



Date: May 16, 2023

To: Members of the City Council

From: Mayor Rex Richardson

Subject: Long Beach Right to Counsel Program Updates and Emerging Trends

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file a presentation on the Right to Counsel Program for Tenant Evictions, data on the number and characteristics of Long Beach residents served by the program to date, and emerging trends and community needs regarding evictions in the City of Long Beach since the expiration of LA County's moratorium on evictions.

Discussion

Since 2021, the City of Long Beach has maintained a contract agreement with the County of Los Angeles and the nonprofit organization Stay Housed LA to support their Right to Counsel program, which provides counsel for tenant evictions for low-income residents who have experienced financial hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Managed by the county in partnership with Stay Housed LA, the City's contract provides funding to address tenant issues in Long Beach, playing a critical role in homelessness prevention for at-risk residents.

Early in the pandemic, there were overlapping tenant evictions moratoria at the local, county and state levels to protect low-income tenants from no-fault evictions and harassment for nonpayment of rent. While the state evictions moratorium largely took precedence over local ordinances, after two years and multiple extensions, the state's moratorium expired on June 30, 2022.

Meanwhile, LA County's moratorium continued to provide tenant protections and moved to expand to all unincorporated areas of the county and cities that did not have a local moratorium, including Long Beach. Earlier this year, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors again extended aspects of the County's evictions moratorium for an additional two months. The County's moratorium officially expired on March 31, 2023, marking the end of the remaining pandemic eviction protections still available.

As a proactive step to support homelessness prevention, the City allocated a one-time funding of \$200,000 at the end of March from the City's emergency funds for homeless prevention, permissible under the City's homelessness emergency proclamation, to extend the City's existing contract with LA County and Stay Housed LA to support the Right to Counsel program through June 30, 2023, or until funding is exhausted.



MAYOR REX RICHARDSON

Previous program funding was provided through the General Fund in Fiscal Year 2021 and Long Beach Recovery Act in Fiscal Year 2022, with supplemental funding from a Community Development Block Grant.

Continuing a program to provide legal counsel to low-income tenants remains a critical resource for many community members before eviction or penalty action is taken and to prevent vulnerable residents and families in Long Beach from falling into homelessness.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal or local job impact associated with this item.

Suggested Action

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rex Richardson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mayor Rex Richardson

May 16, 2023