

Communication from Public

Name: Los Angeles Renters' Right to Counsel Coalition
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Council File No: 20-1084-S4
Comments for Public Posting: Please see the attached letter from the Los Angeles Renters' Right to Counsel Coalition. Thank you.



June 16, 2026

Re: Council File: 20-1084-S4

Dear LA City Councilmembers and Mayor Karen Bass,

On behalf of the Los Angeles Renters' Right to Counsel Coalition, we are writing to inform you that, despite the City Council's approval of the new Stay Housed LA (SHLA) contract on March 3, 2026, the contracts have not been executed. The SHLA Program's previous contracts ended March 31, and all organizations have been working in good faith for two months, providing services to tenants without renewed funding or a signed contract.

After two months without payment, some member organizations have begun implementing staff furloughs and layoffs, reducing the overall quality and services available to your constituents across the City. Although the four contracts are at different stages, these delays are placing all programs awaiting contract execution, and the tenants who rely on them, in a precarious position.

The Coalition urges you to:

1. Agendize a motion no later than June 23, 2026, to ensure the release of the allocation of funds for the month of April 2026, no later than July 1, 2026; May 2026, no later than August 1, 2026; June 2026, no later than September 2026, and each month thereafter pending contract negotiation and signing.
2. Release the March 2026 invoice reimbursement no later than June 18, 2026.
3. Instruct LAHD to expedite the payment process after contracts are executed and to release funds in accordance with budget amounts, ensuring that organizations can continue providing eviction defense services to tenants in the City of Los Angeles uninterrupted. The invoices are paid 3 months after funds are expended, and LAHD is already 2 months late. Several SHLA organizations cannot wait 5 months to be paid after funds are expended.
4. Direct LAHD and the Office of the City Attorney to finalize and execute the 4 outstanding contracts immediately.
5. We call on the City Council to establish a sustainable funding and contracting process that prevents future service disruptions, protects tenants' access to counsel and eviction-prevention services, and provides community-based organizations with the stability necessary to serve Los Angeles tenants effectively.

From 2018 to 2025, the Los Angeles Renters' Right to Counsel Coalition worked alongside housing justice advocates, attorneys, organizers, tenants, and City Council Members to secure unanimous passage of a codified Right to Counsel ordinance in the City of Los Angeles, which went into effect on August 20, 2025. Over the past year, we have been advocating for contract extensions for Stay Housed LA. This uncertainty has jeopardized not only the continuation of services to keep tenants housed, but also the planned expansion of eviction-prevention services outlined in the 7-year phase-in plan.

27 organizations in Stay Housed LA have continued to serve tenants without contracts in place, trusting that the City would quickly finalize the approved agreements and restore funding flows. Each month, SHLA provides:

- Full legal representation to more than 261 tenants in eviction cases.
- Limited Scope Representation to an additional 97 litigants to prepare them for trial, 98% of which eventually get full scope representation.
- Legal advice and counsel to more than 580 tenants to prevent eviction and resolve housing problems early.
- Approximately 33 tenant rights workshops, serving more than 120 renters.
- More than 2,200 tenant navigation services, including technical assistance, court support, and leadership development.
- Outreach to over 5,000 tenants through in-person and virtual engagement.
- Over \$500,000 in emergency rental assistance to an average of 55 households.

Despite contract uncertainty over this past year, Stay Housed LA continued to provide a high level of service to tenants. From July 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026 (contract termination date):

- 2,422 tenants were represented in court,
- 4,956 tenants were provided with limited legal services,
- 2,548 tenants had answers filed, thus avoiding default judgments, and
- 287 households stayed housed via \$3,745,576 in settlement/rental assistance.
- Community-based organizations reached:
 - 39,825 tenants through virtual outreach,
 - 25,121 tenants through in-person outreach,
 - performed 26,753 instances of tenant navigation via court support, technical assistance, and leadership development
 - hosted 180 workshops with 1,396 tenants in attendance.

Each month this contract is delayed, we risk losing these essential services and effective July 1, 2026, services to your constituents will be discontinued by agencies that are facing layoffs. Additionally, due to these delays, approximately \$17 million in rental assistance intended to help prevent evictions remains inaccessible. Tenants whose court cases could have been resolved through rental assistance are instead moving toward displacement and, in some cases, homelessness.

We respectfully urge the City Council to take immediate action to identify and address the causes of these setbacks and to direct the Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD) and the Office of the City Attorney to finalize and execute these contracts and issue payments for the months of April 2026 by July 1, 2026; May 2026 by August 2026; and June 2026 by September 1, 2026 pending contract approval and signature. Los Angeles tenants cannot afford prolonged inaction. At a time when housing instability and the risk of homelessness remain critical challenges, the City's commitment to preventing displacement and protecting vulnerable residents must be reflected not only in policy, but in prompt and decisive action.

Sincerely,

AmyLinda Nevarez
Director of the Los Angeles Renters' Right to Counsel Coalition