



Board Summary Report

File #: 21-348

Agenda Date: 5/4/2021

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To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: N/A

Prepared By:

Michelle Halstead, Director, Commissioners' Office

Presenter: Reenie Terjak and Megan O'Byrne, Colorado Legal Services

Subject:

11:00 AM *Colorado Legal Services Eviction Funding Proposal

Purpose and Request:

The purpose of this study session is to provide information on a proposed eviction legal services program, based on similar programs implemented in adjacent counties, for information and consideration.

Background and Discussion: Colorado Legal Services (CLS) is a private, non-profit corporation that provides high quality free legal assistance in civil matters to indigent clients throughout the State of Colorado. CLS is the only agency in the state that provides free legal services, including direct representation, in civil cases to indigent clients in every Colorado county. To qualify for CLS's services, an applicant's income may not exceed 125% of the current federal poverty guidelines. All legal assistance is provided without charge to its clients.

Colorado Legal Services received funding in late 2018 from Adams County, the City and County of Broomfield, and the Cities of Westminster, Thornton, Federal Heights, Brighton, Commerce City, Aurora, and Northglenn to create an eviction defense and housing assistance Legal Services Pilot Program. Adams County took a leadership role in providing initial funding, with local jurisdictions also contributing through an intergovernmental agreement, which is attached. Cost allocations are included in Exhibit B.

The purpose of the Pilot Program was and continues to be to provide legal assistance to low-income households, to help prevent or mitigate the adverse familial and societal impacts of involuntary displacement

and/or homelessness within the contributing jurisdictions, through a dedicated attorney and paralegal. The results of the pilot program within Adams and Broomfield counties are included as an attachment.

According to the 18th Judicial District, eviction filings in Arapahoe County (collected from July 1- June 30) is as follows:

- FY20 - 6,799
- FY19 - 10,183
- FY18 - 10,024

The City of Aurora is participating in the Adams County pilot; based on the program success, the city facilitated an initial meeting with Colorado Legal Services and county officials to share more about the program. Staff was asked to schedule a study session for the Board to learn more about the program and potential opportunities within Arapahoe County.

Fiscal Impact: \$100,000 (over a two-year period).

Alternatives: For information and consideration. If the Board desires to move forward, staff can engage with municipal partners and identify potential funding sources for further consideration.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

- Be fiscally sustainable
- Provide essential and mandated service
- Be community focused

Staff Recommendation: For Information Purposes.

Concurrence: N/A