



September 15, 2020

Matthew H. Hymel  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

**Marin County Board of Supervisors**  
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**SUBJECT:** Expanded Legal and Mediation services to prevent future evictions

Dear Board Members:

**RECOMMENDATION:** Authorize the President to execute agreement in the amount of \$310,000 to provide support for the Legal Aid of Marin, allocate \$90,000 for enhanced District Attorney's Mediation Services and approve related budget adjustments as detailed in the fiscal impact section.

**SUMMARY:**

The economic impacts of the COVID-19 public health crisis are felt in all sectors of Marin especially in our underserved communities. Since the beginning of the emergency, the County and Marin Community Foundation (MCF) have been working to provide emergency support to low-income residents. For example, the County and MCF has provided \$2.6 million for emergency rental assistance for low-income tenants. More recently, we have partnered to provide \$1.25 million for emergency assistance for COVID-19 positive residents.

With recent state and federal actions, evictions due to nonpayment of rent have been postponed, but these actions do not eliminate the looming challenge of unpaid rent. Working with MCF and our cities, we are proposing \$310,000 for Legal Aid of Marin to provide legal services to low-income renters regarding rental modification agreements, rental repayment plans and potential evictions. In addition, we are proposing \$90,000 in additional support for mediation services through the District Attorney's Consumer Protection Unit over the next 18 months to provide neutral mediation services to landlord and tenants to help reach agreements for rental repayment or rental modification prior to any potential eviction procedures. MCF has recently allocated \$120,000 in additional support to Legal Aid of Marin to support these efforts.

The contract for Legal Aid of Marin provides for additional legal staff over the next 18 months to proactively address these challenges to reduce future evictions. County funds will be used to provide enhanced culturally competent/bi-lingual legal staffing to deal with the increased demand for tenant services to avoid evictions during the COVID-19 emergency. Over

an 18-month period, these funds will be used to add staffing to provide legal services, including:

- outreach to low-income tenants regarding state and federal eviction protections
- advice to tenants about their rights
- creation and provision of self-help materials to be disseminated at a variety of locations, such as food distribution centers throughout the county
- proactive engagement with property owners to develop rent repayment plans or rental modification agreements
- coordination with the District Attorney's Mediation Services to provide neutral mediation service to help reach tenant/landlord agreements
- various direct legal services for low-income tenants aimed at eviction prevention

Legal Aid of Marin will provide quarterly reports over the 18-month contract period detailing the number of clients served as well as relevant performance outcomes such as number of rent repayment or rent modification agreements achieved. In coordination with Legal Aid of Marin, DA Mediation Services will provide neutral, non-binding mediation services to landlords and tenants to help facilitate efforts to avoid evictions such as rent repayment plans or rental modification agreements.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** In total, \$400,000 will be allocated to this effort over an 18-month period. Of this amount, \$300,000 (\$250,000 for Legal Aid and \$50,000 for the DA Consumer Protection Unit) would be funded from the County's one-time General Fund reserve and \$100,000 will be funded from all cities and towns based on a population formula. Contributions from cities and towns will support \$60,000 to Legal Aid of Marin and \$40,000 to DA Mediation Services.

Your Board's approval will increase Non-Departmental General Fund expenditure appropriations by a total of \$400,000, fully offset by \$100,000 in increased revenue from cities and towns and a reduction in the General Fund One-Time Reserve (320525) of \$300,000. The remaining balance in the General Fund One-Time reserve will be \$8,221,981.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,



Matthew H. Hymel  
County Administrator

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