



[Home](#) / [Council Documents](#)

191261

Emergency Ordinance

***Amend subrecipient contract for \$164,800 for the provision of services in support of stabilizing tenants at risk of eviction in East Portland (amend Contract 32002672)**

Passed

The City of Portland ordains:

Section 1. The Council finds:

1. In 2019, 5,904 eviction cases were filed in Multnomah County. Of those cases, only 3% of tenants had lawyers. Since 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused an economic downturn throughout Oregon and in City of Portland with unprecedented numbers of layoffs and reduced work hours for a significant percentage of our workforce. This economic hardship, disproportionately affecting low and moderate-income workers and BIPOC workers, has resulted in lost wages and the inability to pay for basic household expenses, including rent. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, nonpayment of rent was the leading cause of evictions within the state and in the City of Portland.
2. Evictions have long-term consequences for tenants including houselessness, the loss of personal possessions, decreased physical and mental health, poor school performance for children, job loss, housing discrimination, and the inability to find stable replacement housing. Evictions force low-income tenants further into poverty. Studies have shown that evictions and their resulting negative impacts disproportionately affect Black and Latino households, households headed by women, and households with children.
3. 2022 Eviction filing data shows that many of the most impacted zip codes in Portland are in East Portland. With 223 filings, zip code 97233, which includes the Centennial neighborhood, was the most impacted community within Multnomah County. As BIPOC Portlanders are increasingly residing in East Portland, dedicated funding for East Portlanders can increase equity in the program by ensuring resources to support housing stability are available.
4. Evictions create significant costs within the City of Portland related to shelter funding, education funding, health care provided in hospitals

Introduced by

[Commissioner Carmen Rubio](#)

Bureau

[Housing Bureau](#)

Contact

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Requested Agenda Type

Consent

Date and Time Information

Requested Council Date

May 3, 2023

instead of community-based providers, transportation costs, and foster care.

5. Providing access to counsel and financial assistance for tenants facing eviction is a proven means of preventing the disruptive displacement of families and the resulting social, economic, and public health costs of such displacement. Even if displacement cannot be avoided, counsel can help negotiate more favorable terms that allow more time to vacate, avoidance of a formal eviction on a tenant's record and possible reductions in back-rent or other costs owed by the tenant.
6. The Portland Housing Bureau (PHB) recognizes the importance of providing legal and financial assistance to tenants facing potential eviction. In addition, as evictions disproportionately impact BIPOC renters, creating a targeted program in East Portland to prevent evictions and their negative consequences is a way to advance the City's Racial Equity Goals & Strategies and Portland Housing Bureau's Racial Equity Plan.
7. Funding is included in the Housing Bureau's FY 2022-2023 adopted budget in the amount of \$164,800.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Council directs:

- A. The Bureau Director or designee is authorized to execute a contract amendment with the United Way of the Columbia Willamette in the amount of \$164,800 in a form substantially in accordance with Exhibit A.
- B. The Mayor and Auditor are hereby authorized to make payments on this contract from the PHB operating fund budget.

Section 2. The Council declares that an emergency exists because the program funds must be obligated within required timeframes; therefore, this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage by Council.

Documents and Exhibits

 [Exhibit A](#) 454.49 KB

An ordinance when passed by the Council shall be signed by the Auditor. It shall be carefully filed and preserved in the custody of the Auditor (City Charter Chapter 2 Article 1 Section 2-122)

Passed by Council
May 3, 2023

Auditor of the City of Portland
Simone Rede

Impact Statement

Purpose of Proposed Legislation and Background Information

The Portland Housing Bureau requests City Council's approval to authorize \$164,800 in general funds to further the goals of the Bureau's strategic plan through the development of a targeted Financial Assistance and Eviction Legal Defense Program for East Portland. The funds would be administered by an existing Eviction Legal Defense Program partner, who has the capacity to ensure housing stabilization funds are spent on the targeted populations.

In August of 2021, PHB was allocated 4.7 million in ARPA funding for an Eviction Legal Defense Program with financial assistance for tenants at risk of eviction. 92% of the \$2,559,562 allocated towards financial assistance has been committed, supporting housing stability for over 500 households. This amendment would continue this work with local funding.

Financial and Budgetary Impacts

The contract in this ordinance is comprised solely of General Funds. The funding source and allocation is authorized in PHB's FY 22-23 Adopted Budget.

This legislation does not increase staffing at the program.

Community Impacts and Community Involvement

In 2019, eviction filings in Multnomah County averaged 490 per month. As pandemic tenant protections ended and rent assistance began to dry up, eviction filings have averaged 700 per month with no indication of slowing down. 2022 Eviction filing data shows that many of the most impacted zip codes in Portland are in East Portland. With 223 filings, zip code 97233 was the most impacted community within Multnomah County. Eviction Legal Defense Program partners have developed an outreach plan to connect with culturally specific organizations in East Portland to increase awareness of the program within BIPOC communities and to build direct referrals to the Eviction Legal Defense Program. As BIPOC Portlanders are increasingly residing in East Portland, dedicated funding for East Portlanders can help close this service gap and increase equity in the program.

Through this contract, United Way of the Columbia Willamette will provide financial assistance for at least 30 East Portland tenants facing eviction who are receiving legal assistance from the Eviction Legal Defense Program. Demographic data of Program participants will be tracked to assess the Program's effectiveness in advancing the City's Racial Equity Goals & Strategies and the Portland Housing Bureau's Racial Equity Plan.

In the summer and fall of 2022, the Rental Services Commission analyzed housing stabilization and financial assistant programs across multiple jurisdictions. This series of meetings culminated in a letter to Portland's City Council recommending that additional financial assistance is made available through various programs, including the Eviction Legal Defense Program.

PHB continues to solicit feedback from program partners and community members on how to ensure the Eviction Legal Defense Program meets its goals of promoting housing security for vulnerable renters in Portland.

100% Renewable Goal

Approval of this subrecipient contract amendment does not impact the City's total or renewable energy use.

Budget Office Financial Impact Analysis

The City's contract with the United Way of the Columbia Willamette is amended by \$164,800. The funding is from PHB's ongoing General Fund allocation for the East Portland program which is included in the bureau's FY 2022-23 Adopted Budget.

Agenda Items

347 Consent Agenda in [May 3, 2023 Council Agenda](#)

Passed

Commissioner Dan Ryan Yea

Commissioner Rene Gonzalez Yea

Commissioner Mingus Mapps Yea

Commissioner Carmen Rubio Yea

Mayor Ted Wheeler Yea