

CONSENT CALENDAR

June 1, 2021

To: Members of the City Council

From: Mayor Jesse Arreguín, Councilmember Kate Harrison, Councilmember Rashi Kesarwani, Councilmember Terry Taplin

SUBJECT: Referral to the FY 22 Budget Process: Landlord Incentives for Section 8 Participation

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Process, \$100,000 of General Fund revenues to replenish and augment funding for the Section 8 Landlord Incentive Program currently offered by the Berkeley Housing Authority.

BACKGROUND

During the FY 2018 budget process, the City Council authorized \$50,000 to the Berkeley Housing Authority (BHA) to be used to provide incentives to Landlords to lease units to Section 8 tenants. The funds were disbursed to BHA in June of 2020. This funding could *only* be used for repairs to ready a unit for occupancy by a Section 8 tenant, either letting or re-letting of units to those searching for housing in Berkeley utilizing a Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8). The funds are not used to incentivize units in luxury buildings, or those with institutional ownership, or with long term contracts with BHA, guaranteeing HAP subsidy, such as the Project-based or Mod Rehab./SRO properties.

Beginning July 1, 2020, BHA began promoting the Landlord Incentive Unit Turnover program. BHA reached out to the Berkeley Property Owners Association (BPOA), and landlords currently participating with BHA who may have additional vacancies, to promote these incentives. Over the past ten months this program will have assisted 33 landlords by expanding the pool of units that house families with Section 8 housing subsidy in the City of Berkeley. BHA is working on processing and reviewing applications/receipts and expects the funds from the initial \$50,000 to be fully depleted by the end of June 2021.

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Referral to the FY 21/22 Budget Process:  
Landlord Incentives for Section 8 Tenants

Currently there are 58 Section 8 families/tenants that are seeking housing within Berkeley, with more new voucher holder households coming online regularly. Providing additional funds to the Landlord Incentive pool would expand the Section 8 opportunities within the City for those with incomes between 0% - 50% of the Area Median Income, and who would not be able to afford living in Berkeley without the benefit of deep rental subsidy that BHA's Housing Choice Vouchers provide.

The maximum award for the Unit Turnover Program is \$1,500; with a \$100,000 allocation to BHA, an additional 66 units could be incentivized to house our most vulnerable populations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

\$100,000 from the General Fund

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) is instrumental in helping our unhoused population off of our streets and into long term subsidized housing.

CONTACT

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