



Legislation Text

File #: 2024-0145, **Version:** 1

Clerk 04/30/2024

A MOTION requesting the executive establish a policy prioritizing households of certain income levels for eviction prevention and rental assistance programs and requesting a report.

WHEREAS, the eviction prevention and rental assistance program was established in August of 2020 to assist households economically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and

WHEREAS, the eviction prevention and rental assistance program was administered by the department of community and human services in partnership with thirty-five local community based organizations to operate three programs, specifically the tenant program, the small landlord program, and the large landlord program, and

WHEREAS, in the 2021 legislative session, the Washington state Legislature approved Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1277, establishing a one-hundred-dollar surcharge on recorded documents to fund housing services, including the Department of Commerce eviction prevention rental assistance program, and

WHEREAS, the 2023-2024 biennial budget allocated approximately \$20,500,000 in anticipated eviction prevention rental assistance program funding, and

WHEREAS, recent reports of misuse of King County eviction prevention rental assistance moneys, including one instance of a tenant who received assistance from the Housing Justice Project and did not pay rent despite earning an income and caused the housing provider to become homeless, have demonstrated the need for increased aid applicant screening and standards in order to prevent fraud and protect public trust, and

WHEREAS, instances of misuse of eviction prevention and rental assistance moneys pose significant

financial burdens to housing providers, especially given the extensive backlog of eviction cases in the King County superior court, and

WHEREAS, the Rental Housing Association of Washington has reported that the misuse of eviction prevention rental assistance funds damages the availability of affordable housing in the region, and

WHEREAS, the council seeks to prioritize households at or below two hundred percent of the federal poverty level when distributing moneys for eviction prevention and rental assistance programs in order to target the use of this aid to those who demonstrate need;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The council requests the executive establish a policy prioritizing households at or below two hundred percent of the federal poverty level when entering into contracts for eviction prevention and rental assistance. The policy should prohibit moneys from being expended to assist tenants above that income threshold. Additionally, the policy should only allow moneys to be expended to assist tenants who are renting a housing unit with an assessed value less than the median home value in King County.

B. The council further requests the executive develop an eviction prevention and rental assistance policy report, which should include at least the following components:

1. The policy requested in section A of this motion and a description of how this policy will be implemented in future contract negotiations with eviction prevention and rental assistance service providers;
2. An accounting of which service providers, including the Housing Justice Project, have received funding, are contracted to receive funding for the eviction prevention and rental assistance program in the 2023-2024 biennium to date, and how the moneys are contracted to be spent; and
3. A detailed summary of the outcome of each eviction prevention and rental assistance case provided by the Housing Justice Project, the average time between the Housing Justice Project receiving a client and resolution of the case, and the income level of each client.

C. The executive should electronically file the report requested by this motion no later than October 1,

2024, with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff, the chief policy officer, and the lead staff for the committee of the whole, or its successor. The report should be accompanied by a proposed motion that should acknowledge receipt of the assessment report.