



Legislation Text

File #: 2021-239, Version: 1

TITLE

EVICITION MEDIATION AND TENANCY SUPPORT PROGRAM PROPOSAL

SPONSOR

Heather Skeens, DHHS Director (Sharon Barlow)

BACKGROUND

This proposal was developed by the UNC Greensboro Center for Housing and Community Studies (CHCS) in response to an invitation to apply for funding from Guilford County Government. The proposed project builds upon existing CHCS programs to address the needs of vulnerable, low-income communities experiencing housing instability and potential evictions. The proposed project will: address impending evictions that have resulted from COVID19; assist residents with underlying issues causing housing instability; and build resiliency, leadership skills, knowledge, and self-efficacy in these communities to address future housing needs.

Our goals are to preserve tenancy, reduce cost-burden, strengthen community efficacy, and assure landlords of being reimbursed for rental arrears. Our proposed intervention to address housing instability in Guilford County has three key components: 1) a triage system of housing counseling and resource navigation that will guide tenants through options to address rental arrears, address cost burden, and connect with existing resources in the community (including but not limited to the ERAP and other COVID-19 resources); 2) an eviction mediation service that facilitates a resolution to pending or eminent evictions; and 3) a training program to build capacity in vulnerable and low-income renter communities to address the factors which may lead to eviction and/or housing instability.

The proposed project will address several gaps of need for residents that have been hard hit by COVID-19 and for whom existing community assistance is limited or non-existent. Providing residents access to information and assistance that can enable them to remain in their current housing, improve the safety and quality of their housing, and participate in the improvement of the housing within their neighborhoods and communities represents a valuable investment to the County. Through the services outlined in this proposal we believe the results will make a

substantial difference in not only the individuals and families who receive assistance through the proposed programming, but many others who are family, friends and neighbors will benefit from program recipients as they learn about community resources, community services and their rights as residents of Guilford County.

The project will be conducted over a 15-month period. During this time project team members will meet monthly with Guilford County staff to report progress and updates. The program is anticipated to assist as many as 500 tenants with resource navigation, 30-50 individuals or families per month with housing counseling and more than 480 attendees attending capacity building workshops. A cloud-based case management system will be developed and tailored for this project.

The total cost for this project is \$548,554 which includes direct labor, travel, supplies and materials, facilities administrative cost, and social return on investment analysis. This project will be funded using the administrative dollars of both rounds of Emergency Rental and Utility Assistance. The administrative dollars associated with the first allocation of ERUA is \$725,272.19. Administrative dollars for the second allocation is \$860,810.91. The total administrative dollars for both allocations is \$1,586,083.10. The remaining use of administrative dollars will be used for staffing and advertising needs around ERUA.

BUDGET IMPACT

NO ADDITIONAL COUNTY FUNDS REQUIRED

REQUESTED ACTION

Approve proposal and authorize staff to proceed with the contract with UNC Greensboro Center for Housing and Community to address the needs of vulnerable, low-income communities experiencing housing instability and potential evictions as part of the County's Emergency Rental Assistance Program.