



PROPOSAL FOR Rent-to-Own Legal Assistance

Submitted to: City of Olympia, Washington

Submitted by: Sound Legal Aid (formerly Thurston County Volunteer Legal Services)

Contract Period: 1 year duration, start date to be determined

Project Overview

Sound Legal Aid proposes a comprehensive legal assistance program to support tenants in rent-to-own agreements. This program will include both the development of standardized legal resources and direct legal consultations to ensure agreements are legally sound and protect tenant rights. The goal is to provide accessible legal guidance, prevent abusive practices, and support the City's broader housing stability initiatives.

Component 1: Development of Template Contract and Educational Materials

Description:

Sound Legal Aid will create a legally sound template contract for rent-to-own agreements, along with educational resources for tenants. These materials will outline tenant rights, responsibilities, and potential risks associated with these agreements.

Deliverables:

- Standardized rent-to-own contract template
- Educational guide for tenants

Estimated Time to Complete:

- Attorney time: 40–50 hours
- Support/Paralegal time: 10–15 hours

Estimated Cost: \$15,000–\$18,000

Component 2: Individual Legal Consultations and Contract Drafting

Description:

This component will allow tenants to access legal consultations for customized rent-to-own agreements. Sound Legal Aid will provide contract drafting and/or review services, ensuring that agreements are legally sound and protect tenant interests. The City may subsidize legal fees for qualifying tenants.

Deliverables:

- Individual consultations for tenants (up to 10 hours per case)
- Drafting and review of rent-to-own agreements
- Coordination with the City to ensure compliance with rental regulations

Estimated Time per Case:

- Attorney time: 6–10 hours
- Support/Paralegal time: 1–2 hours

Estimated Cost per Case: \$2,000–\$3,500

Budget

In response to the City’s request for a flat hourly rate, Sound Legal Aid proposes the following fee structure:

- **Attorney Services:** \$322/hour
- **Support & Paralegal Assistance:** \$175/hour
- **Indirect Costs:** \$1,250/mo.
- **Total Contract Cap:** Not to exceed **\$50,000**

All services under this agreement will be performed as funds allow, up to the \$50,000 contract cap. Sound Legal Aid will begin work upon contract execution and will continue providing services until the available funds are expended. This ensures that the city is only billed for actual time worked and that project activities remain within the approved budget.

Implementation Plan & Additional Considerations

This combined approach ensures that tenants have both proactive educational resources and reactive legal assistance when needed. The City’s role in subsidizing tenant legal fees could further enhance protections against exploitative agreements.

If the City pursues exemptions for landlords from rental registry and licensing requirements, legal oversight will be critical to prevent abuse. Sound Legal Aid is open to discussing a service contract model similar to the City’s existing agreement with the DRC.

We welcome further discussion on implementation and structure.

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