



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:16-2098

Agenda Item Number:

Agenda Date: 3/22/2016

In Control: Housing Commission to Protect and Preserve Dynamic and Diverse Neighborhoods

DEPARTMENT: Human Services

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Melody Woosley

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City-Wide

SUBJECT:

Briefing and Discussion on the Department of Human Services Fair Housing/Housing Counseling Program

SUMMARY:

This item provides a briefing on the Department of Human Services (DHS) Fair Housing/Housing Counseling Program. This item also provides an update on progress made in addressing Fair Housing/Housing Counseling items outlined in the Mayor's Task Force on Preserving Dynamic and Diverse Neighborhoods.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Department of Human Services (DHS), Fair Housing/Housing Counseling Program (FHHC) has provided housing counseling services to homeowners as a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Certified Housing Counseling agency since 1979. FHHC supports the delivery of a wide variety of housing counseling services to homebuyers, homeowners, low to moderate income renters, and those in danger of or experiencing homelessness. Services are provided regardless of income.

On April 22, 2015, the Mayor's Task Force on Preserving Dynamic and Diverse Neighborhoods issued a report designating the DHS Fair Housing/Housing Counseling Program and the Fair Housing Council of Greater Bexar County as primary resources for vulnerable residents to minimize displacement due to redevelopment and mitigate the effects of neighborhood change.

The primary goal of the Fair Housing/Housing Counseling Program is to improve housing stability by:

- Providing public education to reduce discrimination in housing
- Educating landlords and tenants regarding their legal rights and responsibilities
- Expanding homeownership opportunities and improve access to affordable housing
- Helping homeowners prevent or resolve mortgage delinquency, default and foreclosure and maintain homeownership
- Providing relocation assistance in the event of displacement

- Connecting residents to emergency assistance, financial empowerment to prevent homelessness

During FY 2015, 1,686 San Antonio families received housing counseling services and 228 foreclosures were prevented.

ISSUE:

The Fair Housing/Housing Counseling program is funded through three primary grant sources: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), and HUD Housing Counseling. In FY 2015, the DHS Fair Housing/Housing Counseling program served 1,686 residents; provided tenant/landlord mediation for 1,045 residents; referred 25 complaints of discrimination to HUD and 31 cases to Legal Aid; provided 3 foreclosure prevention workshops, attended by 2,100 residents; and prevented 228 foreclosures through foreclosure mitigation counseling and financial counseling. Additionally, DHS increased community outreach and awareness by coordinating with 211 and 311 information hotlines, counsel staff trainings and informational presentations at fairs, apartment complexes, and other community events.

In line with recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Preserving Dynamic and Diverse Neighborhoods, DHS restructured homeless prevention and housing related programs to create a coordinated initiative to address housing stability. To this end, the Department of Planning and Community Development allocated \$52,042 in additional FY 2016 CDBG funding to DHS to expand the Program's capacity to provide housing counseling and homeless prevention services through the addition of a Housing Counselor position. The total program budget is \$763,314 and funds 7 positions.

The expanded scope of services offered through the Fair Housing/Housing Counseling Program ensures coordination of traditional housing discrimination and housing counseling services with relocation assistance, boarding home inspection, homeless prevention, and financial education resources.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is a briefing for informational purposes only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is a briefing for informational purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is a briefing for informational purposes only.