

# AGENDA ITEM REQUEST FORM

Department: Rent Program

Department Head: Nicolas Traylor

Phone: 620-6564

Meeting Date: June 12, 2023

Final Decision Date Deadline: June 12, 2023

**STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:** 11.100.060 (g) of The Fair Rent, Just Cause for Eviction and Homeowner Protection Ordinance (aka the Richmond Rent Ordinance) requires the Board (through the Rent Program) to conduct Community Education so that all residents of Richmond will have the opportunity to become informed about their legal rights and duties. At the May 31, 2023, Special Meeting of the Rent Board, the Board approved budget Option B and directed staff to present the Rent Program's comprehensive outreach plan. Review of the comprehensive outreach plan and ongoing budget concerns related to posting the entire agenda packet in translated form supports consideration of possible revisions to the Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget.

## 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 type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contract/Agreement   | <input checked="" 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 agenda report on the Rent Program's outreach plan and PROVIDE direction related to potential revisions to the proposed Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget. (Nicolas Traylor – 620-6564).

AGENDA ITEM NO:

**F-1.**

***This page intentionally left blank***



# AGENDA REPORT

## Rent Program

<b>DATE:</b>	June 12, 2023
<b>TO:</b>	Chair Cantor and Members of the Rent Board
<b>FROM:</b>	Nicolas Traylor, Executive Director
<b>Subject:</b>	Review of Comprehensive Outreach and Discussion on possible revisions to Budget for FY 2023-24
<b>Fiscal Impact:</b>	The fiscal impact is dependent on the Rent Board's direction to staff regarding possible revisions to the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Rent Program budget.
<b>STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:</b>	11.100.060 (g) of The Fair Rent, Just Cause for Eviction and Homeowner Protection Ordinance (aka the Richmond Rent Ordinance) requires the Board (through the Rent Program) to conduct Community Education so that all residents of Richmond will have the opportunity to become informed about their legal rights and duties. At the May 31, 2023, Special Meeting of the Rent Board, the Board approved budget Option B and directed staff to present the Rent Program's comprehensive outreach plan. Review of the comprehensive outreach plan and ongoing budget concerns related to posting the entire agenda packet in translated form supports consideration of possible revisions to the Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget.
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b>	RECEIVE agenda report on the Rent Program's outreach plan and PROVIDE direction related to potential revisions to the proposed Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget.

**DISCUSSION:**

Background

In accordance with Section 11.100.060(g) of the Richmond Fair Rent, Just Cause for Eviction, and Homeowner Protection Ordinance, the Richmond Rent Program performs community education and outreach so that community members and rental property owners are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the Richmond Rent Ordinance and associate laws. If Landlords and Tenants are on the same page about the law, it is more likely that the law will be followed and enforced. Community education and outreach activities are funded in a variety of ways, with most costs associated with staffing and with lesser costs for supplies, translation, interpretation, and technology. Community outreach and community education work hand in hand: to educate community members you first must reach out to them. The Rent Program, therefore, must have accurate data on the properties and people it serves.

The Comprehensive Outreach Plan

The chart below provides a high-level overview of outreach activities, numbers, and costs. To assist the Board with fully understanding in more detail what each outreach and education activity entails within the comprehensive outreach plan, a more detailed explanation follows the report.

<b>Ongoing Outreach Conducted by Staff 2017-Present</b>			
<b>Type of Outreach</b>	<b>Description/Goals of Activity</b>	<b>Tools and Activities</b>	<b>Engagement Techniques</b>
<b>Information and Education</b>	Community education is a core component of the services provided by the Richmond Rent Program. Strengthening connections with knowledge gathering allows constituents to play a key role in determining relevance and appropriateness of the Richmond Rent Ordinance and applicable rental laws. The Richmond Rent Program has worked diligently to develop informational tools and materials to be accessible to the public. Whether this be online, hard copies at the office or through one's preferred language. In essence, the Rent Program believes in exchanging information, in addition to collecting it because this provides an incentive for the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly Community Workshops</li> <li>• Housing Counseling</li> <li>• Rent Program Listserv</li> <li>• Fact Sheets                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rent Program Fact Sheet</li> <li>○ Rent Control Fact Sheet</li> <li>○ Just Cause for Eviction Fact Sheet</li> </ul> </li> <li>• City Manager's Weekly Reports</li> <li>• Social Media (Facebook and Instagram)</li> <li>• Annual Reports</li> <li>• Infographics/Videos</li> <li>• Post-Cards                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Announcement of the Annual</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spanish translation of all written documents</li> <li>• Bilingual Staff to assist monolingual speakers. Current staff is available to assist in Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.</li> <li>• Community educational materials available online and by hard copies at the Richmond Rent Program office</li> <li>• Housing Counseling is available by phone, in-person, and one on one video conference (e.g. Zoom)</li> <li>• Ongoing projects to maintain consistency of community engagement and education.</li> </ul>

## ITEM F-1

	<p>public to feel welcome to engage in conversations with Rent Program staff so they may feel a greater sense of ownership in the outcomes/decisions they make based on their rights and responsibilities under the Rent Ordinance.</p>	<p>General Adjustment (Allowable Rent Increase for Rent-Controlled Units)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rental Housing Fee Announcement</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rent Program website</li> <li>● Mass Mailing Projects</li> <li>● Rent Relief Resource List</li> <li>● Brochures</li> <li>● Informational Flyers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mass mailings of key documents to all Richmond residents</li> </ul>
<p><b>Billing &amp; Registration (“Compliance”)</b></p>	<p>Gathering information is another vital principle for Rent Program staff. To ensure accurate data on rental properties and tenancies, staff must research and identify methods to obtain property information. Increasing accessibility to our services, providing creative opportunities, and assisting Landlords with compliance under the Rent Ordinance are key actions that reflect our organizations mission and values about developing equitable and sustainable engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● New Owner Outreach Project</li> <li>● Courtesy Compliance Letters (mailed to both Landlords and Tenants) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Termination of Tenancy Letter</li> <li>○ Excess Rent/Overcharge</li> <li>○ Habitability Complaint</li> <li>○ Just Cause for Eviction Violation</li> <li>○ Temporary and Permanent Relocation Letter</li> <li>○ Government Subsidized Status Change</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Property Enrollment Packet</li> <li>● Newly Discovered Rental Unit Packet</li> <li>● Billing and Invoicing Mailing Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Spanish translation of all key written documents</li> <li>● Bilingual staff to assist Landlords with Rent Ordinance compliance (enrollment, registration, and payment of associated Rental Housing Fee)</li> <li>● Ongoing projects to maintain consistency of community engagement/education. Some tasks are ongoing as others may be on a case-by-case basis.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Interaction with the Community and community Partnerships (“Collaborate”)</b></p>	<p>For community engagement to succeed, organizations and individuals that represent those organizations must be open to organizational changes that are responsive to community insight, all while protecting the feasibility and sustainability of the Rent Program department and staff. There are various methods to achieve this, but Rent Program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Community Tabling Events/Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Women’s Day Celebration Event</li> <li>○ Cinco de Mayo Festival</li> <li>○ Juneteenth</li> <li>○ National Night Out Event</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ordering of promotional community materials: magnets, pens, highlighters, drawstring backpacks, water bottles</li> <li>● Printed community outreach materials: PowerPoint presentations, Rent Board meeting calendars, workshop flyers, and Rent</li> </ul>

**ITEM F-1**

	<p>staff have partnered with various community organizations and participants to build deeper relationships to further understand the communities' insights. This may include, but is not limited to sharing of ideas, resources, programs, and events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interdepartmental Collaboration</li> <li>• Monthly Interdepartmental Affordable Housing Meetings-departments involved:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Redevelopment Agency</li> <li>○ City Manager's Office</li> <li>○ Fire Department-Fire Safety</li> <li>○ Richmond Housing Authority</li> <li>○ Code Enforcement</li> <li>○ Building Department</li> <li>○ Planning Department</li> <li>○ Richmond Police Department</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Richmond Rent Relief Meetings             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Richmond Neighborhood Housing Services</li> <li>○ Community Housing Development Corporation</li> <li>○ Spark Point Contra Costa County</li> <li>○ West Contra Costa Public Education Fund</li> <li>○ Richmond Community Foundation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Program staff business cards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spanish translation of all key written documents and materials</li> <li>• Bilingual staff available to attend events to assist with translation for monolingual speakers</li> <li>• Ongoing participation of events and meetings by staff to maintain consistent relationships with the community</li> </ul>
--	---	---	--

## ITEM F-1

Outreach Plan Moving Forward FY 2023-2024			
Type of Outreach	Description/Goal of Activity	Tools and Activity	Engagement Techniques
<b>Additional “Consult and Collaborate” Strategy</b>	Because of Richmond diverse population, including a large Spanish speaking population, Richmond Rent Board directed staff to develop additional creative outreach strategies to enhance outreach and education to the Spanish speaking community and other community groups of diverse backgrounds. Outreach and education to the community could be expanded to involve Rent Program staff meeting with key community groups, stakeholder groups and businesses. By engaging these groups, they are more likely to connect their participants to Rent Program services and engage with the Rent Board. This activity also ensures that outreach activities connect with the diversity of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rent Board Ambassador Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tasks that involve staff with key stakeholders in the community</li> <li>Translation and interpretation of key documents</li> <li>Regular meetings to provide input in policy discussions</li> </ul>

### Rent Program Outreach Cost Breakdown

#### Advertisement/Promotional

Item	Cost Per Item	Quantity	Total
Promotional Ads	\$100.00	2	\$200.00
Facebook Boosts	\$50.00	12	\$600.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$800.00</b>

#### Postage/Mailing Costs

Item	Postage Rate	Quantity	Total
Letter Mailing Project	\$0.63	18,000*	\$11,340.00
Postcard Project	\$0.48	18,000*	\$8,640.00

## ITEM F-1

Rental Housing Fee Invoicing Project	\$0.63	6,500**	\$4,095.00
Late Fee Invoice Project	\$0.63	1,000	\$630.00
Rent Control and Just Cause for Eviction Guide	\$1.00	24,500***	\$24,500.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$49,205.00</b>

### Printing Costs

Item	Printing Rate	Quantity	Total
Letter Mailing Project	\$0.05	18,000*	\$900.00
Postcard Project	\$0.22	18,000*	\$3,960.00
Rental Housing Fee Invoicing Project	\$0.05	6,500**	\$325.00
Rent Control and Just Cause for Eviction Guide	\$0.85	24,500***	\$20,825.00
Community Workshops	\$0.05	1,200	\$60.00
General Office Print Materials			\$6,500.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$32,570.00</b>

\*Quantity of mailing and printing is based on the total of enrolled rental properties in the City of Richmond.

\*\*Quantity of mailing and printing is based on the total of Richmond landlords.

\*\*\* Quantity of mailing and printing is based on the total of rental units and Richmond landlords.

### Rent Program Outreach by the Numbers

Activity	Applicable Numbers (July 1, 2022- June 30, 2023)	Status
<b>Community Workshops</b>	10 Community Workshops Conducted	Occurs Monthly- Ongoing
<b>New Owner Outreach Project</b>	1,066 Letters mailed	Occurs Quarterly- Ongoing
<i>No Rental History Letters Mailed</i>	762	
<i>Fully Covered (Rent Control and Just Cause for Eviction) Letters Mailed</i>	74	
<i>Partially Covered (Just Cause for Evictions Only) Letters Mailed</i>	230	

## ITEM F-1

<b>Courtesy Compliance Letters</b>	1,500 Letters mailed	Occurs Daily- Ongoing
<b>Rent Program Housing Counseling</b>	4,000 counseling sessions	Occurs Daily- Ongoing
<i>Legal Referrals</i>	290	
<i>Mediations</i>	45	
<i>Non-English Counseling Sessions</i>	267 total non-English counseling sessions  <i>Spanish Counseling Sessions: 265</i>  <i>Cantonese Counseling Sessions: 2</i>	
<b>Listserv Emails</b>	50 Email messages sent with more than 1,620 subscribers	Occurs Weekly or Monthly- Ongoing
<b>Social Media Platforms</b>		Occurs Weekly or Monthly- Ongoing
Facebook	320 posts, 350 followers	
Instagram	250 posts, 690 followers	

### In-Depth Discussion on Outreach and Education Activities

**Successful Outreach and Education Starts with Securing Accurate Data on Richmond Landlords and Tenants:** The Rent Program’s Public Information and Enrollment Unit are charged with performing community education and outreach for the agency, with enrollment and public information staff working together to gather information essential necessary to identify and educate community members. The Rent Board has adopted regulations that compel Richmond Landlords to register rent controlled tenancies and enroll rental properties that are subject to the Rent Ordinance. Landlords who fail to enroll their rental properties and register tenancies are not in compliance with the Richmond Rent Ordinance. Non-compliance with the Rent Ordinance may impact a Landlord’s ability to raise rents or terminate tenancies. To ensure the Rent Program has accurate data on rental properties, rental property owners and tenancies, for the purpose of performing community outreach and education, Public Information and Enrollment research and identify rental properties and tenancies, through property data subscription services, City and County records, online rental listings, available real estate data and information gathered during housing counseling sessions. After identifying rental properties, staff perform compliance related outreach

and education, associated with property enrollment and payment of the Rental Housing Fee.

To fund outreach and education activities, the Rent Board budgets \$369,140 (not including Fringe Benefits) for two Rent Program Services Analysts (aka housing counselors), a Senior Analyst (Unit supervisor), and three Administrative Aides (aka Compliance Specialists). We estimate that staff in the Public Information and Enrollment Unit spend about 25-30% of their time on outreach and education related activities. The Board also budgets \$13,500 on non-personnel costs associated with education and outreach annually (copying, printing, postage, supplies, etc.).

**The Comprehensive Outreach Plan and the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic:**

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted staff's ability to implement some outreach and education activities, especially those that required in-person engagement. Existing outreach and education projects still under development were also delayed due to the pandemic.

Among the newly proposed outreach and education activities, was expanded outreach to key stakeholders in the community, including local businesses and organizations (e.g., cafés, restaurants, barber shops, food markets, non-profits, churches, schools/parents/students, neighborhood groups, etc.).

Additionally, because more than 10% of counseling sessions are conducted in Spanish and a high percentage of Tenants and Landlords in Richmond are Spanish speaking, starting in 2020, staff began conducting and translating of all workshops into both English and Spanish.

**The Rent Program's Outreach Plan and Priorities:** The Rent Program's outreach plan is tailored to and oriented around Richmond's diverse population. Outreach and education activities are centered around information that helps effectuate enforcement of the Rent Ordinance.

Over 40% of the population speaks Spanish. Over 20% of the rental housing stock is affordable housing. About 57% of the rental housing stock is partially covered by the Richmond Rent Ordinance (primarily single-family dwellings and condominiums in which only Just Cause eviction protections apply). 43% of rental units are rent controlled and about 90% of Richmond Landlords own 5 or less rental units in Richmond. Although having approximately the same number of residents as Berkeley, Richmond has about 5,700 Landlords, compared to Berkeley's approximately 3,000 landlords.

**Outreach and Education Associated with Property Enrollment and Payment of the Rental Housing Fee:** Rent Programs in cities with few owners of rental units may be able to achieve high levels of compliance, because they need to spend less staff time and

## ITEM F-1

resources performing the outreach and education required to achieve that compliance as there are simply less rental property owners to contact. Since Richmond has such a high number of owners of rental properties, many of whom only rent out one or two rental units, and due to many rental properties regularly changing hands, more staff resources must be devoted to educating Landlords on the requirements of the Rent Ordinance. As a result, staff have prioritized (1) robust counseling and monthly workshops, (2) targeted outreach to new owners, and (3) compliance related outreach (billing, enrollment and exemption verification outreach and education).

At the beginning of each fiscal year, Richmond Landlords receive an invoice from the Rent Program to pay the Rental Housing Fee. Included with the invoice are important updates, changes in the law, and frequently asked questions around Landlord rights and responsibilities. Billing outreach occurs once a year, usually in July.

Richmond Landlords are required to enroll any rental property that is subject to the Rent Ordinance. Enrollment data allows for accurate billing of the Rental Housing Fee. When the Rent Program becomes aware of a rental property that is not enrolled, enrollment staff send the owner(s) an Enrollment Packet, that includes information about the Rent Ordinance and its requirements. Public Information and Enrollment staff send out approximately 300 enrollment packets to newly discovered rental property owners annually. Landlords who receive these packets generally end up contacting the Rent Program, which generates additional opportunities for outreach and education. Property enrollment outreach occurs throughout the fiscal year.

**New Owner Outreach Project:** The title of this project may be little confusing. This project is not a “new” project, rather it is an ongoing project that focuses on reaching out to new owners of rental property in Richmond. With so many single-family homes and condominiums rented compared to surrounding cities, and the frequent sale of those properties, targeted outreach and education focused on new owners is necessary. The New Owner Outreach project has been in place since February of 2020. Rent Program staff review monthly residential property sales in Contra Costa County and cross examine newly sold properties with the properties in the Rent Program database. These newly identified owners receive a special informational packet, informing them about the Rent Ordinance and its requirements. The packet also allows new owners to update ownership information and the property’s rental status. This project helps ensure that new owners know are in-compliance with the Rent Ordinance, but it also helps the Rent Program know which rental property owners to invoice and focus outreach and education resources. The New Owner Outreach project is an ongoing effort.

**Exemption Verification Mailings:** Usually at least once a year, the Rent Program sends out a mailing to all single-family dwellings, condominiums, and properties that have been claimed as exempt or inapplicable to the Rent Ordinance. The purpose of this mailing is

## ITEM F-1

to determine if the property is rented or not. Since Richmond has so many single-family dwellings and condominiums that are rented and these properties often go in and out of the rental market, verifying the status of these properties assist with the billing and collection the Rental Housing Fee.

**Focus on the Spanish Speaking Community:** Since 2021, Rent Program staff have held a Spanish educational workshop for each workshop held in English. All workshop presentations are translated into Spanish as well. Workshops occur at least once a month.

Landlords and Tenants can set up appointments to speak with a Rent Program Services Analyst and have in depth discussions about their rights around rent overcharges, evictions, habitability issues, rent assistance resources and options for recourse. At least 10% of counseling sessions are in Spanish, many of which are with monolingual Spanish speakers. 66% of Public Information staff and around 50% of agency staff are bilingual in Spanish speakers). Most forms and outreach materials are available in Spanish.

**Affordable Housing Outreach:** Affordable Housing is exempt from the rent control provisions of the Richmond Rent Ordinance but is still covered by the requirement to have one of the eight Just Causes to evict. All Affordable Housing properties have multiple staff who work as onsite management, and who must adhere to state and federal guidelines regarding lawful rents set by the State Tax Allocation Committee and safe habitability standards.

As a result, the Rent Program focuses its outreach and education resources for affordable housing Tenants around eviction related education and mediation. To make sure that affordable housing Tenants and management are aware of eviction protections and the right to mediate disputes, the Rent Program has devoted a substantial amount of time building and maintaining relationships with on-site management and conducting onsite educational workshops. The COVID-19 pandemic slowed the number of site visits, but staff plan to restart onsite workshops and meetings with affordable housing management and Tenants in the upcoming fiscal year.

Tenants in affordable housing, who have general issues related to their tenancy, or threats of eviction may request and engage in Rent Program mediation.

Rent Program staff also meet monthly with the Police Department, Fire Department, Community Development (Code Enforcement/Building Division) and the Housing Authority for an interdepartmental meeting to discuss issues or problems occurring at affordable housing properties. It is during these meetings, Rent Program staff learn about habitability issues, nuisance, criminal activity, displacement due to fires, happening at affordable housing properties. These meetings help staff focus outreach and education resources for at properties accordingly.

## ITEM F-1

The financial strain caused by the COVID-19 pandemic also caused many residents of affordable housing to face eviction due to non-payment of rent. Our housing counseling staff regularly perform informal mediations with affordable housing providers and tenants, to negotiate repayment plans to avoid eviction and or address habitability issues. In other cases, Tenants in affordable housing are referred by the Rent Program to the Eviction Defense Center or Bay Area Legal Aid for legal assistance.

**Online Outreach and Education Services:** A robust website is a vital outreach and education tool. The Rent Program's website ([www.richmondrent.org](http://www.richmondrent.org)) allows community members to access all the pertinent laws and regulations related to rent control, eviction protections, the Relocation Ordinance, and other intersecting laws. It provides Landlords and Tenants with the ability to file a rent adjustment petition, enroll rental properties, pay the Rental Housing Fee, file a rent increase or eviction notice with the Rent Program, access prerecorded workshops/webinars and infographic informational videos, listen to "frequently ask questions" pod casts, access information about rent assistance resources, schedule an appointment with Rent Program staff, access the agenda packet for Rent Board meetings, and email or call Rent Program staff with questions about rights and responsibilities under the Rent Ordinance. Members of the public can sign up to receive email updates from the Rent Program through the Rent Program's Listserv. The Rent Program posts weekly reports on Rent Program activities when necessary to the City Manager's weekly community email, which reaches hundreds of community members. There are over 1,600 members of the public who receive ongoing Listserv messages from the Rent Program. The Rent Program also utilizes social media (Facebook and Instagram) posts to connect with and educate the public.

**Outreach and Education at Community Events:** Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Rent Program staff would attend and table at community events, such as Cinco de Mayo, Juneteenth, National Night Out, neighborhood festivals, neighborhood community Council meetings, and many other community events. Staff intend to begin attending community events again in the upcoming fiscal year.

**Targeted Outreach to Community Stakeholders:** One of the newest outreach activities that was initiated just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic was outreach and education to key stakeholders in the community. Staff began visiting local barber shops, food markets, bike shops, and other community gathering spots, and handing out business cards, putting up posters and having conversations with community members. Meeting with community stakeholders proved to be a very effective way of integrating the Rent Program into the community and increasing "word of mouth" referrals to Rent Program services. In one example, after staff visited a local barber shop, the owner contacted the Rent Program months later to refer a customer who had discussed his housing dilemma and needed Rent Program assistance. With the COVID-19 pandemic now past, staff plan to restart this important outreach and education project.

## ITEM F-1

**Outreach and Education Associated with Tenancy Registration:** Landlords of rent controlled units must register each tenancy, to allow for the tracking of the lawful Maximum Allowable Rent (rent ceiling). With tenancy information, the Rent Program plans to send Tenants in rent-controlled units and Landlords, who own rent-controlled units, notices informing both of the apparent lawful rent ceiling(s). When a Landlord or Tenant receives a notice of the apparent lawful Maximum Allowable Rent or rent ceiling, it helps keep the Landlord and Tenant on the same page as to what the lawful rent is (helping avoid rent overcharges). It also triggers follow up calls from Landlord and Tenants regarding other Landlord/Tenant issues. A 2012 Study, conducted by the City of Los Angeles, revealed that rent control jurisdictions utilizing tenancy registration (also known as rent registration) had higher levels of compliance. In fact, tenants residing in rent-controlled cities without tenancy registration were almost 30% more likely to experience rent overcharges. In 2019-20, the Rent Program planned to initiate tenancy registration outreach, but due to the pandemic and the need to secure a new database, the project was delayed and not fully implemented. Staff intend on continuing the development and implementation of tenancy registration outreach in the upcoming fiscal year.

**A New Database to Support Tenancy Registration Outreach and Education:** The Rent Program is in the process of securing a new database, which will allow for tenancy registration outreach to commence in full. The City of Richmond is currently evaluating vendors that could provide support to all departments within the City of Richmond, including the Rent Program. Implementation of the new database is planned for this upcoming fiscal year.

**Eviction Noticing Requirement Outreach and Education:** Under the Richmond Rent Ordinance and Rent Board regulations, Landlords of Controlled Rental Units are required to submit a copy to the Rent Program of any notice of termination of tenancy served on a tenant, within two business days of having served the tenant. This requirement allows the Rent Program to monitor eviction trends, and perform outreach and education to Tenants and Landlords engaged in the eviction process. Time is of the essence after the eviction process has begun. The sooner a Tenant knows their rights and is referred to legal assistance, the sooner they can take action to prevent displacement. Once the Rent Program receives a notice of termination of tenancy, staff send both the Tenant and the Landlord an informational letter outlining eviction protections and eviction related requirements, as well as information regarding legal assistance resources.

Many of the calls/emails the Rent Program receives are from Tenants and Landlords who receive the eviction related informational letters. These conversations lead to important discussions that can save Tenants from unnecessary or unlawful evictions, and Landlord from costly mistakes for not knowing the law. Landlords and Tenants who contact the Rent Program because of this type of outreach and education, often avail themselves to

## ITEM F-1

other Rent Program services, such as referrals to eviction defense legal assistance, the Rent Adjustment Petition Process, Rent Program mediation and self-help resources available on our website (workshops, videos, and other forms of media). This is an ongoing project.

**Special Courtesy Compliance Letters:** When the Rent Program becomes aware of a Tenant who has received an unlawful notice (e.g., no Just Cause notice) staff send a Courtesy Compliance Letter to the Landlord to warn them that they may be in violation of the law to contact the Rent Program for assistance. This is an ongoing project.

**Special Outreach and Education for “No Fault” Just Cause Evictions:** Tenants and Landlords who are going through the owner-move in eviction process and withdraw from the rental market eviction process, receive a special informational packet on their rights and obligations, the right to permanent relocation payments. This is an ongoing project.

**Rent Increase Related Outreach:** Each year, the Rent Program announces the Annual General Adjustment (annual allowable rent increase percentage), which since the passage of Measure P in 2021, is calculated at 60% of the Consumer Price Index (inflationary rate) or 3%, whichever is less. To get the word out about how much the rent can be raised, Rent Program staff send out a Listserv message, update the Program’s website, use posters and send a mailing Richmond Landlords and Tenants. This is an annual project.

**Important Update Postcards and Factsheets:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, to protect public health, various emergency laws were passed in California to protect housing stability, prevent displacement, and provide rent assistance resources. To ensure the community was aware of these new laws, all Richmond residents were mailed an informational postcard and published a comprehensive Fact Sheet detailing these new laws. The total cost for the postcard mailing to all Richmond residents was approximately \$11,000. Projects such as these occur on a situational basis.

**Program “Messaging” Outreach through Annual Reports, Videos, and Infographic Videos:** The Rent Ordinance requires that the Rent Program provide an annual report to the City Council at least once a year. At that presentation, the Executive Director, or his/her designee, provides the City Council and community with statistics and information about rents and evictions in Richmond and the services provided by the Rent Program. The Rent Program Annual Report acts as a central “messaging” tool for explaining how the Program effectuates the purpose of the Rent Ordinance and the role it plays in protecting and preserving public health. Rent Program staff have produced both comprehensive written Annual Reports, as well Annual Reports in the form of infographic/informational videos. This is an annual project.

## ITEM F-1

**Mass Mailing to All Richmond Residents in FY 2023-24:** The Rent Program periodically sends a mass mailing to all Tenants, Landlord or residents informing them of important updates and rights (as occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic). To ensure that all Richmond residents regularly receive information about rights under the Rent Ordinance, a mass mailing is sent to all Richmond residents. Sending a mass mailing to all Richmond residents increases the likelihood that that community members and neighbors, through word of mouth, refer each other to the Rent Program to seek assistance. This is an ongoing project that is already absorbed in the outreach budget.

**The Rent Board Ambassador Program (newly proposed):** The Ambassador Program would task Rent Program staff to meet with key stakeholders including both private, public, and nonprofit business and agencies that serve the community to educate those stakeholders on key aspects of the Rent Ordinance; and listen to concerns that intersect with the Rent Program's mission. Those key stakeholders, having been educated on the Rent Ordinance, would help spread the word about the Rent Ordinance and Rent Program Services. There would be no additional costs to implementing the ambassador program and it would help fulfill the goal of increasing participation in Richmond's diverse communities.

**Hybrid Board Meetings (newly proposed):** The Board has instructed staff to investigate the possibility of conducting hybrid Board meetings (simultaneously in-person and live streamed via a videoconferencing platform). Although conducting hybrid Board meetings is feasible and funding for it is incorporated into the proposed budget, it requires the involvement of the City's IT department. The Rent Program is still holding discussions with the IT department and the City of Richmond regarding the ability of the City to support the Rent Program by holding hybrid Board meetings.

### Fiscal Year 2023-24 Outreach and Education Budget Priorities and Budget Options

Among the Board's priorities for fiscal year 2023-24 are (1) translation of Rent Board documents and interpretation of Rent Board meetings, (2) conducting hybrid Board meetings and (3) developing and implementing creative outreach projects.

Prior to making final decisions on the budget, it is important to discuss how outreach and education funds can best be utilized. At their May 31, 2023, Special Meeting of the Richmond Rent Board, the Board approved Option B, which among other things, provides funding for publicly posted full translation and interpretation of all Rent Board documents, with meetings held every other month.

As mentioned at the May 31, 2023, Special Meeting, publicly posting a translated version of the entire agenda packet presents potential concerns. Among those concerns is that the Rent Program would not be able to limit the posting of the agenda packet into just Spanish or another non-English language. If languages in addition to Spanish are

## ITEM F-1

requested for translation, the Rent Program would need to provide that translation as requested. This could drive up spending on translation beyond what was originally budgeted. To address this situation, staff recommend only posting the agenda itself in Spanish with the remainder of the agenda packet translated for Board members using an internet application and staff review at no additional cost. Below is the listing of documents that the Board had directed staff to bring back to the Board for evaluation and discussion for potential inclusion or omission as documents that may be publicly posted. Discussions around potential costs related to translating these documents are only for translating one language. Additional translated languages that may be publicly posted would significantly drive up the potential costs.

### Hearings Unit

- Petitions
- Appeals
- Digest

### Board and Legal Postings

- Rent Board Agenda
- Rent Board Packet
- Annual Reports
- Ordinance
- Regulations
- Resolutions
- Public Records Act (PRA) Request
- Submissions to the Board
- Emails for PRA and Petitions filed

Considering the implications of potential ballooning translation costs, including future deficits, which could result in having to borrow from the City of Richmond, and weaken the autonomy of the Board, staff recommend the Board consider only posting the agenda itself in Spanish (or any other language requested). Board members would still receive a fully translated copy of the agenda packet (translated internally by staff).

### Recommended Action

RECIEVE agenda report on the Rent Program's outreach plan and PROVIDE direction related to potential revisions to the proposed Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget, and:

1. Translate only the agenda for public posting, while providing individual Board members with fully translated copies of the agenda packet; and
2. Monthly Board meetings would be added back into the budget.

**DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:**

Attachment 1 – Proposed Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget – Option B from May 31, 2023 - Special Meeting

**ITEM F-1  
ATTACHMENT 1**

OPTION B	Type	# UNITS	Proposed Fee	Revenue			
	Fully-Covered	7,749	\$217	\$1,684,832	(a) + (b) + (c)		
	Partially-Covered	10,385	\$123	\$1,282,282	(a) + (b)		
	Total Units	18,134		\$2,967,115			
<b>BUDGET</b>							
Object #	City Account Description	FY 18-19 ACTUALS	FY 19-20 ACTUALS	FY 20-21 ACTUALS	FY 21-22 ACTUALS	FY 22-23 ADOPTED	FY 23-24 PROPOSED
<b>REVENUES</b>							
340445	Fees/Admin Fees	2,189,703	2,681,689	2,764,961	2,332,429	3,062,687	2,967,115
361701	Int & Invest/Pooled-All Other	367	11,537	6,096	4,619	14,000	20,000
364867	Revenue from Collections & Other	133	13,042	24,796	19,641	30,000	50,000
	<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>2,190,203</b>	<b>2,706,268</b>	<b>2,795,854</b>	<b>2,356,688</b>	<b>3,106,687</b>	<b>3,037,115</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>							
400001	Salaries & Wages/Executive	530,092	639,594	649,356	676,463	724,848	814,741
400002	Salaries & Wages/Mgmts.-Local 21	294,152	263,080	183,838	147,008	324,846	367,225
400003	Salaries & Wages/Local 1021	128,866	150,317	168,422	152,925	202,332	348,878
400006	Salaries & Wages/PT-Temp	49,557	45,905	32,244	35,234	35,776	37,565
400031	Overtime/General	4,778	2,094	1,312	1,793	2,500	2,500
400048	Other Pay/Bilingual Pay	6,993	9,064	9,719	7,910	11,172	11,470
400049	Other Pay/Auto Allowance	4,200	4,200	4,200	4,200	4,200	4,200
400050	Other Pay/Medical-In Lieu of	2,700	1,500	-	-	-	-
400079	Comp Absences/WC-Prof-Mgt-Tec	1,486	5,328	-	-	-	-
400058	OTHER PAY/Bonuses	-	-	-	34,200	-	-
	<b>Subtotal - Salaries &amp; Wages</b>	<b>1,022,823</b>	<b>1,121,084</b>	<b>1,049,091</b>	<b>1,059,732</b>	<b>1,305,674</b>	<b>1,586,579</b>
400103	P-Roll Ben/Medicare Tax-ER Shor	14,937	16,389	15,313	15,435	18,207	20,774
400105	P-Roll Ben/Health Insurance Be	146,557	136,575	128,611	168,100	232,291	271,329
400106	P-Roll Ben/Dental Insurance	16,652	17,021	17,534	13,509	17,520	18,031
400109	P-Roll Ben/Employee Assistance	430	473	422	244	216	234
400110	P-Roll Ben/Professional Dev-Mg	3,728	5,200	1,500	250	6,750	7,500
400111	P-Roll Ben/Vision	2,106	2,095	2,049	1,588	2,052	2,158
400112	P-Roll Ben/Life Insurance	5,557	4,006	3,433	3,336	4,139	3,931
400114	P-Roll Ben/Long Term Disability	9,408	10,100	9,259	6,952	12,342	11,996
400116	P-Roll Ben/Unemployment Ins	1,860	5,100	4,960	4,440	5,472	5,928
400117	P-Roll Ben/Personal/Prof Dev	750	1,493	1,500	1,140	2,250	2,250
400118	P-Roll Ben/Worker Comp-Injury Appt	-	-	692	-	-	-
400121	P-Roll Ben/Worker Comp-Clerical	13,806	12,154	14,541	9,042	24,001	6,923
400122	P-Roll Ben/Worker Comp-Prof	69,352	60,744	74,891	47,762	-	-
400127	P-Roll Ben/OPEB	39,338	43,623	42,145	40,276	40,723	32,127
400130	P-Roll Ben/PARS Benefits	642	434	50	398	-	-
400149	P-Roll Ben/Misc.	123,021	140,616	139,314	128,986	156,287	186,975
400151	P-Roll Ben/Misc. (UAL)	162,985	235,683	271,234	252,844	287,268	309,894
	<b>Subtotal Fringe Benefits</b>	<b>611,127</b>	<b>691,706</b>	<b>727,447</b>	<b>694,301</b>	<b>809,518</b>	<b>880,050</b>
400201	Prof Svcs/Professional Svcs	32,112	38,241	10,957	10,460	143,455	185,100
400206	Prof Svcs/Legal Serv Cost	137,614	193,742	149,994	183,326	210,000	275,000
400220	Prof Svcs/Info Tech Services	2,375	-	2,142	2,205	-	-
400241	Travel & Trng/M meal Allowance	359	-	-	-	-	-
400242	Travel & Trng/Mileage	1,284	17	-	-	-	-
400243	Travel & Trng/Conf, Mtng Trng	280	-	-	-	-	-
400245	Travel & Trng/Tuition Rmb/Cert	800	800	-	-	800	800
400261	Dues & Pub/Memberships & Dues	824	1,590	1,453	1,437	1,650	1,650
400263	Dues & Pub/Subscription	1,500	-	-	-	-	4,500
400271	Ad & Promo/Advertising & Promo Materials	1,559	2,106	1,702	3,928	800	800
400272	Ad & Promo/Community Events	1,563	1,722	-	-	-	-
400280	Adm Exp/Program Supplies	5,292	1,600	3,432	1,126	5,380	5,808
	<b>Subtotal Prof &amp; Admin Services</b>	<b>185,563</b>	<b>239,819</b>	<b>169,680</b>	<b>202,481</b>	<b>362,085</b>	<b>473,658</b>
400231	Off Exp/Postage & Mailing	10,849	5,905	6,528	14,981	17,300	15,355
400232	Off Exp/Printing & Binding	12,071	3,295	3,428	735	24,404	15,425
400233	Off Exp/Copying & Duplicating	46	-	236	-	500	-

**ITEM F-1  
ATTACHMENT 1**

400304	Rental Exp/Equipment Rental	8,721	4,532	2,488	2,554	9,000	9,000
400321	Misc. Exp/Misc. Contrib	3,000	-	1,500	1,500	2,000	2,000
400322	Misc. Exp/Misc. Exp	3,061	2,262	-	173	2,000	5,000
400341	Off Supp/Office Supplies	8,721	6,024	1,891	6,457	5,000	5,000
400344	Off Supp/Computer Supplies	18	783	-	-	-	-
	<b>Subtotal Other Operating</b>	<b>46,486</b>	<b>22,801</b>	<b>16,072</b>	<b>26,400</b>	<b>60,204</b>	<b>51,780</b>
400121	Carry forward from FY 2022-23 - System	-	-	-	-	-	(100,000)
400401	Utilities/Tel & Telegraph	254	414	551	498	500	500
400538	Contract Svcs/Other Contract Svcs	-	-	103	150	-	-
400552	Prov Fr Ins Loss/Ins Gen Liab	8,029	8,765	9,047	8,991	9,300	9,300
400574	Cost Pool/(ISF)-Gen Liab	55,701	75,144	69,513	79,937	-	-
400586	Cost Pool/(CAP)-Admin Charges	51,454	51,454	51,454	52,481	-	-
400591	Cost Pool/(IND)Civic Ctr Alloc	52,420	47,026	50,289	50,286	48,217	60,248
400601	Noncap Asst/Comp Hardware<5K	-	6,526	-	-	-	5,000
400604	Noncap Asst/Furniture <5K	13,328	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>2,047,186</b>	<b>2,264,738</b>	<b>2,143,246</b>	<b>2,175,258</b>	<b>2,595,497</b>	<b>2,967,115</b>
	<b>NET BUDGET BALANCE</b>	<b>143,017</b>	<b>441,530</b>	<b>652,608</b>	<b>181,431</b>	<b>511,190</b>	<b>70,000</b>