



City of Cambridge

O-12
IN CITY COUNCIL
June 24, 2019

COUNCILLOR SIDDIQUI
MAYOR MCGOVERN
COUNCILLOR SIMMONS
COUNCILLOR MALLON

WHEREAS: In accordance with its mission to provide critical guidance to the City of Cambridge on mitigating the effects of housing instability and displacement, the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Tenant Displacement has sought to identify both where the greatest funding needs exist in fighting and preventing displacement, as well as potential opportunities for acquiring additional funding sources; and

WHEREAS: In anticipation of its comprehensive report of final recommendations for policy change and resource allocation, the Tenant Displacement Task Force presents below the following which have come to its attention:

- Due to cuts in federal funding for elder (60+) services, Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services is no longer able to fund the support services it provides to Cambridge's growing population of elders facing eviction from private housing, and additionally lacks the grant funding flexibility to support those voucher-holders who have been displaced from our community in returning to Cambridge; and
- De Novo Center for Justice and Healing, formerly Community Legal Services and Counseling Center, provides on-location legal aid support at the Middlesex Session of Eastern Housing Court and every Friday at Cambridge District Court through its 'Lawyer for the Day' Housing Clinic program, coordinated by one of De Novo's part-time attorneys; and
- Transition House provides critical services and transitional housing to Cambridge residents who have experienced DV/IPV and subsequently displacement or eviction from their homes or are otherwise seeking shelter and safety from their perpetrator, and, due to the extremely limited supply of transitional housing and family shelter, particularly for survivors, in Cambridge, many of these residents are forced to seek shelter outside of the City; and
- The Task Force's Education Working Group has been developing a plan for a series of tenant workshops, and identified The Alliance of Cambridge Tenants (ACT)--that collective body of tenants and activists allied to organize and advocate specifically on behalf of tenants' rights in the City of Cambridge--as a critical partner in the establishment and implementation of this series; and

WHEREAS: The Tenant Displacement Task Force therefore recommends that additional city funds be allocated to sponsor the following:

- Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services to expand its services to elder residents, increase the number of office hours it currently provides at the Cambridge Multi-Service Center and serve ~ 30 more resident cases each year; and
- De Novo Center for Justice and Healing to sustain its “Lawyer-A-Day” program and continue providing much-needed support to those lacking representation at housing court; and
- Transition House to hire a “Housing Stability Coordinator” who would serve to both stabilize tenancies and provide mobile case management to more effectively serve the immense need of displaced DV/ IPV survivors for support in finding housing in Cambridge; and
- A partnership between the City of Cambridge and the Alliance of Cambridge Tenants (ACT) that would serve to fund a series of educational workshops and resources for tenants, as well as support the continuation of the critical services and advocacy ACT provides for this City’s residents; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Department of Finance and Department of Human Services to explore options for incorporating additional line items in the FY20 Budget to allocate supplemental funds for legal aid services, housing stabilization and tenant education and organizing to prevent displacement and address its ramifications on Cambridge residents and families; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to report back on the matter of these allocations by September 2019.