

2021 Seattle City Council Budget Action

Council Budget Action: Agenda

Tab	Action	Option	Version
SDCI	012	B	001

Budget Action Title: Add \$145,000 GF to SDCI for eviction legal defense

Ongoing: Yes Has Budget Proviso: No

Has CIP Amendment: No Has Attachment: No

Primary Sponsor: Kshama Sawant

Council Members:

Staff Analyst: Ketil Freeman

Council Bill or Resolution:

Date		Total	LH	TM	KS	AP	DJ	DS	AL	BC	LG
	Yes	0									
	No	0									
	Abstain	0									
	Absent	0									

Summary of Dollar Effect

See the following pages for detailed technical information

	2021 Increase (Decrease)	2022 Increase (Decrease)
General Fund		
General Fund Revenues	\$0	
General Fund Expenditures	\$145,000	
Net Balance Effect	\$(145,000)	
Total Budget Balance Effect	\$(145,000)	

Budget Action Description:

This Council Budget Action would add \$145,000 GF to the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) to contract with a renter eviction defense organization, such as the Housing Justice Project (HJP) of the King County Bar Association, to provide free legal defense for any renter facing eviction in Seattle. Council Budget Action SDCI-007-B-001 would add \$460,000 for eviction legal defense. Both budget actions, if approved, would appropriate \$605,000 to SDCI for eviction legal defense.

The HJP indicates that there are about 1,200 eviction court filings each year in Seattle, not counting un-filed evictions or pre-eviction notices. A \$605,000 appropriation would fund approximately five eviction defense attorneys and .5 support staff.

The Housing Justice Project estimates a 56 percent overall success rate since 2019 in keeping tenants

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housed, up from less than 24 percent two years ago when the Council began funding eviction legal defense. Studies indicate that evictions could increase in 2021 as pandemic-related eviction moratoria expire.

In 2020, SDCI issued grants totaling \$340,000 to the Housing Justice Project and the Tenant Law Center to provide services including eviction defense. Those grants were funded, in part, by a one-time appropriation of \$230,000 GF.

Budget Action Transactions

#	Transaction Description	Position Title	Number of Positions	FTE	Dept	BSL	Fund	Year	Revenue Amount	Expenditure Amount
1	Add appropriation for eviction legal defense		0	0	SDCI - CI000	SDCI - BO-CI-U2400 - Compliance	00100 - General Fund	2021	\$0	\$145,000