



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 1208-2020, **Version:** 1

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This legislation authorizes the transfer of \$250,000.00 in Fund 2207 from the Department of Finance and Management to the Department of Development; authorizes the expenditure of up to \$250,000.00 in the Department of Development; and authorizes the Director of Development to enter into a contract with the Legal Aid Society of Columbus in an amount up to \$250,000.00 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 the COVID-19 pandemic causing financial insecurity for many residents of Columbus, eviction filings are rising, and the court is expected to see an increase in eviction hearings for the remainder of 2020. With these grant dollars, The Legal Aid Society of Columbus will be able to staff an additional five TAP attorneys for the remainder of the 2020 calendar year.

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

**Fiscal Impact:** Funding is provided to the City of Columbus from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act passed by Congress and signed into law March 27, 2020. This ordinance is contingent upon the passage of Ordinance 1129-2020, the ordinance accepting and appropriating the CARES Act funds.

**Contract Compliance:** The vendor's number is 006124 and expires 4/27/2022.

To authorize the transfer of \$250,000.00 in Fund 2207 from the Department of Finance and Management to the Department of Development; to authorize the expenditure of up to \$250,000.00 in the Department of Development; to authorize the Director of Development to enter into a contract with the Legal Aid Society of Columbus in an amount up to \$250,000.00 in support of the Tenant Advocacy Project (TAP) to provide legal representation to residents facing an eviction; to authorize the payment of expenses starting March 1, 2020; to and to declare an emergency. (\$250,000.00)

**WHEREAS,** the COVID-19 pandemic is causing financial insecurity for many residents of Columbus, resulting in a rise in eviction filings, with Municipal Court expecting to see an increase in eviction hearings for the remainder of 2020.

**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,** the Mayor and City Council are 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 a contract with the Legal Aid Society of Columbus to immediately begin providing additional legal counsel at eviction court on behalf of Columbus residents facing eviction; now, therefore

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

**SECTION 1.** That the transfer of \$250,000.00 or so much thereof as may be needed, is hereby authorized within Fund 2207 (CARES Act Fund), from Dept-Div 45-01, object class 03 (Services) to Dept-Div 44-10 (Housing), object class 03 (Services) per the account codes in the attachment to this ordinance, and contingent upon the passage of Ordinance 1129-2020.

**SECTION 2:** That the Director of Development is hereby authorized to enter into contract with the Legal Aid Society of Columbus in support of the Tenant Advocacy Project in an amount up to \$250,000.00 effective March 1, 2020;

**SECTION 3:** That the expenditure of \$250,000.00 or so much thereof as may be needed is hereby authorized in Fund 2207 (CARES Act Fund), Dept-Div 44-10 (Housing Division), in object class 03 (Services) per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

**SECTION 4:** That the funds necessary to carry out the purpose of this ordinance are hereby deemed appropriated, and the City Auditor shall establish such accounting codes as necessary.

**SECTION 5:** 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 6:** That this agreement is awarded pursuant to the relevant provisions of Chapter 329 of City Code relating to the process for awarding not-for-profit service agreements.

**SECTION 7:** 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.