

AD HOC COVID

MOTION

In March 2020, the Los Angeles City Council adopted an Ordinance that temporarily prohibits evictions of residential and commercial tenants for failure to pay rent due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Residential tenants have up to 12 months following the expiration of the local emergency period to repay any past due rent. The local emergency period is March 4, 2020 to the end of the local emergency as declared by the Mayor. The Ordinance does not eliminate any obligation to pay lawfully charged rent. Under the City's Ordinance, renters are afforded more protections than those provided under State law, as well as the federal eviction moratorium ordered by the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

According to a Housing Community and Investment Department (HCID) survey that queried participants in the City's rental assistance program, approximately 67 percent of respondents reported that they were behind in rent. Estimates of the average amount of rent owed ranged from \$4,200 to \$7,000. Nearly 278,000 renter households in the City earn less than 30 percent of the area median income and even with 12 months to pay, these households will be severely burdened with paying their back rent.

The City of Philadelphia's Eviction Diversion Program enables landlords and tenants to arrive at an agreement that works for both parties, without having to go to court. The program is designed to assist landlords with tenants who have had difficulty paying rent due to a COVID-19 related hardship. Benefits of diversion and mediation include helping tenants avoid an eviction, while also helping landlords avoid vacancies and unit turnover costs. The Philadelphia Municipal Court recently ordered that landlords cannot file an eviction action until they first apply for rental assistance with the city's Emergency Rental Assistance program. Upon completing the application, the landlord will be automatically enrolled in the Eviction Diversion Program as well. This novel approach seeks to divert eviction actions towards existing rental assistance programs and mediation. This type of program should be studied to determine the feasibility of implementing a similar program in Los Angeles.

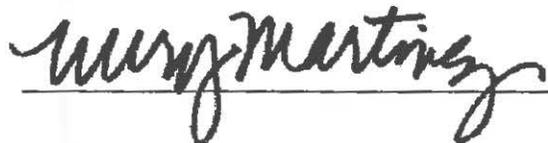
I THEREFORE MOVE that the Housing and Community Investment Department be directed to study the feasibility of implementing an eviction diversion program modeled after the City of Philadelphia program, in which landlords are required to access rental assistance and mediation before they are permitted to file an eviction action.

PRESENTED BY:



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SECONDED BY:



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