



RESOLUTION NO. 39876

1 BY REQUEST OF COUNCIL MEMBERS BLOCKER, CAMPBELL, AND
2 WALKER LEE

3 A RESOLUTION authorizing the use of City Council Contingency Funds, in the
4 amount of up to \$50,000 to support a pilot project to assist tenants and
5 provide incentives to landlords who accept Section 8 Housing Vouchers;
6 create funds for landlord damage reimbursements; assist tenants with
7 screening fees and security deposits; and, directing the City Manager to
8 negotiate an agreement with the Tacoma Housing Authority outlining the
9 scope of work and deliverables, and to study adding source of income as
10 a protected class in rental regulations.

11 WHEREAS, as part of the homeless health emergency declaration and
12 increased cost of living in the Tacoma area, the City Council has discussed
13 strategies to encourage affordable housing, including incentives for landlords to
14 accept Section 8 Housing Vouchers from the Tacoma Housing Authority (“THA”),
15 and assisting tenants with security deposits and screening fees, and

16 WHEREAS, according to the THA, as many as 40 percent of new voucher
17 recipients in 2016 had to return their vouchers because they could not secure
18 housing in the time allotted; that percentage dropped to 22 percent in 2017, and

19 WHEREAS this decrease was not because more housing became available,
20 but rather because THA is giving families more time to look for housing; it
21 sometimes takes over four months for new voucher holders to secure housing, and

22 WHEREAS, at the November 14, 2017 Study Session, Council Member
23 Walker Lee shared a Council Consideration Request, sponsored by Council
24 Members Blocker and Campbell, to support a pilot project with the THA to assist
25 tenants and provide incentives to landlords who accept Section 8 Housing
26 Vouchers, and



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WHEREAS THA's suggestions for a pilot program are to establish the following incentives:

1. Signing bonus for landlords who make units available to Section 8 tenants: A one-time cash incentive for landlords who make units that have not previously been available to Section 8 tenants available to them.

2. Creation of a landlord damage fund: This fund would act as an insurance policy for landlords if their properties were to become damaged by Section 8 tenants. The fund would likely only provide reimbursements for amounts in excess of the tenant's security deposit and any other insurance payments, as well as include a cap on what that amount would be.

3. Creation of a fund to assist tenants with screening fees and security deposits: Screening fees and security deposits are an ongoing barrier for low-income households.

4. Request City staff examine the feasibility of adding source of income as a protected class over the next year: This strategy would request the City's Office of Equity and Human Rights ("OEHR"), along with the Human Rights Commission, to look at the feasibility of making it illegal for landlords to discriminate on the basis of where tenants obtain their income. Implementing this policy would take an extensive outreach and education campaign, as well as community engagement, and would necessitate OEHR staff to begin developing a timeline for implementation to be presented to the Community, Vitality, and Safety Committee in 2018, and



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WHEREAS RCW 35.33.145 and 35.34.250 authorize a withdrawal from the Contingency Fund for any municipal expense, the necessity or extent of which could not have been foreseen or reasonably evaluated at the time of adopting the budget, and

WHEREAS the City Council's request to use funds from the Contingency Fund for a pilot project to provide incentives to landlords who accept Section 8 Housing Vouchers is necessary and could not have reasonably been foreseen or evaluated at the time the City Council adopted the budget, and

WHEREAS Ordinance No. 22569 requires an affirmative vote of not less than six members of the City Council in order to withdraw moneys from this fund;

Now, Therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TACOMA:

Section 1. That one-time funding in the amount of up to \$50,000, budgeted from the City Council Contingency Fund, is hereby approved for the purpose of supporting a pilot project to assist tenants and provide incentives to landlords who accept Section 8 Housing Vouchers; create funds for landlord damage reimbursements; assist tenants with screening fees and security deposits; and



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Section 2. That the City Manager is hereby directed to negotiate an agreement with the THA for the purposes hereinabove enumerated; and, to study adding source of income as a protected class in rental regulations.

Adopted _____

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk

Approved as to form:

Deputy City Attorney