



CITY COUNCIL

Darryl Moore
Councilmember District 2

CONSENT CALENDAR

June 12, 2007

To: Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Darryl Moore

Subject: Budget Referral: Housing Rights, Inc.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Berkeley City Council refers \$6,000 to the FY2008-2009 budget process for Housing Rights, Inc. to help fill a gap in services.

BACKGROUND:

Historically, there has been a shortfall of service to residents of subsidized housing who do not have a need for legal representation, and thus cannot be served by East Bay Community Law Center (EBCLC), nor do they have an issue that is covered under the City's rent control and related ordinance, so they cannot be served by the Rent Board's staff either. Housing Rights, Inc. would like to address the shortfall for subsidized housing tenants who have conflicts with their landlord which do not fall under that jurisdiction of the Rent Board or priority for individual assistance from EBCLC and who have problems such as: landlord disputes, repair needs, and security deposit disputes.

Housing Rights, Inc. would like to develop programming to serve a population that can currently find not alternative for direct one-on-one assistance. Several years ago the Rent Board funded the agency to provide non-legal eviction defense services for Berkeley Residents. Over the years as the Rent Board has developed internal capacity they have assumed most of those services. Currently they fund Housing Rights for a very limited service (\$3,000 for next fiscal year). They also fund the Eviction Defense Center and the EBCLC to provide eviction prevention services and to assist renters through the administrative hearing process before the Rent Board. Because our current City of Berkeley funding is for the investigation of housing discrimination, without the extra funding through the Rent Board, we do not have the funding or the staffing to assist tenants of subsidized housing. Housing Rights is seeking a modest amount to fund a staff person to dedicate 5 hours per week to assist Berkeley subsidized housing residents who are not served by the Rent Board or EBCLC, and will assume the cost of all other expenses (rent, phones, etc.). The intent for the program would be eviction prevention, public education as to their housing rights and responsibilities as tenants, to resolve conflicts between clients and their landlords, and helping clients to obtain/retain housing through exercising their housing rights.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

\$6,000

CONTACT PERSON:

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