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**2022 RES-022**

**AWARDING A CONTRACT TO TENANT RESOURCE CENTER, INC. FOR  
EVICTION COURT RENTAL ASSISTANCE AND EVICTION AND FORECLOSURE  
LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAMS  
DCDHS – HAA DIVISION**

This project is funded with the County’s allocation of emergency rental assistance funds (ERA 1) was authorized in the 2020 federal COVID-19 relief bill. Funding for Eviction and Foreclosure Legal Services is provided with American Rescue Plan (ARP) local aid administered by Dane County. This resolution includes expenditures outlined in 2021 RES-267 approved by the Dane County Board of Supervisors.

**Justification**

Authorizing Law: In December of 2020, \$900 billion COVID-19 relief bill authorizing additional funding to respond to the pandemic across multiple areas of need. The act included \$25 billion in funding for emergency rental assistance (ERA 1).

The State of Wisconsin received over \$320 million dollars in ERA 1 from the December 2020 stimulus and is granting more than \$10.2 million of their allocation to support Dane County’s continued efforts to prevent widespread evictions and promote housing stability for renter, which was expended by July 2021. The State of Wisconsin offered a second allocation of \$10.2 million of their allocation to continue to support Dane County’s continued efforts to promote housing stability and prevent eviction.

\$250,000 in funding for eviction and foreclosure legal services was approved in the 2022 Dane County Budget.

Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Many renters have fallen behind on their rent, or are in need of assistance to pay future rent, due to continued hardship related to the COVID-19 pandemic’s effect on our economy. The CDC eviction moratorium expired on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The additional emergency rental assistance authorized in the COVID-19 relief bill can be used in a number of ways to help households in Dane County achieve housing stability and avoid eviction.

The Dane County Department of Human Services’ (DCDHS) Housing Access and Affordability Division (HAA) seeks to award a contract to Tenant Resource Center, Inc. for an ERA at-risk or involved in eviction court program and eviction and foreclosure legal services program. Tenant Resource Center Inc., was selected as Dane County’s court ERA and legal services vendor through a competitive RFP process in 2022.

Tenant Resource Center Inc., will receive \$1,100,000 to fund direct rental assistance to households who are at risk of eviction or are involved in eviction court proceedings to eligible applicants. Of that amount, Tenant Resource Center, Inc. will receive up to \$100,000 for administrative costs related to the program. Tenant Resource Center, Inc. will receive up to \$250,000 to fund the Eviction and Foreclosure legal services program.

49 Duplication of Funding/Existing Partnerships and Programs:

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51 Emergency Rental Assistance at Court:

52 The funding is not duplicative with other efforts, as duplication of effort is not allowed per  
53 federal regulations. Dane County's emergency rental assistance allocation (ERA 1)  
54 authorized in the December 2020 federal COVID-19 stimulus bill.

55

56 Legal Services:

57 The funding is not duplicative with other efforts related to legal services and will add  
58 needed capacity in this resource area.

59

60 Guidelines:

61

62 Emergency Rental Assistance at Court:

63 The federal government has passed detailed guidelines for the emergency rental  
64 assistance funds authorized by the US Treasury. For eligibility purposes, grantees must  
65 only consider household income for 2020 or confirmation of the monthly income that the  
66 household is receiving at the time of application, as determined by the Treasury  
67 Secretary.

68

69 Up to fifteen (15) months of rental assistance can be provided per household. Eligible  
70 costs include rental and utility arrears, future rent, other expenses related to housing  
71 including relocation expenses (such as rental security deposits), and rental fees  
72 (including application or screening fees). If a household has reached 15 months of rental  
73 assistance, Urban Triage has the ability to provide an additional three (3) months of  
74 funding using ERA 2 funds with the existing contract.

75

76 Households are eligible for assistance if one or more individual has qualified for  
77 unemployment benefits, has experienced a reduction in household income, has incurred  
78 significant costs, and/or has experienced other financial hardship due directly or  
79 indirectly to the COVID-19 pandemic, and where one or more individual can demonstrate  
80 a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability (a past due utility or rent  
81 notice or an eviction notice, unsafe or unhealthy living conditions; or any other evidence  
82 of such risk as determined by the grantee.)

83

84 Per federal guidelines, households that make 50% area median income (AMI) and below  
85 and in which one or more member is unemployed and has been unemployed for longer  
86 than 90 days must be prioritized among applicants.

87

88 The grantee must ensure recipients of emergency rental assistance funding do not  
89 receive duplicate assistance from other federally funded rental assistance programs.

90

91 Per federal guidelines, landlords or owners may apply on behalf of tenants meeting the  
92 eligibility requirements if the tenant cosigns the application, the landlord provides the  
93 necessary documentation to the tenant, and the payments are used to pay the tenant's  
94 rental obligation to the owner.

95

96 Legal Services:

97 Services will be provided based on a client assessment to determine if the client will  
98 receive advice only or legal representation in court related actions. TRC will serve Dane  
99 County households with priority given to households that include an individual who has  
100 been unemployed for the 90 days prior to application for assistance and households with  
101 income at or below fifty percent (50%) of the area median income (AMI). Additional  
102 preference will be given to households at or below thirty percent (30%) of the AMI who  
103 have a current eviction filing or foreclosure filing in the Dane County Court system.  
104

105 In addition, TRC will serve households at risk of eviction or those facing other eviction  
106 related concerns that interfere with their housing stability. Those circumstances include,  
107 but are not limited to, individuals and families who have been threatened with an  
108 eviction, have received a notice terminating tenancy, have a court date scheduled for  
109 eviction proceedings, have been subject to an eviction lawsuit in the past, households  
110 that have not been evicted themselves, but are facing challenges securing housing due  
111 to a landlord assuming or associating them from/with parties with eviction records, and  
112 households that been notified that the property is in foreclosure including tenant related  
113 issues.  
114

### 115 **Expected Outcomes and Data Collection**

116

#### 117 Emergency Rental Assistance at Court:

118 Per the federal guidelines, information that must be collected by the grantee includes the  
119 number of eligible households that received assistance, the acceptance rate of applicants  
120 for assistance, the type of assistance provided to each eligible household, the average  
121 amount of funding provided per eligible household, the household income level based on  
122 0-30, 31-50, 51-80% AMI, the average number of monthly rental payments that were  
123 received, and demographics of the primary recipient (race, gender, ethnicity per HUD  
124 definition).  
125

126 Per the federal government, the information collected by the grantee must be reported to  
127 the US Treasury on a quarterly and monthly basis to maintain ERA 1 compliance. This  
128 information will be shared quarterly with the Dane County Board of Supervisors per 2021  
129 RES-013.  
130

#### 131 Legal Services:

132

133 County Board reporting guidelines require the provider to send its Dane County contract  
134 manager a monthly report that includes the unduplicated number of households served,  
135 demographics of households served, number of forced evictions or foreclosures  
136 prevented, number of forced evictions that moved forward, number of auctioned  
137 foreclosure, housing retention rate of clients at 6 months and again at 12 months.  
138

139 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the County Board approves a contract in  
140 the amount of \$1,350,000 with Tenant Resource Center Inc. and authorizes the County  
141 Executive and County Clerk to execute the contract documents, and authorizes the  
142 Controller to issue the checks for payment of contract invoices  
143  
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145	<b><u>Vendor</u></b>	<b><u>Contract Amount</u></b>
146	Tenant Resource Center Inc.	\$1,350,000

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148 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the County Board requests quarterly reports be shared  
149 with the members of the County Board, and that the Health and Human Needs  
150 Committee review the reports on a quarterly basis and discuss how the information  
151 presented addresses anticipated program outcomes.