

STAFF REPORT

Date: January 22, 2025

To: Mayor and City Council

Through: Jackie Bryant, City Manager

Subject: Presentation and update regarding the Housing Court eviction diversion pilot program, in partnership with Reno Justice Court. (For Discussion Only)

From: Jayna Litz, Housing Manager

Department: City Manager's Office – Housing & Neighborhood Development

Summary:

In August 2024, the City of Reno partnered with the Reno Justice Court to create the Housing Court eviction diversion pilot program. The Housing Court Program provides up to three months of past-due rental assistance for households facing eviction due to nonpayment of rent. Eligible households are those with income at or below 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) that are at risk of homelessness due to an active eviction notice for nonpayment. The City of Reno also requires applicants to participate in financial literacy training, helping build skills to break the cycle of housing instability. The Housing and Neighborhood Development Department (HAND) allocated \$500,000 from AB396 to the pilot program, which is projected to be fully expended by the end of June 2025. HAND and Reno Justice Court are exploring options to secure additional funding to extend the life of the program.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

Economic Opportunity, Homelessness, and Affordable Housing

Previous Council Action:

There is no recent Council action relevant to this item.

Background:

Tenants with a documented eviction face additional barriers when securing housing, perpetuating a cycle of housing instability. HAND is committed to preventing evictions and previously administered an internal Eviction Prevention Program. In 2023-2024 the program assisted 201 households facing active evictions, allowing them to remain in their current rental units. The program was a success and evolved into a partnership with additional resources. The Housing Court Program that began in August 2024 has assisted 46 households in just three months.

Discussion:

The Housing Court Program creates a working relationship with landlords and tenants, providing an opportunity to prevent the eviction process with education and rental assistance. The program requires applicants to participate in financial literacy training, helping build skills to break the cycle of housing instability. Additional resources are also provided through collaborations with Opportunity Alliance Nevada, Northern Nevada Legal Aid, Nevada Legal Services, Reno Sparks Chamber of Commerce, Nevada Literacy Council, Nation's Finest, and the Nevada Department of Welfare and Supportive Services. Eligible households are those with income at or below 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) that are at risk of homelessness due to an active eviction notice for nonpayment.

From August 2024 through November 2024, 46 households were assisted in Housing Court. 13% were elderly (62 and older), and 26% were at or below 30% AMI. A recent survey of landlords indicated that over 80% of households assisted were still housed in the same unit.

The funding allocated towards Housing Court is projected to be fully expended by the end of June 2025. HAND and Reno Justice Court are exploring options to secure additional funding to extend the life of the program.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications associated with this item.

Legal Implications:

Legal review completed for compliance with City procedures and Nevada law.

Attachments: