eviction moratorium fewer tenants needed direct legal services during this time period.

Table 2. ERAP Housing Stabilization (2021-2022) Contract Goals & Performance

Objective	Goal	Actual
Assess eligibility of 200 low- to moderate- Oakland tenants so they can remain housed and not experience homelessness.	200	799 (400% of goal)
Provide emergency rental assistance to approximately 150 eligible households	150	307 (205% of goal)

Centro Legal has a contract to provide tenant legal services and emergency housing assistance for FY22-23. Contract reporting for this period is in process, but they are on track to meet or exceed their goals.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: *Keeping people housed is foundational to economic stability.*

Environmental: *none*

Race & Equity: *People of color are disproportionately rent-burdened and at risk of becoming*

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homeless.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Approve The Resolution to Enter Into A Grant Agreement With Centro Legal De La Raza In The Amount of One-Million dollars (\$1,000,000) for Tenant Legal Services and Eviction Prevention.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Kelly Hoffman, Project Manager, at 510-220-2134.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature: 
Emily Weinstein (Sep 25, 2023 14:20 PDT)

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