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Bid Award for Legal Assistance for Eviction Prevention (B)

The Housing & Community Development Division (HCD) is seeking Commission approval to retain the services of Three Rivers Legal Services, Inc. (TRLS), as a result of their successful selection during the recent Request for Proposal (RFP) process. HCD is committed to the protection and enforcement of tenant rights; and to assist in the prevention of evictions. As a result, the City of Gainesville (City) sought proposals from qualified non-profit or for-profit legal services organizations or attorneys interested in providing informational/educational sessions as well as legal services to City of Gainesville tenants.

Services to be provided will include informational/educational sessions to the community at-large regarding tenant rights. Additionally, individualized counseling and/or representation of income-qualified tenants in eviction proceedings (as deemed warranted and prudent in the professional judgment of the provider), will be offered.

Individualized legal services will be available to all income-qualified city residents. However, the City recognizes that certain tenants may be particularly vulnerable for a variety of reasons; including historical discrimination, reduced ability to access needed services because of income limitations, or less likelihood of accessing services that help tenants. Therefore, income-qualified tenants residing in the following designated neighborhoods will be given priority: NW 5th Avenue, Pleasant Street, Porters, Duval, Lincoln Estates, and Grove Street.

Three Rivers Legal Services will provide services at the following cost:

- Hourly rate for counseling - \$100.00
- Hourly rate for eviction proceeding representation - \$100.00

Flat fee for outreach and marketing - cost per year - \$1,000.00

In review of the Request for Proposal, the committee agreed that TRLS met all programmatic requirements in response to minimum qualification guidelines. They also provided documentation, which demonstrated their ability to satisfy the aforementioned standards. The agency employs current Florida Bar member attorneys, licensed by the Supreme Court of Florida, and other highly qualified staff who have demonstrated experience in landlord/tenant law and in defending evictions in the State of Florida.

Funds in the amount of \$70,000 have been identified from current year appropriation to provide the Legal Services for the Eviction Prevention Program.

The City Commission: 1) award the bid to Three Rivers Legal Services, Inc.; and 2) authorize the City Manager or designee to execute all documents and contract related to the provision of the Eviction Prevention Program, subject to approval by the City Attorney as to form and legality.