



AGENDA REPORT


TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

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

SUBJECT: Centro Legal De La Raza Grant
Agreement

DATE: January 14, 2025

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (Feb 20, 2025 10:35 PST)

Date: Feb 20, 2025

RECOMMENDATION

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.

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 financial assistance.

This proposed legislation would authorize the City Administrator to enter into a grant agreement between Centro Legal de la Raza, Inc. and the City of Oakland for FY 2024-25 for tenant legal services and flexible financial assistance for eviction prevention to eligible tenants of rental housing in Oakland.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Centro Legal de la Raza has been operating the Oakland Housing Secure program since 2018. This initiative is part of the broader Alameda County Housing Secure collaborative, which provides legal services to tenants facing housing-related challenges. Centro Legal de la Raza and its collaborative partners- Eviction Defense Center, East Bay Community Law Center, Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach and The Unity Council deliver critical services to tenants facing housing insecurity.

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, Oakland City Council Resolution 89804 C.M.S. authorized a \$1,000,000 allocation in FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25 for tenant legal services and eviction protection to be carried out by Centro Legal de la Raza.

On October 17, 2023, City Council [Resolution 89951 C.M.S.](#) awarded a grant agreement to Centro Legal de la Raza for an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000 to provide tenant legal services and eviction protection for FY 2023-24.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Evictions are a direct means of displacement. When Oaklanders are evicted from their homes, particularly low-income tenants in rent-controlled units, they are left to contend with finding housing in a rental market that is unaffordable. They typically move far away from their workplaces and social networks, or into situations with even more severe housing problems, such as overcrowding, unsafe conditions, and severe rent burden. Displacement can also have a direct and long-lasting detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of the people who experience it. A large body of research documents the association between evictions and a host of social determinants of health and adverse health outcomes.

Most evictions were paused by the City of Oakland's emergency eviction moratorium during the COVID-19 pandemic. Once the moratorium was lifted on July 14, 2023, tenants faced a deluge of evictions. According to data from the Superior Court of Alameda County made available by Alameda County Housing & Community Development Department's [Unlawful Detainer \(Eviction\) Filing Dashboard](#), eviction filings for the most recently available twelve-month period (October 2023 – September 2024) averaged 223 filings per month, a 59% increase over the pre-pandemic monthly average for the twelve-month period preceding the start of the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2019 – February 2020) when the monthly average was 140.

The collaborative provides critical services that help prevent displacement including:

- Community outreach and education, including workshops
- Legal consultation
- Legal representation
- Connection to supportive services and housing navigation
- Emergency financial assistance as part of a settlement agreement between tenant and rental property owner

This work will continue to advance the Citywide priority of housing, economic, and cultural security by supporting Oakland tenants and preventing displacement.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funding in the amount of \$1,000,000, as appropriated in the Fiscal Years 2023-25 Biennial Budget (Fund 1870- Affordable Housing Trust Fund, Organization Number 89949, Account number 54912, Project Code 10007111-Tenant Legal Services) supports tenant legal services and eviction prevention financial assistance.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

Extensive public engagement was conducted as part of the City Council budget approval process.

COORDINATION

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

PAST PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Centro Legal de la Raza (Centro) supports low-income tenants and prevents displacement through the provision of safety net services including legal assistance, financial assistance, housing stabilization services, and outreach, education, and counseling on housing issues.

In Fiscal Year 23-24, Centro and its collaborative partners provided 220 legal consultations to households, legal representation to 143 households, and case management to 96 households. Additionally, Centro and its collaborative partners hosted 56 know-your-rights workshops, reaching 265 individuals. For Fiscal Year 2023-2024, Centro exceeded all of its contract performance goals.

Centro and its collaborative partners achieved positive outcomes for their clients in **92% of legal services cases**. In 35% of cases, tenants were able to remain stably housed in their current housing. In 49% of cases, attorneys helped tenants achieve a "soft landing." These soft landings provide more time and/or financial benefits in cases when households have to move out.

Additionally, Centro de la Raza and its collaborative partners served some of Oakland's most vulnerable tenants. In their most recent quarterly report, 70% of all households served had extremely low incomes (30% and below the area median income), 38% identified as Black/African American, 40% identified as "Other/Multiple Race," and 21% had at least one household member with a disability.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: Housing stability is foundational to economic stability.

Environmental: None

Race & Equity: People of color experience the highest inequities in housing stability when measuring indicators such as homelessness, displacement, evictions, rent burden, housing quality, overcrowding, etc.

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,



Emily Weinstein (Jan 22, 2025 10:27 PST)

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