



# Memorandum

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Councilmember Sylvia Arenas

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** March 9, 2020

Approved

Date

3/9/2020

**SUBJECT: ACTIONS RELATED TO INCOME LOSS AND EVICTIONS DUE TO NOVEL CORONAVIRUS**

## RECOMMENDATION

Approve Mayor Liccardo's memo and include the following recommendations:

1. Direct the Housing Department to mail a notice of the eviction moratorium to every landlord in the Rent Registry and/or any other contact list available as soon as possible.
2. Direct the City Manager to bring forward emergency budget changes to allocate additional funding for:
  - a. Destination: Home's homelessness prevention program, specifically for families facing COVID-19 related loss of income. Release the \$2 million currently held for next fiscal year.
  - b. Senior nutrition programs, like Meals on Wheels, that deliver meals to isolated seniors
3. Require that all agencies receiving new funds have a 90-day spending plan
4. Direct the City Manager's Office of Intergovernmental Relations to temporarily prioritize emergency funding and support from the state and federal governments as the overriding number one citywide priority for the office.

## BACKGROUND

Our community is facing the realities of a new public health emergency from COVID-19 that has quickly reshaped how we live and interact with one another. For our most vulnerable residents,

this health crisis also means the potential for reduced work hours and loss of income across a variety of industries that rely on public patronage – hotel and travel, restaurants, retail. We know that many of our low-income working families are already living paycheck-to-paycheck with high costs of housing. A moratorium on evictions helps families remain in their homes but may still leave them on the brink of homelessness if they're unable to catch up and back pay their rent once the moratorium is lifted.

A successful homeless prevention program for working families currently exists in Santa Clara County through a partnership between Destination: Home, Sacred Heart Community Service, and other partners. In February, City Council approved the Proposed Expenditure Plan for the Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention Program which allocated \$3 million for the Homeless Prevention System. Housing staff has made clear that only 20% of families in need of prevention services are able to get the help they need.

With more families at risk of losing their housing during COVID-19, any emergency funds received by the City should be prioritized for our most vulnerable residents; including support for the Homeless Prevention System to provide rental assistance for these families and senior nutrition programs that reach isolated older adults, like Meals on Wheels.

Destination Home: and Sacred Heart Community Service are already working to respond to families affected by COVID-19 income instability, the City should leverage emergency funds in support of these efforts. There is currently \$2 million from the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) slated to be released to the Homeless Prevention System in June of this year. I ask the City Manager's office to find a way to release these funds as early as possible to mitigate an increase of evictions stemming from the economic impact of COVID-19. The availability of rental assistance for these cases not only helps families in need but also protects mom and pop landlords from facing any adverse effects from losing rental income.

I applaud the Mayor's office for acting quickly to safeguard our low-income residents from being homeless during this time of uncertainty and urge the Housing Department to act as swiftly in giving notice to landlords to make sure that no family is facing eviction due to this public health emergency.