



Legislation Text

File #: 23-6262, **Version:** 1

Department: County Courts

Department Head/Elected Official: Ed Wells

Regular or Supplemental RCA: Regular RCA

Type of Request: Position

Project ID (if applicable): N/A

Vendor/Entity Legal Name (if applicable): N/A

MWDBE Contracted Goal (if applicable): N/A

MWDBE Current Participation (if applicable): N/A

Justification for 0% MWDBE Participation Goal: N/A - Goal not applicable to request

Request Summary (Agenda Caption):

Request by the County Courts for approval of two positions effective November 4, 2023 and \$1,091,100 in ARPA Local Fiscal Recovery Funds for the County Civil Courts at Law Eviction Appeal docket.

Background and Discussion:

In 2023, Harris County invested \$4M through the ARPA Housing Portfolio to offer Legal Aid and counseling to residents at risk of eviction. The Texas Eviction Diversion Program, which concluded on July 1, 2023, permitted tenants to temporarily halt their eviction while seeking rental assistance. However, even before the program's termination, evictions began to increase due to the decreasing availability of rental aid funds. Moreover, the Harris County Civil Courts at Law have seen a significant uptick in evictions and appeals over the past two years.

The proposed solution is to grant the Civil Courts the necessary funds for an Associate Judge, Coordinator, and Clerk to hear eviction appeal cases and reduce the days to disposition for eviction appeal cases. The non-labor costs include user technology and furniture for the room used as a courtroom for the docket. The appeal process should be timely and remove undue financial and mental stress for both parties. This process serves as an essential avenue for tenants and landlords to fully assert their legal rights.

Expected Impact:

Reducing the time to disposition for eviction appeals ensures that both landlords and tenants can attain resolutions more swiftly. This aids in alleviating the financial and emotional strains linked with extended legal proceedings. Additionally, an efficient appeal process ensures that parties can fully exercise their legal rights promptly, thereby also ensuring justice is not delayed.

Alternative Options:**Alignment with Goal(s):**

- ☒ Justice and Safety
☐ Economic Opportunity
☐ Housing
☐ Public Health
☐ Transportation
☐ Flooding
☐ Environment
☐ Governance and Customer Service

Prior Court Action (if any):

Date	Agenda Item #	Action Taken

Location:

Address (if applicable):

Precinct(s): Choose an item.

Fiscal and Personnel Summary			
Service Name			
	FY 24	FY 25	Next 3 FYs
Incremental Expenditures (do NOT write values in thousands or millions)			
Labor Expenditures	\$358,200	\$358,200	\$358,200
Non-Labor Expenditures	\$16,500	\$	\$
Total Incremental Expenditures	\$374,700	\$358,200	\$358,200
Funding Sources (do NOT write values in thousands or millions)			
Existing Budget			
2651 - American Rescue Plan 2021	\$374,700	\$358,200	\$358,200
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Total Current Budget	\$374,700	\$358,200	\$358,200
Additional Budget Requested			
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$

Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Total Additional Budget Requested	\$	\$	\$
Total Funding Sources	\$374,700	\$358,200	\$358,200
Personnel (Fill out section only if requesting new PCNs)			
Current Position Count for Service	-	-	-
Additional Positions Requested	2	-	-
Total Personnel	2	-	-

Anticipated Court Date: October 31, 2023

Anticipated Implementation Date (if different from Court date):

Emergency/Disaster Recovery Note: COVID-19 related item

Contact(s) name, title, department: Ed Wells, Court Manager, Office of Court Management

Attachments (if applicable): 3441 (2)