

**From:** [Jason Truong](#)  
**To:** [Jalipa, Brent \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** APILO comments re: Housing Stability  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 10, 2023 1:21:14 PM  
**Attachments:** [APILO statement.pdf](#)

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Mr. Jalipa,

Please see API Legal Outreach's statement regarding the need to maintain/expand funding for full scope legal representation of tenants as a means to promote housing stability. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Jason Truong

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**ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER LEGAL OUTREACH**  
1121 MISSION STREET · SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94103 · 415/567-6255

May 10, 2023

To: City and County of San Francisco, Budget and Appropriations Committee

Re: Affordable and Supportive Housing Spending and Recommendations of the Housing Stability Fund Oversight Board – Statement from API Legal Outreach

It was always a given that once the protections that were afforded to tenants during the pandemic expired, there would be a massive influx of eviction cases coming through the court system. Many of these protections were only slowly phased out so as to avoid the possibility of a so-called wave of evictions occurring all at once, an event that would completely overwhelm and collapse the Tenant Right to Counsel Initiative that was overwhelmingly supported by the voters of San Francisco less than five years ago. In response to this seeming inevitability, tenant advocacy groups were able to ramp up their staffing initiatives to meet the need of tenants at risk of being displaced due to the City's recognition of the pending crisis. While legal services organizations still lack adequate staffing to ensure that every tenant facing eviction through the court would have access to a full scope defense attorney, the resourcefulness of these groups working in conjunction with one another has helped to make it so that the legal representation gap between tenants and landlords continues to narrow.

Unfortunately, tenants face threats to their housing through many ways outside of the court system. API tenants in particular are especially vulnerable to so-called "self-help" evictions that never make it to the court-mandated legal process. When discussing the threats to housing stability for the API community (a community that makes up over 34% of San Francisco's population), one must not neglect the particular cultural challenges that are unique to this community. In addition to being elderly and/or disabled, many API tenants in San Francisco deal with a variety of seemingly insurmountable language barriers that make any legal system incredibly difficult to navigate. To further exacerbate the language issue, many API tenants come from communities where landowners hold nearly unlimited power with regards to setting the terms of tenancy. This means that rent increases can happen without warning and often without limitations, that habitability issues are the responsibility of the tenant, and that physical evictions are completely legal (that is, where a landlord can enter a tenant's home and start removing the tenant's property and then change the locks). While some of these tenants do receive some general education on their rights, many remain reluctant to exercise these rights when the onus remains on them to stand up to their landlords, especially when doing so runs completely counter to their understanding of how landlord-tenant relationships work. In response to an aggressive landlord, many tenants will resort to vacating the property under the terms proposed by the landlord, regardless of whether or not they understand the illegality of the landlord's actions.

These tenants in particular are already being overlooked in the current system. While many tenants were able to hold on to their housing through the pandemic due to the various moratoria that essentially stopped most types of legal evictions through the court system, many others (especially those in the API communities) were not afforded any extra protection since there were no additional punitive measures put in place to restrict the actions of landlords who were never interested in following the proper legal procedures to displace the most vulnerable tenants

in our communities. Due to the pause on most legal evictions (particularly those dealing with a tenant's inability to pay rent as a result of COVID-related financial hardship), our office in particular had additional capacity to provide full scope legal representation to tenants who were every bit as at risk of eviction as tenants who are served with a conventional unlawful detainer prior to the pandemic even with a higher number of landlords than ever who showed no shame in pursuing unlawful methods to evict their tenants since the profit incentive for eviction remained as high as ever. Now that most of those protections have gone away, every legal services organization is feeling the strain of having to put more resources into traditional court representation. Unfortunately, this also means that landlords who choose not to go through the court system are able to exploit a larger gap in legal coverage for tenants who are more vulnerable to extra-legal means of displacement.

At a time like this, any proposed reduction in funding to legal services would be catastrophic to the tenants of San Francisco and would betray the core principles of the Tenant Right to Counsel Initiative. Even at the current funding levels, there are inevitably a large portion of tenants who are unable to get matched with an experienced tenant defense attorney and, aside from possibly receiving some assistance in filing their initial responses to the unlawful detainer complaint and getting limited scope assistance at their mandatory settlement conferences, are mostly left to navigate the legal process on their own without a guide. Speaking specifically about the accelerated timeline of an unlawful detainer action, this leaves these unrepresented tenants vulnerable to an untold variety of motions, discovery games, and even sanctions that are difficult for even the most seasoned attorneys to handle. let alone for a tenant going through this process by themselves for the first and only time in their lives.

When the needs of vulnerable tenants being threatened with eviction through non-legal processes are factored in, it is clear that in order to really afford tenants a true right to counsel during any eviction matter as was promised, funding for full scope tenant defense attorneys needs to increase further to help to curb the wave of evictions that has already begun and continues to rise. This is especially true for tenants who have more specific linguistic and cultural needs, as those tenants have historically shown a higher risk of being neglected, if for no other reason than that there are fewer culturally competent services available to them. For these reasons, we call for funding for providing legal services for tenant defense to at least be maintained at their current level if only until there is sufficient funding to increase the services available for the most vulnerable and historically underserved API communities in San Francisco.

**From:** [Dom Refuerzo](#)  
**To:** [Jalipa, Brent \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment - Budget Hearing 5/10/23  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 10, 2023 3:47:17 PM

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Hello,

My name is Dom Refuerzo; I use they/he/she pronouns, and I am writing to express my support for CCHO and SFCLT as the latter's board secretary. SFCLT requests a grant of \$300,000 for our general operations in 2023 and 2024 as we are ramping up our capacity to act more quickly on COPA listings and support the fourteen properties already in our portfolio, including a 40-unit building in the Tenderloin, for which SFCLT raised \$1.8m from the community to purchase. Additionally, SFCLT is an important player in the SSP, having developed its very first pilot program. It is undeniable that the work we do to stop displacement and create permanently affordable housing is critical to meeting the goals and priorities advanced by COPA, SSP, and the Housing Element. This organization is dedicated to supporting BIPOC people like myself, as well as the ecosystem of new BIPOC QNPs and CBCs by working to develop projects jointly as JV agreements. On a personal note, I am actually a former resident of an SFCLT property. It is in no small part to them that I was able to move with my low income to the city where three generations of my father's Filipino family has lived and where I am able to explore my cultural and queer heritages the most openly that I've ever been able to. If SFCLT's capacity is not supported, the capacity of other QNPs will also be neglected, therefore we ask that \$300,000 is included in the budget. Thank you for your time!

Best,  
Dom Refuerzo  
they/he/she  
on lands of the Ohlone people

**From:** [Krista Alderson](#)  
**To:** [Jalipa, Brent \(BOS\)](#)  
**Cc:** [martinac](#); [Ora Prochovnick](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment from Eviction Defense Collaborative: TRC 23-24 Funding Request  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 10, 2023 3:57:37 PM  
**Attachments:** [23-24 TRC Funding Request Public Comment submitted BOS hearing 5.10.2023.pdf](#)

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Dear Clerk Jalipa,

Please find attached Eviction Defense Collaborative's public comment for the SF Board of Supervisors Budget and Appropriations Committee hearing today on the *Affordable and Supportive Housing Spending and Recommendations of the Housing Stability Fund Oversight Board*, as related to our request for sustained funding for the SF Tenant Right to Counsel program in FY 23-24 at the level of \$17.7M system wide.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Krista Alderson

*Krista Alderson (pronouns she, her, [Why Pronouns Matter](#))*  
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[A guest on traditional, unceded Ramaytush Ohlone land.](#)

If you know anyone who needs our help maintaining their housing or shelter (e.g. landlord is trying to evict them, they need help paying their rent, or a shelter is denying them access to shelter services), please direct them to:

- Call or email our Legal Assistance Intake at (415) 659-9184 or [LEGAL@evictiondefense.org](mailto:LEGAL@evictiondefense.org);
- Call or email our Rental Assistance Intake at (415) 470-5211 or [EDCRADCo@evictiondefense.org](mailto:EDCRADCo@evictiondefense.org);
- Call or email or call our Shelter Client Advocate Intake at (415) 669-0284 or [SCA@evictiondefense.org](mailto:SCA@evictiondefense.org)
- Legal Clinic drop in hours at 976 Mission street:  
M, T, W, F 10am - 11:30am & 1pm - 2:30pm



*Date: May 10, 2023*

*To: SF Board of Supervisors Budget and Appropriations Committee*

*Subject: Public Comment on Sustained Funding for San Francisco Tenant Right to Counsel, Hearing on Affordable and Supportive Housing Spending and Recommendations of the Housing Stability Fund Oversight Board, Sponsors: Chan; Preston*

*Public Comment submitted by:*

*Eviction Defense Collaborative, Lead Partner for the San Francisco Tenant Right to Counsel Citywide Program (Eviction Defense Legal Services, Homelessness Prevention Program)*

Public Comment:

Eviction Defense Collaborative thanks you for this opportunity to advocate in support of sustained funding for FY 23-24 in the total amount of \$17.7M system wide for the San Francisco Tenant Right to Counsel program (otherwise known as TRC), which provides legal representation to San Francisco tenants who are facing eviction.

The expert legal representation provided by the TRC program is an essential component of the City's homelessness prevention strategy.

- Since 2019, EDC has served as the Lead Partner with the City of San Francisco in implementing the Tenant Right to Counsel (TRC) program. As Lead Partner, EDC coordinates and oversees the work of the eight partnering legal service organizations comprising the citywide TRC system, who together provide legal representation to thousands of San Franciscans who are being evicted from their homes each year.
- For 27 years, EDC has been the only agency in San Francisco solely dedicated to eviction prevention, processing the vast majority of all eviction notices filed in the City and now the majority of the eviction notices processed by the TRC system.
- In FY 21-22, 66% of the tenants served were Black, Indigenous, People of Color, those most impacted by displacement, eviction and homelessness in San Francisco and



nationwide;

- 45% were people with disabilities;
- 87% were classified as indigent per the State of California poverty guidelines.

Today, with the COVID tenants protections no longer in place, the need for TRC eviction defense legal services, has now, once again, reached an emergency level :

- At present, evictions have returned to pre-pandemic levels with landlords aggressively evicting tenants, many of whom will become homeless if their current housing is lost.
- On average this fiscal year, 220 eviction lawsuits have been filed in San Francisco Superior Court each month, with the average trending closer to 245 in recent months.
- ***Thus far this fiscal year the TRC system has 2100 open eviction cases, with 2,470 projected through June 30th.***
- The TRC system requires sustained funding at the same level, if not higher, to meet this increased demand for services and to keep San Francisco tenants housed and off the streets.
- Sustaining this funding will help San Francisco avoid a catastrophic increase in homelessness citywide.

TRC's Indispensable Value and Impact are evidenced by it's high return on investment (ROI) and success rate:

- *TRC currently has one of the highest existing ROI for homelessness prevention services in the City.* The cost of adding even just one additional bed at a city-funded homeless shelter is nearly 11.3 times the cost of providing eviction defense and homelessness prevention services to an entire household. Case in point: the average total cost for TRC full scope legal representation is \$6300 per eviction lawsuit, while the cost for adding one new bed in a city funded shelter is \$71,000.



- *TRC's success rate also proves the undeniable worth and critical value of its services with 88% of TRC clients receiving full scope representation remaining housed. The indisputable effectiveness of TRC services must be sustained to prevent increasing levels of evictions from taking place.*

Sustaining TRC funding protects the City's investment in this highly effective system of homelessness prevention services:

- The City has spent years investing in these vital homelessness prevention services provided by attorneys and social workers with the experience and skills needed to effectively represent tenants.
- Cutting TRC funding would dismantle a citywide program that would take years to rebuild, and with potential dire consequences to tenants. Instead, we urge you to continue investing in TRC services which provide a tremendous return on investment with proven results in preventing homelessness.

TRC Impacts:

- *Protection for tenants from eviction, displacement and homelessness* by keeping tenants housed and off the streets, stemming the tide of further homelessness and its devastating impact to these tenants, their families and the City as a whole. This saves the city millions in homelessness services and rehousing costs.
- *Preservation of existing affordable housing* for the lower- and middle-income residents, including the elderly and those with disabilities, which reduces the need for further production of new housing, and also saves the City billions in production costs.
- *Preservation of San Francisco's diversity* by keeping tenants, including families with children, in their homes, which stabilizes communities and preserves the racial, ethnic, linguistic, economic and social diversity of San Francisco, preventing it from becoming even more homogenous and further compromising its progressive values.

*We understand and know you face difficult decisions during this budget season, which is why we urge the SF BOS to sustain funding for the San Francisco Tenant Right to Counsel program at the level of \$17.7 million for the citywide system.*





*Investing in TRC is fiscally responsible, prevents homelessness and protects the indispensable system of legal services the City has built over the past four years. Moreover, TRC services stabilize the lives of San Francisco families, communities, and our collective diversity.*

**From:** [Arelious Jones](#)  
**To:** [Jalipa Brent \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** Budget Cuts  
**Date:** Sunday, May 14, 2023 10:05:52 AM

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Good Afternoon Supervisors.

My name is Arelious Jones and I represent Bayview Hunter's Point - SF BLOC.

Today I would like to comment on the MOHCD proposed budget cuts to Rental Relief as well as the cuts proposed to the Community Based Organization Budgets.

For years rental relief has been a tool used to keep some of our communities' most vulnerable residents housed. The rental relief budget is often the last line of defense for a housed person before facing the reality of a tent on the street. As we try to tackle the homelessness crisis here in San Francisco it is important that we do not further add to the number of families who are outside.

Additionally, Community based organizations act as the service connectors, resource guides and a number of other roles while bridging the gap between MOHCD and other city agencies (e.g.HSH). Many of these organizations are operating short staffed and on shoe string budgets. Cuts to funding often means loss of employment for client-facing and direct service staff, resulting in programs that lack effectiveness. As separationist, we uplift the City and County's budget prioritization to repair the harm of impacted households as a result of city policy and implementation.

I, along with my community, urge you to reconsider these cuts and to examine the impacts that the disruption of funds will have on San Francisco's families who, like the city of San Francisco, are trying to recover from economic hardships.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.