

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE February 4, 2022

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Understanding Eviction Assistance in the City of Dallas**

The City of Dallas has worked to provide rent relief assistance and eviction legal assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following information is provided as an overview of evictions mitigation in the City of Dallas.

Notice of Possible Eviction Ordinance

The Notice of Possible Eviction Ordinance (Ordinance) was approved by City Council on April 22, 2020. The Ordinance requires a communication period that allows tenants to cure delinquent rent prior the issuance of a notice to vacate or filing for evictions. **The Ordinance is not designed to establish a rental moratorium and does not stop evictions.**

The Ordinance requires landlords to provide a Notice of Possible Eviction (Notice) before beginning the eviction process, including before sending a notice to vacate or filing for evictions in justice of the peace courts. Tenants have twenty-one days to respond to landlords with documented evidence that the COVID pandemic has negatively affected their ability to pay rent. If the tenant does not reply in twenty-one days, the landlord can move forward with the eviction process. If the tenant replies within twenty-one days, the tenant has sixty days from the original receipt of the Notice to enter into a repayment agreement, including but not limited to, an application to rental assistance. If the tenant does not enter into a repayment agreement during this time, the landlord can move forward with the eviction process. A violation of the Ordinance is an offense punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500. Additional information regarding the Ordinance can be found at the following [link](#).

The Ordinance is not permanent. The Ordinance's expiration clause states:

"This ordinance expires on the later of the termination of the Governor's declared state of disaster due to the COVID-19 Pandemic or the Mayor's declared state of local disaster due to the COVID-19 Pandemic."

Governor Abbott renewed the Declared State of Disaster on January 22, 2022 and this extends the State Disaster Declaration for the next 30 days. Currently, the City's declaration of state of local disaster is connected to the Governor's Disaster Declaration. When the Governor's Disaster Declaration expires the City of Dallas State of Local Disaster would also expire unless the Mayor were to redeclare a State of Local Disaster. A State of Local Disaster automatically extends for seven days and can be renewed to a certain date or event.

DATE February 4, 2022
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Rent Relief Assistance

The City of Dallas is committed to assisting residents in need of rental, utility, or other assistance due impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, the Office of Community Care and local partners process and provide rent relief assistance. The City has specifically partnered with [United Way of Metropolitan Dallas](#) and the [Dallas Housing Authority](#) to provide rental assistance to residents impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, United Way has established the Dallas Rental Assistance Collaborative with multiple citywide partners to distribute assistance to residents in need.

Eligible clients can receive assistance to cover up to 12 months of rent, utilities and/or arrearages with the option for an additional 3 months for housing stability. Priority consideration is provided for households that are facing eviction. In addition, households in which one or more members is unemployed and has been unemployed for 90 days or more and/or are 50% AMI or below may be prioritized. Additional information can be found at the following [link](#).

Eviction Assistance Initiative

The Eviction Assistance Initiative began in 2020 to provide education, training, and legal representation to Dallas tenants negatively impacted by the pandemic. The Office of Equity and Inclusion manages the initiative with partners who provide services. In 2021, the initiative has partnered with Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas to provide legal services. Additionally, the initiative has partnered with Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas and The Concilio to provide community outreach and education. For more information, please visit www.dallascityhall.com/eai.

Staff plans to transition the Eviction Assistance Initiative to utilizing ARPA funds in 2022 and 2023. A Request for Proposal (RFP) is currently out as the Office of Equity and Inclusion seeks to mitigate the lasting effects of the eviction crisis with the goal of keeping families housed and educating tenants and landlords on their rights and responsibilities. The RFP was posted on January 27, 2022, with the tentative timeline for completion expected by June 2022. Services will continue to include outreach and community education, advice and briefs, and full legal representation.

Additional Eviction Mitigation Efforts

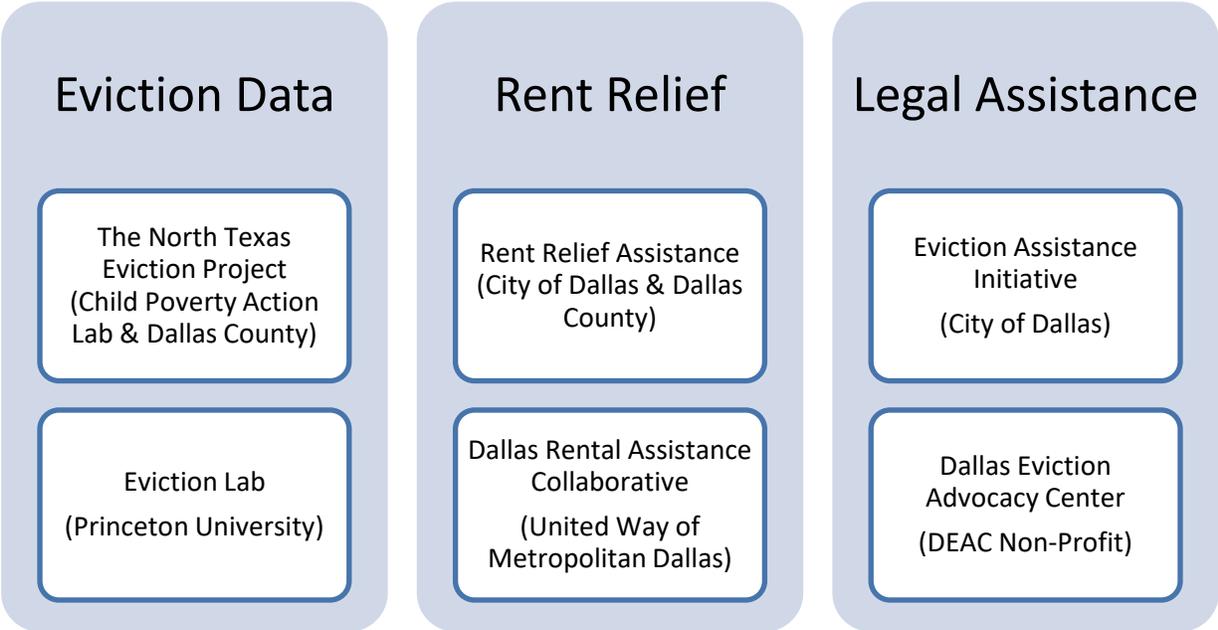
As efforts continue, the Office of Equity and Inclusion has collaborated with the Child Poverty Action Lab (CPAL) and the [Princeton Eviction Lab](#) to better understand evictions data and trends within the City of Dallas. CPAL has established the [North Texas Eviction Project](#). Staff has actively taken part in the United Way of Metropolitan Dallas Eviction Prevention Task force to coordinate responses and share information as the work to mitigate evictions as the pandemic continues and more community alignment occurs to address housing insecurity using a holistic approach. The holistic approach utilizes a collaborative effort between the city and local partners providing eviction data analysis, rent relief, and eviction legal assistance to Dallas residents.

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In addition, the Dallas Eviction Advocacy Center, established during the pandemic, serves Dallas County tenants facing housing insecurity. Services include pro bono legal advice and representation, housing assistance, rent relief and a clearinghouse of tenant and eviction information. For more information, please visit <https://www.dallaseac.org/>.

Additional Information

Below is a current map of the Dallas evictions support ecosystem*:



*Non-exhaustive ecosystem mapping

Should you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me or Dr. Priscylla Bento, Policy Manager, Office of Equity and Inclusion, at priscyla.bento@dallascityhall.com.

Liz Cedillo-Pereira
Assistant City Manager

- c: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
- Chris Caso, City Attorney
- Mark Swann, City Auditor
- Biliera Johnson, City Secretary
- Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
- Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, Deputy City Manager
- Jon Fortune, Deputy City Manager

- Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager
- Robert Perez, Interim Assistant City Manager
- Carl Simpson, Interim Assistant City Manager
- M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer
- Genesis D. Gavino, Chief of Staff to the City Manager
- Directors and Assistant Directors