

Economic Displacement Relocation Assistance Program

SDCI Prepared IT Cost Estimates for Fiscal Note for Proposed Legislation

To support implementation of the Economic Displacement Relocation Assistance program, SDCI will use their existing permitting software called Accela. This new program will require significant enhancements to Accela to support business processes for staff and user experiences for customers. Initial scoping of the program based on the draft ordinance includes a set of record types in the Accela platform to manage tenant activities, including applications, appeals, extension requests, withdrawals, and refunds, as well as owner activities, including making payments, requesting refunds, and appeals. The solution will track key turnaround times identified in the ordinance for SDCI staff, such as notifying the owner of a tenant application within five days of receipt, and ensuring payments are made by the owner to the tenant within seven days of receiving the notice. The solution will also support SDCI staff tasks including reviewing and approving tenant applications, requesting additional information, calculating payment amounts, tracking payments and refunds¹, and enforcement.

Design, development, and implementation of the proposed solution will be complex² and is expected to take approximately nine (9) months to fully implement. Every effort will be made to take an iterative approach to design and development to begin implementing manual and partially automated solutions as quickly as possible if the legislation moves forward. These timelines will need to be extended if the approvals process for key technical solutions within IT and Purchasing are delayed or the requests are not approved.

Since the Economic Displacement Relocation Assistance program will be serving the City's housing vulnerable populations, user experience research and design expertise is included in the cost estimates. These experts will collaborate with the development team and SDCI subject matter experts to work directly with targeted customer groups on the design of the new program with an RSJI lens. Work would include user studies aimed at making the software more friendly for mobile devices, exploring ways to support non-English speakers, and providing insight on how to reach and make the process accessible for tenants who may be eligible but do not have the privilege of accessing technology easily.

Due to Seattle IT capacity and resource constraints, work on this proposal will be done almost entirely by IT consultants hired by SDCI. SDCI has an existing added capacity consultant team that has knowledge and experience with the SDCI instance of Accela. This team has designed and developed other Accela enhancements based on new legislation such as the Vacant Building Monitoring program. If for some reason these consultants are not available, the estimated timeline could potentially be at risk.

¹ Current refund processes are manual and time consuming. Depending on the popularity of this new program, it is unlikely that the turnaround times in the draft legislation can be met. Automation and streamlining of the refund and cancellation process is one of SDCI's critical Accela backlog items. It was one of the reasons a 2021 supplemental BIP request was submitted to extend this added capacity Accela team through the end of this year. New work on this legislation is competing directly with this refund/cancellation work for the work on this team along with 50 other large critical enhancements.

² Complexity of the implementation is partially due to analysis required for understanding how this new program relates to existing tenant assistance programs from technical, staffing, and user experience perspectives.

The proposed estimate includes software for a possible e-sign integration and Zen Desk³ agent subscriptions. These software capabilities are included because of the identified required documents in the application process like affidavits and the increased customer service needs on SDCI's Property Owner and Tenant Assistance team. Based on a high-level review of the known requirements, this project is estimated to cost approximately \$1.25 million.

Accela Enhancements: New Program	
Consultant - Project Manager	\$208,980
Accela Developer	\$214,785
UI/UX Developer	\$143,190
UX Researcher (20hrs/wk)	\$119,970
UX Designer (20hrs/wk)	\$143,190
Business Systems Analyst	\$168,345
Report Developer	\$56,115
Quality Assurance	\$168,345
<i>Contract Staff Total</i>	<i>\$1,222,920</i>
e-Sign Integration	\$18,000
Zen Desk - 7 agent subscriptions	\$12,600
<i>Software Total</i>	<i>\$30,600</i>
<i>Grand Total: 9 months</i>	<i>\$1,253,520</i>

³ Zendesk is part of a budget proposal submitted by SDCI for modernizing customer support. This estimate includes the need for additional agent licenses to support this new proposed program. Modernization means moving from manual, siloed voice and email experiences to integrated support via multiple channels including "answerbots", live chat, and video chat, email, and voice. SDCI is working with Seattle IT on how Zendesk overlaps and complements current Seattle IT Unified Communications and Contact Center projects happening in late 2021 and throughout 2022.