

**Phoenix City Council
Economic Development and Housing (EDH) Subcommittee
Summary Minutes
Wednesday, May 28, 2025**

City Council Chambers
200 W. Jefferson Street
Phoenix, AZ

Subcommittee Members Present

Vice Mayor Ann O'Brien, Chair
Councilman Kevin Robinson
Councilwoman Kesha Hodge Washington

Subcommittee Members Absent

Councilwoman Debra Stark

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman O'Brien called the Economic Development and Housing Subcommittee to order at 10:02 a.m. with Councilman Robinson and Councilwoman Hodge Washington present.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

None.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

1. Minutes of the Economic Development and Housing Subcommittee Meeting

Councilwoman Hodge Washington made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2025, Economic Development and Housing Subcommittee meeting. Councilman Robinson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously, 3-0.

CONSENT ACTION (ITEMS 2-5)

Items 2-5 were for consent action. No presentations were planned, but staff was available to answer questions.

2. Maricopa County Community Colleges District – Phoenix Forge Expansion

Consent only. No councilmember requested additional information.

3. Request Approval to Submit Updated Program Options to the Office of Head Start

Consent only. No councilmember requested additional information.

4. Request Approval for the Head Start Birth to Five Program to Purchase Capital Equipment Over \$10,000

Consent only. No councilmember requested additional information.

5. Request Approval to Apply for a Head Start Birth to Five Non-Federal Share Waiver

Consent only. No councilmember requested additional information.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington made a motion to approve Items 2 through 5. Councilman Robinson seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 3-0.

INFORMATION ONLY (ITEMS 6)

6. Head Start Birth to Five Monthly Report – March

Information only. No councilmember requested additional information.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION (ITEMS 7-8)

Item 8 was heard out of order as requested by Chairwoman O'Brien.

8. Economic Power of the Arts

Arts and Culture Director Mitch Menchaca, Chairman and CEO of Plaza Companies Sharon Harper, Senior Vice President of Marketing and Communications of Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC) Serena Remy, and Community and Economic Development Director Christine Mackay presented the item.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington inquired if there were strategies to increase public-private partnerships for public art.

Ms. Harper spoke about the importance of including and supporting the arts community in future developments. She noted that promoting public art and implementing broader stakeholder engagement will help increase the collaboration needed for a greater presence of public art in the City.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington asked about the timeline for each phase of short-term and long-term public art documentation and marketing strategy development.

Ms. Remy stated the focus over the past year has been to centralize the documentation of existing public art. She aims to continue documentation and leverage data for marketing purposes simultaneously.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington asked what the process was for an artist to ensure their work is included in the documentation.

Ms. Remy answered artists can directly go to the Street Art Cities website or work with GPEC staff directly to be registered on the documentation platform.

Councilman Robinson asked if there were areas within the City that do not have as much public art, and if there were efforts to install public art in those areas.

Mr. Menchaca answered the Arts and Culture Department aims for equitable distribution of the Public Art program across the City and is looking to partner with the artists and the private sector to highlight public art that exists throughout the City.

Ms. Harper explained Artlink Website opens projects to as many interested artists as possible to reach more artists.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked how public art ordinances in other cities throughout the region play a role in integrating public art developments.

Ms. Harper stated the City of Scottsdale has a committee that facilitates the recruitment process for public art, which has been effective.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked if there was feedback for the importance of public art for economic development.

Ms. Mackay answered public art is critical for developing a sense community, which can attract economic development.

Chairwoman O'Brien inquired if members of the community can access the Street Art Cities website to report existing public art.

Ms. Remy explained residents can directly upload images to the Street Art Cities website.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked if the City of Phoenix is looking into adopting an Art Ordinance, and what role the Arts and Culture Department would have in adopting this ordinance.

Mr. Menchaca answered the effort in creating a Public Art ordinance would need to be in collaboration with the Planning and Development Department and the private sector. He explained it would call for research into costs and processes associated with the administration of the ordinance.

Chairwoman O'Brien stated if such ordinance was to be adopted, it must be designed in a way that does not slow down development.

Chairwoman O'Brien thanked Ms. Harper and Ms. Remy on presenting how important the Arts is to our City and economic aspect.

7. Tenant Assistance Programs

Human Services Director Jacqueline Edwards presented the item. She provided data on three primary programs: Rental and Utility Assistance, Landlord Tenant Program, and the Eviction Legal Services.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked why 55 cases have not been accepted for Eviction Legal Services.

Ms. Edwards answered the cases were not accepted due to incomplete applications or the applicant refusing service.

Chairwoman O'Brien inquired which cases were considered non-eligible.

Ms. Edwards stated out of the 85 cases that were accepted and referred to one of the service providers, none of them were deemed non-eligible.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked for statistics and description of the 55 cases that were not accepted.

Ms. Edwards explained 41 of the cases had incomplete applications and 14 cases were ineligible because the applicant was not a resident of the City of Phoenix, not on lease, not at the threat of an eviction, or refused services.

Chairwoman O'Brien requested information regarding what the factors were for incomplete applications.

Ms. Edwards, shared the Human Services Department, is looking into additional ways to support tenants in completion of the application, such as reducing documentation requirements for income verification.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked how the City is reaching out to people that are not directly paying their water bills, therefore not receiving the Phoenix At Your Service monthly newsletter.

Ms. Edwards answered staff are using social media as well as other services that are provided by the Human Services Department to share information regarding Legal Eviction Services. The Human Services Department focuses its outreach on communities with higher rates of eviction, which may be living in larger apartment complexes and not directly paying their water bills.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked staff to explore partnering with other utilities and services such as phone and electricity, in order to provide outreach. She asked if the number of cases presented are unique cases.

Ms. Edwards said yes.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington asked if there were any recommendations to bridge the gap between eligibility criteria amongst different tenant assistance programs.

Ms. Edwards answered the differences in eligibility criteria are tied to the fund source for each program. She noted that staff are frequently looking for funding and grant opportunities to widen the eligibility criteria for all programs.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington asked if the gap in eligibility criteria is acting as a barrier to residents.

Ms. Edwards explained staff have not deemed any applicant ineligible based on income for Eviction Legal Services and would follow up on other tenant assistance programs.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington asked if the City will be able to maintain the funding for the Rental Assistance Program in the next fiscal year.

Ms. Edwards answered that the City is required by the Arizona Department of Economic Security to operate a 12-month program and the City's funding for the program will carry the program through the end of June 2026.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington inquired what the average turnaround time is for the Rental Assistance Program from application to funds being paid to landlords.

Ms. Edwards said once resident calls staff, they get scheduled for an appointment in approximately two-week timeframe, in which information and documentation is conducted, and working with the landlords to provide information on the process. She said she will follow up with information on the entire turnaround time.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington stated a two-week wait time for an appointment can be lengthy for residents facing potential eviction. She asked if staff have considered consolidating the different phone lines to one hotline for tenant assistance programs.

Ms. Edwards explained the Rental Assistance Program has emergency criteria that expedite the process. She shared staff was investigating ways to streamline calls to connect tenants to appropriate programs and develop a new client facing module and case management system to expedite the process.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington stated the way the City requests information for applicants of the Eviction Legal Services makes it difficult to identify the full range of needs for each applicant.

Ms. Edwards explained the screening questions are in place to prevent ineligible applicants from proceeding further through the process.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington asked what the process is for identifying communities with greater rates of eviction.

Ms. Edwards answered the process is based on eviction filings by zip code. She also noted HSD works with community partners and landlords to get ahead of the eviction process to provide support to tenants and landlords.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington inquired if the information regarding the process can be shared once the communities are identified.

Ms. Edwards said yes.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington suggested partnering with landlords and exploring other community partners to share information regarding the programs. She asked what the capacity for caseload is for Eviction Legal Services.

Ms. Edwards answered the program was at roughly 50 percent capacity, with the maximum capacity being 50 new cases per month.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington inquired what was being done to gather feedback from program participants for all tenant assistance programs.

Ms. Edwards explained for Eviction Legal Services, there was a survey that goes out 30 days after each case closes and another survey six months after closing to assess whether the participants' housing stability and the department was looking into sending out a feedback survey for participants of all programs starting in July.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked if the application forms are available in both English and Spanish.

Ms. Edwards answered while the application for Eviction Legal Services is available in both languages, the form for Emergency Landlord-Tenant Program is only available in English. However, she noted this document was in the process of being translated to Spanish.

Chairwoman O'Brien inquired when the translation is expected to be complete.

Ms. Edwards said it was expected to be completed in the next week.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked what the timeline was for reviewing applications for Eviction Legal Services.

Ms. Edwards answered that applications are reviewed within one business day.

Chairwoman O'Brien inquired what the timeline is for the vendors.

Ms. Edwards replied it was two business days.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked if there were any clients that have experienced difficulties in the process.

Ms. Edwards answered while there were clients that failed to provide timely information, staff has been able to follow up with most clients to help ensure their needs are met in a timely manner.

Chairwoman O'Brien inquired what the current process was for Eviction Legal Services.

Ms. Edwards explained there are a set number of appointments with applicants in emergency situations being given priority to get an appointment scheduled.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked what the timeline was for improving the process.

Ms. Edwards answered the timeline can be broken down to short, medium and long-term. She noted the short and medium timeline focused on streamlining phonenumber reception while working on developing new public facing management system in the long term.

Chairman O'Brien opened the floor to public comment for this item.

Evelynne Castillo said the Eviction Legal Services program was not well known, not easy to access and was not at the scale needed to mitigate the rate of evictions that occur in the City.

John Escobar stated housing insecurity disproportionately impact Native Americans and people of color and stated there needs to be greater efforts to publicize and expand the program.

Danielle Witcher said she tried to receive Eviction Legal Services but was unsuccessful in accessing the program.

Andrea Luna Cervantes stated the Tenant Assistance Programs were difficult to navigate and the City must improve accessibility of the programs.

Miesha Fish said she had applied to Emergency Rental Assistance Program but did not receive a response and that the programs need to improve accessibility.

Sebastian Del Portillo stated the low usage of the Eviction Legal Services was a result of poor promotion and outreach regarding the program.

Pamela Bridge, Director of Litigation and Advocacy at Community Legal Services, were referred 25 cases for Eviction Legal Services, where 15 were taken as limited or full representation and 10 received post eviction services.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked if there are any recommendation for improvement of the program.

Pamela Bridge answered that the City should consider including cases of tenants with notice of non-renewal and speed up the referral process.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington asked if there were hurdles for tenants to access the City's Eviction Legal Services and if there was a way to capture data regarding the cases Community Legal Services receives directly to the cases coming through the City.

Pamela Bridge explained that there were tenants facing eviction that reach out to Community Legal Services directly for assistance that Community Legal Services are able to provide with resources outside of funding received from the City and agreed on the need to incorporate data from all vendors to better understand the demand for the services.

Danielle Fernandez Lertzman, Associate Attorney at Barton Mendez Soto, said it was important to have legal representation for those facing evictions.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked if there were any recommendation for improvement of the program.

Danielle Fernandez Lertzman answered greater outreach regarding the program would help those in need of the services to receive services sooner.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington inquired what post eviction services entails.

Danielle Fernandez Lertzman explained post eviction services consists of negotiation with the landlord to get the eviction judgment vacated.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington stated it is important to incorporate the calls vendors receive directly to fully capture the demand for the program and the City should look into possibly expanding the capacity of the program. She added the City should investigate outreach plans to better engage community partners. Councilwoman Hodge Washington asked if applicants receive confirmation that shows their application is complete once they are done.

Ms. Edwards answered all clients that submitted applications received confirmation and recently have been receiving a copy of their responses.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington suggested providing an expected timeline and contact information of staff in the confirmation, so clients have a way of reaching out and connecting with staff and inquire if there is any information that is used to prioritize clients.

Ms. Edwards stated if clients include any information on eviction notice such as a timeframe or court date, it would be highlighted in the application to prioritize those cases.

Robin Dugas, an attorney at Cronus Law, said Eviction Legal Services program was vital to ensure housing stability for the community and there was a great demand for these services.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION (ITEM 9)

9. Fiscal Year 2025-30 Public Art Plan

Arts and Culture Director Mitch Menchaca and Deputy Arts and Culture Director Carrie Brown presented on the item.

Patrick McDaniel expressed support for the 2025-30 Public Art Plan.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked how the City can get more public art installations in the public right of way.

Mr. Menchaca answered that the location of public art projects depends on where the capital improvement projects take place. He noted that if there was not a capital improvement project in the area, there are potential temporary projects and community celebrations that could be explored as well.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington made a motion to approve Item 9. Councilman Robinson seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 3-0.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

None.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairwoman O'Brien adjourned the meeting at 12:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Seo
Management Fellow