

# AGENDA ITEM REQUEST FORM

Department: Rent Program

Department Head: Nicolas Traylor

Phone: 620-6564

Meeting Date: May 20, 2020

Final Decision Date Deadline: May 20, 2020

**STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:** The Monthly Activity Report is designed to provide members of the Rent Board and Richmond community with a summary of the Rent Program's activities for the month. Staff members find it timely to begin producing such reports on a monthly basis.

## INDICATE APPROPRIATE BODY

- |   |   |  |  |   |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> City Council               | <input type="checkbox"/> Redevelopment Agency                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Authority     | <input type="checkbox"/> Surplus Property Authority          | <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Powers Financing Authority |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance Standing Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Safety Public Services Standing Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Reuse Authority | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>Rent Board</u> |   |

## ITEM

- |   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation/Proclamation/Commendation (3-Minute Time Limit) |  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing   | <input type="checkbox"/> Regulation  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>CONSENT CALENDAR</u> |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contract/Agreement   | <input type="checkbox"/> Rent Board As Whole                                     |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grant Application/Acceptance                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Claims Filed Against City of Richmond                   |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution   | <input type="checkbox"/> Video/PowerPoint Presentation (contact KCRT @ 620.6759) |  |  |

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** RECEIVE the April 2020 Rent Program Monthly Report - Rent Program (Paige Roosa 620-6537).

AGENDA ITEM NO:

**F-3.**



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Executive Director Traylor and Members of the Rent Board

**FROM:** Paige Roosa, Deputy Director

**DATE:** May 20, 2020

**SUBJECT:** APRIL 2020 MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT

Introduction

The Monthly Activity Report is designed to provide members of the Rent Board and Richmond community with a summary of the Rent Program's activities for the month. It is anticipated that the format, content, and detail of this report will evolve over time. Feedback concerning this report may be submitted via email to [rent@ci.richmond.ca.us](mailto:rent@ci.richmond.ca.us) or by calling (510) 234-RENT (7368).

April Agency Highlights

Like March, the month of April was a considerably unique one for the Rent Program team and the nation in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the extension of the mandated Shelter at Home orders. All Rent Program staff continue to carry out all job functions remotely, which presents us with both challenges and opportunities. The content below highlights our activities for the month.

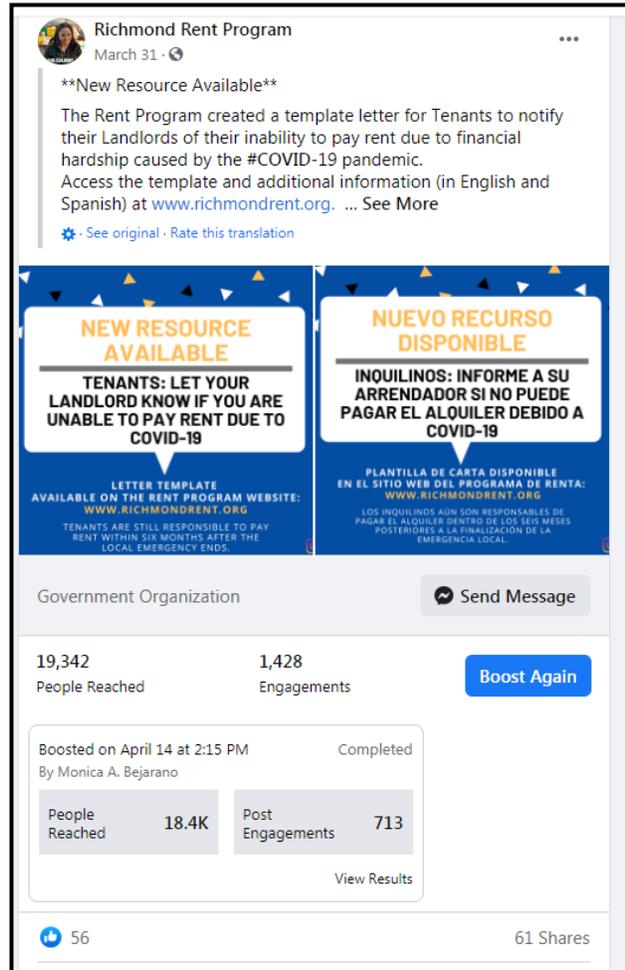
*Rent Program staff members continue to educate the Richmond community about the City's emergency orders and the impacts on Landlord and Tenant rights and responsibilities.*

The demand for services remains constant, with the Rent Program leading community education efforts about the original [Order 29-20](#) prohibiting residential evictions and the [Supplemental Order 34-20](#), which extends eviction protections to commercial tenants and prohibits the issuance of rent increases through May 31, 2020, or any extension of the local emergency. These educational efforts include the development and continual maintenance and updating of a [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and Rentals: What Richmond Tenants and Landlords Need to Know fact sheet](#) as well as a Letter Template for Tenants to use to inform their Landlord of their inability to pay rent due to the financial impacts of COVID-19 in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). Staff Attorneys Charles Oshinuga and Palomar Sanchez have continued to collaborate with staff in the City Attorney's Office to develop and enforce both the original and supplemental orders.

| CITY OF RICHMOND RENT PROGRAM   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) AND RENTALS:</b><br><b>WHAT RICHMOND TENANTS AND LANDLORDS NEED TO KNOW</b><br>EMERGENCY ORDER PROHIBITING RENT INCREASES AND/OR EVICTIONS FOR<br>RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL TENANTS<br>Last modified: May 4, 2020 11:00 AM PST |  |
| Para español,<br>vea página 4   |  |
| A local state of emergency exists in Contra Costa County.   | On March 10, 2020, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and Contra Costa Health Services declared a local emergency and local public health emergency to aid the regional healthcare and governmental community in responding to COVID-19.   |
| The Contra Costa County Superior Court closed all locations beginning Monday, March 16, 2020.   | On March 13, 2020, to respond to the unique and continuing public health and safety challenges presented by COVID-19, the Contra Costa County Superior Court closed at all locations beginning Monday, March 16, 2020.   |
| The Director of Emergency Services declared a local emergency in Richmond.  | On March 17, 2020, the City Manager, in her role as the Director of Emergency Services, proclaimed the existence of a local emergency pursuant to Chapter 2.20 of the Richmond Municipal Code to ensure the availability of mutual aid and an effective City response to COVID-19, and issued an Order prohibiting certain types of evictions for residential tenants. |

*Public Information Unit staff members continued to educate the community on City Orders through the use of social media platforms.*

In an effort to reach as much of the Richmond community as possible, Rent Program staff members have been utilizing the “boost” features available on Facebook to broaden our educational impact. This function has proved successful, with the numbers of community members contacting Rent Program staff for assistance rising with the spread of such social media posts. The image above illustrates this impact: our post concerning the Letter Template developed for Tenants to use to inform Landlords of their inability to pay rent due to the financial impacts of COVID-19 reached 19,324 people, received 56 likes, and was shared by Facebook users 61 times; our greatest social media engagement yet.



*Rent Program staff members collaborated with staff in the Community Development Department to establish a Rent Assistance Fund.*

The need for monetary rent assistance for Richmond tenants was well-established prior to the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; today, the need for such a resource is greater than ever. To that end, Executive Director Nicolas Traylor, Analyst Magaly Chavez, Intern Sarah Schaff, and I worked collaboratively with Community Development Director Lina Velasco and Development Project Manager Charice Duckworth throughout the month of April to create promotional materials communicating the need for a Rent Assistance Fund in Richmond, envision the administration of the fund, and devise a fundraising strategy. It is anticipated that the Rent Assistance Fund will be contained within the larger [Richmond Rapid Response Fund \(R3F\)](#), which is now accepting donations and is anticipated to begin providing disbursements in May to assist Richmond residents in six priority areas, including:

- Economic Recovery and Security
- Food and Essential Supplies
- Housing and Homelessness
- Health and Healing
- Social and Legal Services
- Education and Learning

The promotional infographic supporting the need for a Rent Assistance Fund is contained on the following page. Staff members look forward to continuing to make progress on this important endeavor.

# RENT ASSISTANCE

Rent Assistance funds provide emergency support for struggling households. It is a necessary aid for renters in Richmond facing financial hardships caused by the COVID-19 crisis.



Since 2015, income hasn't kept pace with housing costs for renters.

**MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR RENTERS IN RICHMOND BETWEEN 2015-2018**

2015: \$46,806 **+9%**

2018: \$50,922

**MEDIAN HOUSING COSTS FOR RENTERS IN RICHMOND BETWEEN 2015-2018**

2015: \$1,379 **+14%**

2018: \$1,572

Source: American Community Survey Table S2902, 2015-2018; 2015 figures have been adjusted for inflation to 2018 dollars.

## POVERTY RATES

**7.7%**

Poverty rate in Contra Costa County

**13.8%**

Poverty rate in Richmond

Source: ACS Table S1701, 2018, 1-yr estimate; California Department of Education 2019

## MANY HOUSEHOLDS IN RICHMOND ARE COST-BURDENED.

Cost-burdened households are those that spend more than 30% of their monthly income on rent.

According to the American Community Survey, in 2018 the percentage of cost-burdened households in Richmond was approximately 40%. About 25% spend over 50% of their monthly income on rent.

Source: ACS Table S2902, 2018, 1-yr estimate

**96%**

of the 4,211 eviction notices filed in FY 18-19 with the Rent Program were for nonpayment of rent.

Source: Richmond Rent Program, 2019

**70.1%**

of students in West Contra Costa Unified School District were eligible for a free or reduced school lunch in 2019.

Source: California Department of Education 2019

## IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON UNEMPLOYMENT

As of April 28th, 2020,

**11,028** unemployment insurance claims have been filed by Richmond residents since January 4th, 2020.

**10,161** of those claims have been filed since the Shelter-At-Home order.

Employment Development Department, 2020

Unemployment Rate in Richmond in February 2020:

**3.3%**

Unemployment Rate in Richmond as of April 4th, 2020:

**17%**

Employment Development Department, City of Richmond, 2020

Summary of Activities

I. Department Unit Activities

| <b>PUBLIC INFORMATION UNIT</b>   | <i>Occurrences</i> |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>Persons Assisted By Front Office Unit (without referral to an Analyst)</b>                                | <b>183</b>         |
| <b>Total Consultations Provided by a Rent Program Services Analyst</b>                                       | <b>400</b>         |
| Calls Received ( <i>Phone Counseling Sessions</i> )  | 206                |
| Emails Received  | 194                |
| <b>Total Consultations Provided in a Language other than English</b>   | <b>93</b>          |
| Consultations Provided in Spanish  | 93                 |
| Legal Service Referral Forms Completed   | 2                  |
| Courtesy Compliance Letters Mailed   | 30                 |
| Community Workshop Attendees ( <i>04/18/2020 Security Deposits- Rights and Responsibilities: Cancelled</i> ) | N/A                |
| <b>Total Hard Copy Notices Processed</b>   | <b>11</b>          |
| Hard Copy Rent Increase Notices Processed  | 6                  |
| Hard Copy Termination of Tenancy Notices Processed   | 5                  |

| <b>BILLING AND REGISTRATION UNIT</b>   | <i>Occurrences</i> |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>Total Consultations with a Billing and Registration Unit Staff Member</b>         | <b>53</b>          |
| Phone Call Consultations   | 16                 |
| Email Consultations  | 37                 |
| Enrollment Forms Processed   | 36                 |
| Invoices Generated   | 2                  |
| Payments/Checks Processed  | 27                 |
| Compliance Actions ( <i>reviewing records, exemption statuses, owner addresses</i> ) | 1                  |
| Rental Units Discovered ( <i>not in database, but in existence</i> )                 | 1                  |
| Property Information Updated   | 183                |
| Total Monthly Revenue Collected ( <i>04/01/2020 – 04/30/2020</i> )                   | \$39,135           |
| Total Revenue Collected in FY 2019-20 ( <i>through 04/30/2020</i> )                  | \$2,629,753        |
| Total Revenue Collected in FY 2018-19  | \$2,189,836        |
| Total Revenue Collected in FY 2017-18  | \$2,173,778        |

| <b>LEGAL UNIT</b>                    | <i>Occurrences</i> |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Public Records Act Requests Received | 3                  |
| Subpoenas Received                   | 1                  |

## ITEM F-3

| HEARINGS UNIT   | Occurrences |
|---|-------------|
| <b>Total Consultations with Hearings Unit Coordinator</b>   | <b>8</b>    |
| Calls/Placed Received ( <i>Regarding Hearings and Petitions</i> )   | 1           |
| Emails Sent/Received ( <i>Regarding Hearings and Petitions</i> )  | 7           |
| <b>Total Landlord Petitions Received</b>  | <b>0</b>    |
| <b>Total Tenant Petitions Received</b>  | <b>0</b>    |
| <b>Total Number of Pending Petition Cases</b> ( <i>“Pending Petition Cases” are defined as those awaiting an objection response, a decision is pending, a decision has been issued with an appeal deadline approaching, or where an upcoming hearing has been scheduled</i> ) | <b>25</b>   |
| Pending Tenant Petitions ( <i>As of May 14, 2020</i> )  | 21          |
| Pending Landlord Petitions ( <i>As of May 14, 2020</i> )  | 4           |

### II. Online Notices Filed with the Rent Program

| <i>Type of Form</i>  | <i>Monthly Submissions/ Notices Filed</i> | <i>Prior Month Total</i> | <i>% Change from Prior Month</i> |
|--|---|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Agent Authorization  | 0   | 0                        | N/A                              |
| Proof of Excess Rent Refund  | 0   | 0                        | N/A                              |
| Proof of Permanent Relocation Payment                                    | 2   | 3                        | (-33.3%)                         |
| Proof of Temporary Relocation Payment                                    | 0   | 0                        | N/A                              |
| Change in Terms of Tenancy Notices Filed                                 | 0   | 3                        | -100%                            |
| Rent Increase Notices Filed  | 25  | 73                       | (-65.8%)                         |
| Termination Notices Filed <sup>1</sup>                                   | 30  | 151                      | (-80.1%)                         |
| <i>Applicable Just Cause for Eviction – Nonpayment of Rent</i>           | 26  | 143                      | (-81.8%)                         |
| <i>Applicable Just Cause for Eviction – Breach of Lease</i>              | 3   | 3                        | N/A                              |
| <i>Applicable Just Cause for Eviction- Withdrawal from Rental Market</i> | 0   | 1                        | -100%                            |
| <i>Applicable Just Cause for Eviction – Owner Move In</i>                | 0   | 3                        | -100%                            |
| <i>Applicable Just Cause for Eviction - Nuisance</i>                     | 1   | 0                        | N/A                              |
| <b>Total Online Form Submissions</b>                                     | <b>57</b>                                 | <b>230</b>               | <b>(-75.2%)</b>                  |

<sup>1</sup> Note: Termination Notices filed with the Rent Program does not indicate the number of Unlawful Detainer (eviction) lawsuits filed in court. In some cases, the Tenant may cure the issue for the notice (e.g. Tenant pays the rent that is due) and the eviction process is not initiated.