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TO: Mayor Robinson and City Councilmembers

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Community Development

SUBJECT: Eviction Resolution Pilot Program Update

This report is for information only.

Bellevue's Conflict Resolution Center has been an official provider of the Eviction Resolution Pilot Program for tenants and landlords of the City of Bellevue and the City of Kirkland. The state pilot program is expected to sunset on June 30, 2023. This update will focus on sharing information about the effectiveness of the program and highlight some stories of its impact.

Background The Bellevue Conflict Resolution Center is a dispute resolution center formed under Chapter 7.75 of the Revised Code of Washington to provide all people in Washington equal access to justice.

The Eviction Resolution Pilot Program was established and funded by the Washington State Legislature in 2021, with the intent to reduce court filings for evictions and keep tenants housed. The program provides landlords and tenants an ability to negotiate mutually agreeable rent repayment plans, connect to available resources (such as rent assistance), and avoid filing for unlawful detainers in the courts.

The program has worked in coordination with community partnerships, connecting the safety nets of rent assistance, homelessness and housing outreach, legal assistance and city services (Bellevue and Kirkland). Community partners have worked together to share resources to provide informational outreach to tenants, prevent "self-evictions" and encourage engagement with Eviction Resolution Pilot Program process. By building a "chain of trust" with cultural service agencies, the program has helped connect tenants with current and available rent assistance and negotiate sustainable repayment plans.

2022 Year in Review

Bellevue's Conflict Resolution Center has provided the Eviction Resolution Pilot Program for Bellevue and the City of Kirkland. The following statistics capture the program's effectiveness in 2022:

- The total number of cases rose incrementally throughout 2022, totaling 1,863 cases.
- The average rent in arrears was \$4716 per case, with over \$10M in total rent arrearages identified overall.
- Through connection with rent assistance and negotiation of repayment plans, the majority of cases (80 percent) were resolved without issuance of a certificate that would advance the case to court.
- The average time to resolve each case was 58 days.
- In 2022, the program estimates that over 6,000 tenants were able to maintain their rental housing through participation in the Eviction Resolution Pilot Program.

The success rate of the first year of the program is attributed to a number of factors: the coordinated response of a network of community partners, the response rate of tenants to participate, the willingness of landlords to negotiate on repayment plans and the availability of rent assistance.

Current Status

The state mandate and funding for the Eviction Resolution Pilot Program covered the duration of the pilot program (from November 1, 2021 until June 30, 2023). Beginning July 1, landlords will no longer be required to participate with dispute resolution centers to negotiate repayment plans. The prior process for landlords filing for unlawful detainers (evictions) will resume with the courts. The Conflict Resolution Center will work with landlords and tenants to transition back to the court process in the coming months.

Rental assistance funding is still available in Bellevue.

After the Eviction Resolution Pilot program officially ends, Bellevue's Conflict Resolution Center will continue to provide services that address landlord-tenant issues and rent negotiation on repayment plans through voluntary participation. Additionally, we will provide a report on the Eviction Resolution Pilot program, including lessons learned, data on key performance metrics, and best practice recommendations for adapting future services for multi-family housing.