



City of Columbus

Office of City Clerk
90 West Broad Street
Columbus OH 43215-9015
columbuscitycouncil.org

Legislation Text

File #: 2089-2023, **Version:** 1

This legislation authorizes the Director of the Department of Development to enter into a not-for-profit service agreement with the Legal Aid Society of Columbus in an amount up to \$1,500,000.00 in support of the Tenant Advocacy Project (TAP) to provide legal representation to residents facing an eviction.

Tenants with legal representation are much more likely to avoid an eviction judgment and keep possession of their homes than unrepresented tenants. In addition to these primary effects, a right to counsel offers several secondary benefits to defendants who are sued for eviction. Attorneys may be able to keep eviction filings off tenants' records, arrange for alternative housing, negotiate reasonable amounts of time for tenants to move out, reduce or eliminate money owed to the landlord, or help tenants apply for rental assistance.

With these dollars, The Legal Aid Society of Columbus will be able to staff additional TAP attorneys and support staff for an additional year. Because the Tenant Advocacy Project attorneys specialize in these services this cannot be provided by existing city employees.

Emergency Designation: Emergency action is requested to ensure that The Legal Aid Society of Columbus can immediately continue providing additional legal counsel at eviction court on behalf of Columbus residents facing eviction.

Fiscal Impact: Funds are available within the Public Safety Initiatives subfund to support this contract.

Contract Compliance: the vendor's vendor number is 006124 and is compliant through 3/28/24.

To authorize the Director of the Department of Development to enter into a not-for-profit service agreement with the Legal Aid Society of Columbus in an amount up to \$1,500,000.00 in support of the Tenant Advocacy Project (TAP) to provide legal representation to residents facing an eviction; to authorize an appropriation and expenditure within the Public Safety Initiative subfund; and to declare an emergency. (\$1,500,000.00)

WHEREAS, high eviction rates continue to cause financial insecurity for many residents of Columbus, resulting in a full docket of eviction filings, which are expected to continue into 2024; and,

WHEREAS, low-income residents in the City of Columbus are in need of legal services to assist them in eviction court and the Legal Aid Society of Columbus provides assistance in advocating on behalf of residents facing eviction; and,

WHEREAS, Columbus City Council is committed to the Legal Aid Society's Tenant Advocacy Project, which aims to keep residents in their homes, and provide legal counsel for residents facing an eviction; and,

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the Department of Development in that it is immediately necessary to authorize the Director to enter into a not-for-profit service contract with the Legal Aid Society of Columbus to immediately continue providing additional legal counsel at eviction court on behalf of Columbus residents facing eviction, all for the immediate preservation of the public health, peace, property, safety and welfare; and **now therefore**,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1: That the Director of the Department of Development is hereby authorized to enter into a not-for-profit

service agreement with the Legal Aid Society of Columbus in support of the Tenant Advocacy Project to provide legal representation to residents facing an eviction.

SECTION 2: That the Auditor is hereby authorized and directed to appropriate \$1,500,000.00 to the Department of Development within the Public Safety Initiatives subfund, fund 1000, subfund 100016, in Services-03 per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 3: That per the action authorized by Section 1 of this ordinance, the expenditure of \$1,500,000.00 or so much thereof as may be needed is hereby authorized in the Public Safety Initiatives subfund, fund 1000, subfund 100016, per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 4: That the City Auditor is authorized to make any accounting changes to revise the funding source for all contracts or contract modifications associated with this legislation.

SECTION 5: That for reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.