



San Antonio Eviction Prevention Program Evaluation

April 2022

Abstract

This report analyzes the existing structure of the eviction prevention efforts in San Antonio along with strengths and areas for improvement moving forward.



Table of Contents

I. Introduction	3
II. Background and Program Structure	4
City of San Antonio	5
Bexar County	6
Legal Aid Organizations	6
Connection to Other Prevention Resources	7
III. Key Strengths of San Antonio’s Eviction Prevention Program.....	10
1. Collective Dedication of Multi-sectoral Entities to Address Eviction Prevention	10
2. Strong Leveraging of Funding Streams.....	12
3. City Commitment to Support an Ongoing Program	14
IV. Opportunities to Strengthen and Align Prevention Efforts Moving Forward.....	15
1. Expand Coordination Efforts to Focus on Holistic Client-Centered Service Delivery	15
2. Establish Common Data Collection, Analysis, and Evaluation Practices Amongst all Agencies Working on Homelessness Prevention and Eviction Prevention	19
3. Impose Eligibility and Prioritization Standards for More Effective Use of Resources.....	21
4. Develop Protocols and Standards Applied Uniformly Across all Precincts of the Justice of Peace Courts Handling Evictions.....	23
5. Improve Engagement with Tenants and Landlords	25
6. Identify and Pursue New Funding Opportunities.....	27
Conclusion.....	29
Glossary	30
Appendix A.....	35

I. Introduction

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) San Antonio contracted with Homebase¹ to conduct an evaluation of the City of San Antonio’s eviction prevention program. The evaluation took place between November 2021 and April 2022 and included input from a wide array of stakeholders, including representatives from the City of San Antonio’s Neighborhood & Housing Services Department (NHSD) and the Department of Human Services (DHS); Bexar County, including the Justice of the Peace (JP) Courts; homeless service providers; legal aid organizations and the local law school; the Continuum of Care (CoC) lead agency – South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless (SARAH); and landlords.

San Antonio’s eviction prevention program is a collaborative effort that was formed out of an urgency to serve those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the crisis, the City and County received one-time funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) (among other initiatives) to offer resources and services to community members impacted by COVID. Two years later, the unprecedented influx of resources is coming to an end, but San Antonio residents continue to be at risk of housing instability and homelessness. Without the ongoing financial resources, the City and County must determine how to continue to meet the needs of individuals and households still at risk.

This evaluation is intended to identify the strengths of the City’s eviction prevention program and provide recommendations for long-term sustainability moving forward. The City of San Antonio and Bexar County and their partners need to be strategic about how to continue to operate the program with more limited funding.

The evaluation is organized in the following manner:

- Background and structure of the existing eviction prevention program;
- Key strengths of the existing program; and
- Opportunities to strengthen and align prevention efforts moving forward.

¹ Homebase is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building community capacity to end homelessness and reduce poverty, and to foster thriving, inclusive communities. For over three decades, Homebase has worked tirelessly alongside local partners to identify and analyze the root causes of homelessness and develop effective systems and solutions.

II. Background and Program Structure

The pandemic exacerbated an already existing housing crisis in San Antonio as families, many of whom were already cost-burdened, faced unemployment, unexpected needs for childcare or elderly care, medical costs and sickness, and other emotional and economic hardships. In response, the City of San Antonio revamped its Risk Mitigation Fund, which provided rental and mortgage assistance to residents facing employment-related hardship. The City launched a new program called the Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP) in April 2020. EHAP leveraged an influx of state and federal funding to provide eligible renters and homeowners up to nine months of housing-related assistance, including rent, mortgage, and/or utility bills. From April 2020 to May 2022, the program provided 169,964 individuals with over \$204.2 million in assistance.² Funding for the EHAP was expended in March 2022 and the City is exploring alternative sources of funding to continue the program long-term.

Due to the increase of eviction proceedings and tenants' limited knowledge of their rights and the eviction process, the City of San Antonio passed a local ordinance, which went into effect July 25, 2020, requiring all housing providers to provide a Notice of Tenants' Rights³ to residents within one business day of delivering a Notice to Vacate for Non-Payment of Rent. The City developed the Notice of Tenants' Rights in partnership with the San Antonio Apartment Association. The Notice of Tenants' Rights clarifies that the Notice to Vacate is not an eviction and the tenant does not need to move out immediately. It also encourages tenants to speak with their landlords about repayment options and includes information about legal aid and rental assistance resources. Landlords must provide both English and Spanish versions of the notice.

In addition to EHAP funding and the supporting local ordinance, the City's eviction prevention program is a robust coordinated effort between the City, Bexar County – including the Justice of the Peace Courts (JP Courts) – and several legal aid organizations. The City funds a Right to Counsel program, which provides legal aid services to low-income households facing evictions or other landlord-tenant issues. The City program also partners with the local Continuum of Care (CoC), known as the South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless (SARAH), and service providers through mutual referrals to other local homelessness prevention programs. Like spokes on a wheel, each entity plays a critical role in preventing evictions and homelessness in San Antonio.

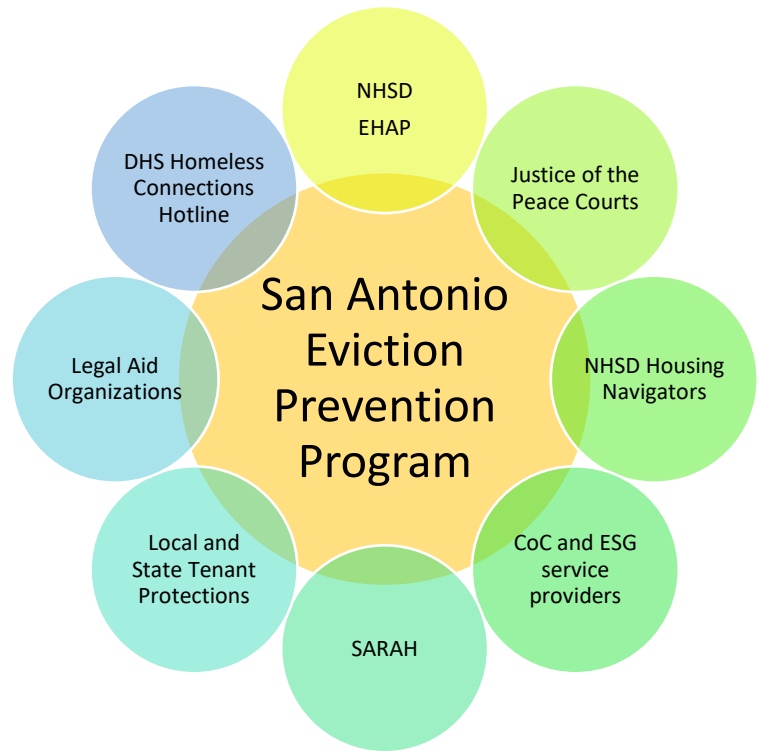
² City of San Antonio Dashboard of COVID-19 Emergency Housing Assistance Program. Available at: <https://dhs.mendixcloud.com/p/dashboard>

³ City of San Antonio, Notice of Tenants' Rights. Available at: <https://covid19.sanantonio.gov/Resources/Housing/Housing-Evictions>.

Throughout this report, reference to the San Antonio “eviction prevention program,” includes the collaborative effort between the various organizations and the services they collectively provide for eviction prevention and in some instances, homelessness prevention. The following summarizes each entity’s role in helping families avoid evictions, get connected to resources, and prevent homelessness.

City of San Antonio

NHSD’s eviction intervention program has a team of five full-time housing navigator staff, four of whom are located at each of the JP Court precincts. Their primary role is to help prevent evictions by connecting both tenants and landlords to EHAP. The housing navigators help tenants complete rental assistance applications or other needed forms and connect them to additional resources in the community, including legal assistance.



Housing navigators act as neutral parties to provide advice and counsel to both tenants and landlords. Because housing navigators are located on-site at the Courts, they can provide interventions on the day of eviction proceedings. As allowed by the Supreme Court of Texas’ Fiftieth Emergency Order,⁴ landlords who agree to accept rent relief can request the JP Courts to dismiss the eviction and seal the court record. With the record sealed, tenants avoid having an eviction on their record, which can hinder their ability to find rental housing in the future. Landlords must provide documentation to the JP courts that shows that they will receive rental assistance. The housing navigators also help landlords provide the documentation and ensure that they understand the process.

In addition to the programs funded by NHSD, the City’s DHS set up a homeless connections hotline during COVID, when in-person assistance became less available. City staff take incoming calls from all over the County and educate and refer individuals

⁴ Tenant Protections under the 50th Emergency Order, Texas State Supreme Court. Available at: <https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1454055/229030.pdf>.

to the EHAP and other appropriate prevention resources. The hotline also serves as an access point to the local homeless system of care's Coordinated Entry System (CES). The City also operates a 311 customer service line that connects callers to a variety of broader city services like animal control, parks, and code enforcement. The 311 website and customer service representatives also provided individuals with information about the EHAP program.

Bexar County

The partnership between the City of San Antonio and Bexar County includes work with the JP Courts. The partnership has been instrumental in the success of the eviction program thus far. Not only has the County allowed City housing navigators to work at the courthouse to directly assist tenants and landlords, but they have allowed them to make general announcements regarding the EHAP program prior to eviction hearings. The Court also sends out information regarding the program along filing notices to tenants. Since many tenants and landlords have not heard of EHAP, the housing navigators' presence at the courthouses is critical to getting eviction cases dismissed and sealed once the landlord agrees to accept rental assistance. In addition to their general presence in all four JP Court precincts, some of the justices allow tenants and landlords to confer with City staff during the actual hearings. Each of the four justices has control over their own courtroom and court processes in each precinct; therefore, there has been some inconsistency regarding when these procedures are carried out.

Bexar County also received state and federal additional funds to provide county residents with financial assistance associated with eviction prevention. Given that the largest city in the county is San Antonio, the County provided its share of eviction prevention resources allocated toward San Antonio residents to the City, who then administered and distributed the county funds through the EHAP.

Legal Aid Organizations

There are several legal aid organizations that assist tenants with landlord tenant issues including evictions: Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid (TRLA), San Antonio Legal Services Association (SALSA), and St. Mary's Law School.

As part of the City's Right to Counsel program, TRLA and SALSA provides free legal assistance, including negotiation and representation in hearings, to tenants facing evictions. TRLA and SALSA receive referrals from city staff located at the courts. Through a collaborative approach, City staff assist tenants and landlords applying for

EHAP and the legal aid staff provide tenants legal representation at eviction proceedings.

In March 2022, the Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs (TDHCA) awarded the City's Right to Counsel program \$6.7 million dollars in funding, which will be used to expand contracts with TRLA and SALSA. In addition, the funds will also be dedicated toward a relocation assistance program to help tenants who cannot afford to remain in their current housing situation, but with counseling and assistance, can get help finding a new place to live, as well as cover expenses such as moving costs, emergency hotel vouchers, and security deposits.

In addition to the Right to Counsel program, St. Mary's Law School has a Consumer Protection Clinic with a Housing Legal Advice Hotline that offers San Antonio residents free legal advice regarding housing issues. Since the pandemic, the clinic saw a rise in callers asking for eviction advice, with over 1,500 calls received since June 2020. The clinic is run in partnership with TRLA and is staffed primarily by law students who provide approximately 30 minutes of free counseling over the phone and help connect callers to rental assistance and other community resources. The clinic also directly represents tenants in eviction proceedings.

Connection to Other Prevention Resources

Eviction prevention is one piece of a broader prevention effort aimed at ensuring San Antonio residents retain stable housing and avoid evictions and homelessness.

Homeless service providers that are funded for prevention assistance may assist individuals that meet the definition of "imminent risk of homelessness"⁵ and "at risk of homelessness"⁶ through CoC and ESG funding respectively. These providers specialize in more intensive case management for more vulnerable clients. They may assist clients with rental assistance or housing relocation and stabilization services. These providers receive referrals for prevention services from the coordinated entry system as well as DHS' homeless connection hotline. NHSD also referred individuals that they could not serve under EHAP to the homeless prevention service providers. The ESG providers include both the City of San Antonio and Bexar County, along with SAMMinistries, St. Vincent de Paul, Catholic Charities, Endeavors, and Family Violence Prevention Services.

⁵ Category 2: Imminent Risk of Homelessness definition, HUD Exchange, Available at: <https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/coc-esg-virtual-binders/coc-esg-homeless-eligibility/four-categories/category-2/>

⁶ At risk of homelessness definition, HUD Exchange, Available at: <https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/coc-esg-virtual-binders/coc-esg-homeless-eligibility/four-categories/at-risk-of-homelessness/>

During the fall of 2020, SARAH led the creation of a Prevention Subcommittee aimed at formally coordinating the response of the City, County, and homeless service providers that are funded for prevention. The Prevention Subcommittee worked with NHSD to adapt referral protocols based on the needs in the community and the capacity of the service providers. In addition, the Prevention Subcommittee is rolling out a prevention screening tool to assess an individual's vulnerability to better prioritize the limited resources.

The following chart summarizes some of the key services and initiatives of each of the participating entities.

Summary of Key Services and Initiatives of Entities Related to Eviction Prevention

The City of San Antonio

- NHSD administers the Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP), which provides up to 9 months of rental, mortgage and/or utility assistance based on Area Media Income (AMI).
- NHSD Housing navigators located at JP Courts connect tenants and landlords to EHAP and other community resources.
- NHSD operates the Right to Counsel program in partnership with TRLA and SALSA.
- DHS operates the homeless connections hotline where city staff refer callers to prevention and homelessness resources.
- 311 website, app, and phone line connects individuals to city services and resources including EHAP.

Bexar County

- Justices within the JP Courts enable city staff to announce EHAP at top of docket and confer with tenants and landlords during eviction hearings.
- The JP Courts help spread information about EHAP by including information about the program along with filing notices to tenants.
- JP Court Justices can opt to allow city staff to assist landlords and/or tenants during proceedings.
- Contributes County funds toward housing-related financing assistance, with the City of San Antonio administering through their EHAP program.

Legal Aid Organizations

- Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid (TRLA) provides free legal representation for tenants in landlord-tenant cases, including eviction cases.
- San Antonio Legal Services Association (SALSA) provides free legal counseling including negotiations for eviction cases. SALSA held a weekly in-person clinic at Haven for Hope to directly assist tenants apply for rental assistance through the Texas Rent Relief Program.
- St. Mary's Law School operates a consumer protection clinic with law student participants. The clinic includes a housing hotline where law students offer 30 minutes of legal advice regarding housing matters including evictions and help connect callers to community resources.

SARAH and Other CoC-ESG providers

- The CoC Lead Agency, SARAH has led community-wide homelessness prevention efforts in connection with the coordinated entry system, the City, County, and homeless service providers that receive prevention funding, including the creation of the Prevention Subcommittee aimed at formalizing a coordinated homelessness prevention response.
- SARAH works together with the City of San Antonio and CoC and ESG-providers to ensure that clients are connected to resources. When a client is not eligible to receive assistance through EHAP, the City of San Antonio refers them to ESG Prevention providers.
- The Prevention Subcommittee has developed a prevention screening tool to assess the vulnerability of individuals and households and target limited prevention resources.

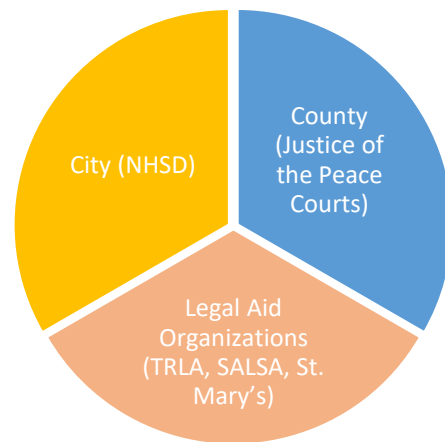
III. Key Strengths of San Antonio’s Eviction Prevention Program

The City of San Antonio, Bexar County, local legal aid organizations, and the homeless system of care service providers have worked tirelessly during the pandemic to respond to the needs of local residents so that they can avoid evictions and remain stably housed. Over the past two years, the efforts have resulted in many successes, including helping over 150,000 individuals avoid evictions. The success of the eviction prevention program is one to be recognized and built upon moving forward. The key strengths of the San Antonio program include:

1. The dedication of entities from multiple sectors collaborating together to address eviction prevention.
2. Strong leveraging of funding streams.
3. City leadership and commitment to staff positions allowing the City to become a direct service provider.

1. Collective Dedication of Multi-sectoral Entities to Address Eviction Prevention

A fundamental best practice in any eviction prevention program is the collaboration and engagement of as many relevant stakeholders as possible.⁷ San Antonio’s eviction prevention effort includes a robust, multi-sectoral group of dedicated agencies and organizations that all strive to do their part to help curb evictions and keep homelessness at bay.



The City of San Antonio has taken ownership of the local effort, playing a leadership role in funding, developing, and implementing the eviction prevention efforts. Alongside the City, there are robust partnerships with Bexar County and the JP Courts, as well as with local legal aid organizations and homeless system of care service providers. The City and County pooled resources to make available millions of dollars that could be used for rental assistance, implementing them under one program, taking advantage of efficiencies so

⁷ Harvard Negotiation and Mediation Clinical Program and American Bar Association, “Designing for Housing Stability: Best Practices for Court-Based and Court-Adjacent Eviction Prevention and/or Diversion Programs,” June 2021. Available at: <https://hnmcp.law.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Deasigning-for-Housing-Stability.pdf>.

that the maximum amount of assistance could get in the hands of individuals and families most in need, rather than spent to duplicate administrative services. The County opened up their JP Court system to accommodate City staff and legal aid representatives to directly connect with tenants and landlords at the courthouse, and in some cases in the courtroom. Additionally, City staff at the courthouse have familiarity about other programs, including workforce development, so are able to connect tenants to trainings and even stipends that are available for workforce development to get people into meaningful work that pays a minimum wage.

The City also collaborated with the homeless system of care and other service providers to set up a telephone hotline to accept intake during the time when in-person intake was challenging at best, impossible at worst. The centralized hotline enabled efficient assessment and screening of City residents and referrals to the different prevention programs, based on the individual circumstances and needs of callers. St. Mary's Law School also enhanced intake for people reaching out to them directly with legal issues, making direct referrals to their partner legal aid organizations in the community.

Equally of value, service providers contributed by conducting outreach and education to make the San Antonio community aware of the available state and local rental assistance resources under EHAP, as well as to help tenants complete applications.

Since January 2022, many of the partners have come together as an Oversight Group to discuss the various prevention programs' viability moving forward. They have met bi-weekly, anticipating diminished resources, and affirming the desire to continue to provide robust eviction prevention assistance and resources moving forward. During that time, they have shared resources with one another, identified areas where improvements could be made, and begun strategic discussions on how best to scope out a long-term program for San Antonio. There is a strong, clear sense of dedication from community providers to connect clients to whatever resources are available no matter who funds or administers the resources.

“There is a lot of cooperation, communication, and helping with resources. It is a great collaborative effort to help prevent people from going into homelessness.”

- Hotline Staff

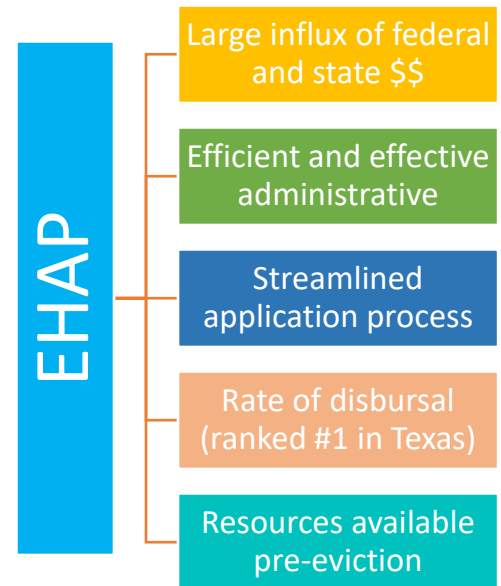
2. Strong Leveraging of Funding Streams

The availability of rental and utility assistance is the backbone of any eviction diversion or prevention program. Even the most flexible and accommodating landlords need to make mortgage payments. While legal aid attorneys can zealously advocate against evictions based on other legal grounds, it is difficult to prevent an eviction if the reason for the eviction is unpaid rent.

Without funds available to provide a wide range of rental assistance, including paying rental arrears that accrued while the eviction moratorium was in place, many landlords had no choice but to initiate eviction proceedings. With the City and County expending federal and state funds to provide financial assistance for back rent and other housing costs, many cases that would have resulted in eviction were forestalled and San Antonio residents were able to stabilize their housing situations.

Another strength of the San Antonio program was that financial assistance was available to people before they were threatened with eviction. The City program was available for people experiencing an emergency and hardship involving rent or mortgage, in many cases before landlords had to resort to the legal system. As a result, the money expended to make landlords whole not only prevented future evictions, but also was an efficient use of funds compared to the costs of filing and proceeding with an eviction.

Legal aid attorneys attribute the availability of rent relief as one of the most important factors in negotiations between tenants and landlords to resolve eviction cases favorably and enable tenants to retain their housing.



“It really is about money or major personality preferences – that’s what eviction is about. People in the situation facing an eviction, their lives are nuts – the City tries every way, shape or form to help them. At the end of the day, if someone hasn’t paid their rent and there are no personality problems, the landlords will take the rent relief and let them stay. If there are issues between the landlord and the tenant, they don’t care about the money, they just want them out. It’s just about mitigation. The City has been able to help a lot – I wish they had more money – money saves the day!”

- Legal Aid Attorney

One of the greatest strengths of the City’s EHAP is the efficient and effective administration of funds. With so many individuals and families unable to pay rent and facing imminent evictions due to the expiration of the eviction moratorium on July 2021, it was imperative that the program disburse the assistance dollars as quickly as possible. In a report by Texas Housers,⁸ San Antonio’s program was ranked as the top amongst other local Emergency Rental Assistance programs in Texas for the rate of disbursement of the assistance dollars. The evaluation focused on two parameters: the percentage of the total Emergency Rental Assistance funds received from the federal government that were distributed to households; and the percentage of all eligible households in the jurisdiction that received assistance. In other words, San Antonio’s program was able to distribute a high percentage of funds received from the federal government to a significant number of individuals and families in a short amount of time. From April 2020 to May 2022, the program provided over 169,964 individuals with over \$204.2 million in assistance.

The impact of efficient administration and disbursement had many positive effects in the community. Not only did the City quickly resolve the outstanding rental payments so that tenants could retain stable housing, but the quick distribution built good will within the landlord community. City staff received feedback that landlords were more likely to agree to resolve eviction cases and agree to participate in EHAP because they knew they would receive the rental relief funds in a timely manner.

“The team that administered EHAP did a phenomenal job expending monies. Especially in urgent situations, they find a way to do it. This has given the program enormous accountability with landlords. They favored the EHAP program over the state’s program due to how quickly funds were able to be disbursed.”

- City Staff

“The City has been great about getting funds out to folks who are at risk of eviction efficiently. The response time has had a quicker turnaround than the now closed Texas Rent Relief Program.”

- Oversight Group Member

⁸ Texas Housers, “The Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program in Texas,” Available at: <https://texashousers.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ERAP-Report-7-13.pdf>.

3. City Commitment to Support an Ongoing Program

What sets the City of San Antonio apart is that they are committed not only to provide the monies that fund the assistance program but investing resources into providing core staff to the program. They administer the emergency rental assistance dollars directly to landlords instead of contracting this responsibility out to a nonprofit service provider.

Outside of the millions of dollars of federal and state funding intended to provide direct assistance to individuals and families in need of emergency assistance, the City Council voted to invest local resources to provide backbone staff for the eviction prevention work. While the federal and state rental assistance dollars may reduce or increase overtime, the staffing positions have become a core part of City functions. The City has dedicated four housing navigators for each of the four JP Court precincts, and one lead navigator who rotates across all of the precincts. As a direct service provider, the City has a pulse on the needs of the community and can adapt and take immediate action to resolve issues.

The City also provides ongoing funding for the Right to Counsel program. The program is dedicated to continuing to fund the legal aid programs to provide representation to tenants in eviction proceedings. The City has secured additional funding through Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) to expand the Right to Counsel program including staffing for the eviction intervention team and contracts with TRLA and SALSA to provide legal aid assistance.

With the understanding that evictions cannot always be thwarted, the City is also using the TDHCA award to expand its prevention efforts to begin providing relocation assistance to help individuals and families find stable housing. The City will be launching a new Housing Assistance portal, where City residents can apply for financial assistance or relocation assistance.

“As both a funder and provider, the City is hearing concerns from providers and staff – that’s an asset so that we can better hold the system accountable. It helps us speed things up. Things are fixable if someone would just put attention and resources to it. If we have the resources and are able to help, we will.”

- City staff

IV. Opportunities to Strengthen and Align Prevention Efforts Moving Forward

The eviction prevention effort in San Antonio was developed in crisis mode during the pandemic. While the City focused on getting money out the door into the hands of those in need, there wasn't much time to reflect on program design or outcomes. There is an opportunity now to transition the important work away from crisis mode to intentional planning and design. Building on existing relationships, structures, policies and procedures, and the momentum established throughout all the local eviction prevention efforts, there are key opportunities recommended for moving forward.

1. Expand coordination efforts to focus on holistic client-centered service delivery.
2. Establish common data collection, analysis, and evaluation practices amongst all agencies working on homelessness prevention and eviction prevention.
3. Impose eligibility and targeted prioritization standards for more effective use of resources.
4. Develop protocols and standards applied uniformly across all precincts of the justice of peace courts handling evictions.
5. Improve engagement with tenants and landlords.
6. Identify and pursue new funding opportunities.

1. Expand Coordination Efforts to Focus on Holistic Client-Centered Service Delivery

Living without stable housing, even briefly, is a traumatizing experience, and many never recover from the physical, emotional, and financial impacts. By preventing both evictions and homelessness, the City of San Antonio has helped individuals and families avoid the economic, social, mental, and physical challenges that result from eviction and homelessness – often at a much lower cost than it takes to serve people after they lose their housing.

Effective prevention requires having adequate safety net services in place to address needs before they escalate to crises. Prevention involves adequate cross-sector collaboration, including with schools, the child welfare system, public health/emergency rooms, mental health care facilities, public benefit programs, etc. It also includes increased awareness and attentiveness to housing stability as well as effective transition and/or discharge planning. Systems should work together to ensure that individuals are effectively connected to mainstream resources to reduce the risk of homelessness. Many people who are at risk of homelessness or eviction come from households living on the economic margins who routinely face choices between housing

and meeting other basic needs. They are often households unable to accumulate a savings cushion. In addition to offering rental assistance, it is important to think about helping individuals holistically through other supports such as financial counseling or workforce development. More effective coordination can ensure those clients are not getting lost.

Prevention programs in the County and the City came together during the pandemic in a swift manner to provide a safety net for many San Antonio residents. With the influx of resources provided through the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan (ARP), the community was able to bring financial resources to bear to help people retain stable housing in a crisis. In 2021 and 2022, those organizations implementing prevention programs were more coordinated than ever before.

Despite expanded coordination efforts, stakeholders expressed concerns over the need for improved coordination between the City and homeless service providers doing prevention work to ensure that individuals are referred to the most appropriate resources. Some individuals may need more limited one-time assistance and others may need more long-term intensive case management. Given the large amount of funding made available from the federal government, the main goal was to get as much assistance out as possible and so those individuals may not have always been directed to the most appropriate providers. Now that funds are more limited, a clear coordinated response between eviction prevention and homelessness prevention efforts is necessary.

The CoC and ESG prevention providers have done significant work through the Prevention Subcommittee, including developing a targeted screening tool with racial equity considerations to identify the most vulnerable populations given the limited resources. It will be pertinent for the City to work with the Prevention Subcommittee to develop an aligned triage or screening tool to help connect individuals and families to the prevention resources most suitable for their needs, as well as applicable mainstream services.

Another area that stakeholders highlighted for improvement was potential duplication of services. There was no mechanism in place to check whether individuals who had received assistance from EHAP did not receive assistance from an ESG prevention provider. This is discussed further in the next section regarding improving data sharing efforts.

Moving forward, the collaboration and coordination across the City, the County, and service organizations can continue and broaden. Not only should the organizations

already collaborating continue to coordinate and identify opportunities to leverage resources more effectively, but they should also broaden the partnerships to include more mainstream and upstream programs and providers to ensure individuals and households have support to avoid evictions and homelessness altogether.

Institutionalize Current Coordination Efforts and Broaden Collaboration

Homebase recommends the community take the following action steps to strengthen and broaden collaboration and coordination around eviction and homelessness prevention programs:

Action Steps:

<p>Capitalize on and expand coordination efforts already in place (e.g., the Oversight Group, Prevention Subcommittee) to regularly convene meetings of key agencies and organizations working to prevent and divert people from evictions and/or homelessness. Leverage group to develop a coordinated screening or triage tool that will be used by all prevention access sites.</p>
<p>Expand collaboration with public benefit program leaders, philanthropy, service organizations, and the faith-based community to engage in critical prevention initiatives.</p>
<p>Strengthen partnerships with criminal justice, child welfare, and health care systems to coordinate support people at high risk of homelessness and evictions to avoid discharges into homelessness.</p>
<p>Increase support for formerly homeless households and households with eviction histories by providing intensive services (including relocation assistance) to ensure they can attain long-term housing stability.</p>
<p>Provide regular training for all stakeholder partners in problem solving conversation techniques, including all access and outreach points.</p>
<p>Coordinate information sharing to ensure duplication of services and benefits are not occurring. Consider utilization of HMIS by a broader set of partners, including the City of San Antonio.</p>
<p>Align and offer self-help services such as education and financial counseling.</p>

Community Model: Housing Court Workgroup, Ramsey County, MN

Led by leaders from the county judicial system, the community in Ramsey County, MN came together to **collaborate across different sectors** to strengthen the systems involved in addressing evictions and eviction prevention.

In 2017, the Chief Judge of the Second Judicial District Court **convened a workgroup** of housing stakeholders, court administrators, court clerks, dispute resolution organizations, financial assistance service providers, and legal services providers to develop strategies and recommendations to strengthen access for landlords and tenants to legal, financial, and social services before, during, and after their initial eviction court appearance. The workgroup focused on:

- Addressing challenges in the rental market;
- Understanding the court process for landlords and tenants;
- Expanding availability and awareness of mediation services; and
- Increasing coordination with community organizations.

The Second Judicial District Court then worked with County officials and community organizations to **implement the recommendations from the workgroup**.

2. Establish Common Data Collection, Analysis, and Evaluation Practices Amongst all Agencies Working on Homelessness Prevention and Eviction Prevention

Reliable, valid data provide the basis for sound decision making, policy solutions, and evaluation of programs. Without comprehensive data, communities do not have sufficient information to understand who needs assistance, to measure outcomes, to guide planning, to prioritize resources, or to evaluate and measure program performance that can increase the likelihood of preventing evictions and/or ending homelessness.

The EHAP and homeless prevention programs put in place in the City of San Antonio in response to the crises of homelessness and the pandemic, did a tremendous job ensuring resources helped individuals and families avoid evictions, prevent homelessness, and remain stably housed. The EHAP was pulled together swiftly, leveraging federal, county, and city resources efficiently and effectively. Unfortunately, consistent policies to support data collection, analysis, and evaluation were not in place across the different partners that could provide evidence-based lessons for the community moving forward.

Homebase analyzed different data points that were collected by various entities contributing to eviction prevention and homelessness prevention efforts. In the analysis, we found that none of the participating community agencies and organizations collected information that comprehensively tracked outcomes (e.g., Was the eviction prevented? Was the household able to remain in their current living situation? Did the household connect with the homeless system of care within 12 months of preventing eviction?).

Even in the process of collecting basic demographic information, there was no uniformity about the data elements collected – for example, one entity might collect one specific data point about household income (e.g. “what is the household’s monthly income”) while another entity might collect household income broken down into multiple separate measures (e.g., cash income from family, earned income, unearned income, etc.). There currently is little to no uniformity in the data each agency or organization collects (as illustrated in the chart in Appendix A).

It is important that there is shared commitment across all programs to ensure that they obtain and preserve good quality data to understand who they serve, whether they are succeeding, how and when to make changes, as well as to guarantee compliance with funders to maintain or increase resources to do the important work.

Establish Communitywide Data Infrastructure

Homebase recommends the community take the following action steps to improve data collection, analysis, and evaluation:

Action Steps:

Create a **data committee** comprised of representatives from the variety of organizations touching the prevention system to develop a uniform data collection policy and consider viable options for a data-sharing platform.

Develop a **core set of data points** that all agencies and organizations working on eviction and/or homelessness prevention programs collect and report on uniformly.

Establish a **quarterly process for sharing aggregate data** that can be analyzed, evaluated, and reported out safely and securely.

Evaluate the possibility over the long-term of developing a **data warehouse** or platform that can pull aggregate data from the separate data systems and organize the data by different data elements to enable communitywide data analysis by demographics, outcomes, etc. while still permitting each entity to preserve their own data.

Develop and **deliver appropriate training and support resources** (including technical assistance) to all HMIS-participating agencies.

Community Model: Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA), City of Memphis and Shelby County, TN

Many communities across the nation have collaborated across sectors to develop emergency rental assistance (ERA) programs. One such program in Shelby County (Memphis), Tennessee includes a number of attributes that may be of interest in the City of San Antonio.

The City of Memphis and Shelby County developed a joint emergency rental assistance program, which includes a **data-sharing relationship with the local court system**. With access to court and program data, the jurisdictions developed tools that allow program administrators to obtain **access to real-time data** that could identify neighborhoods with increased eviction activity.

With the real-time data in hand, program leaders have been able to undertake **targeted outreach** to landlords and tenants in those identified neighborhoods. As well, the information has enabled ERA program staff to **build effective relationships with large apartment complexes** (including landlords and property managers). It has also enabled ERA program staff to identify buildings where they **can engage with tenants directly on the premises**.

3. Impose Eligibility and Prioritization Standards for More Effective Use of Resources.

With more limited funding, the City will need to be strategic about eligibility and prioritization standards for more effective use of resources. The City can coordinate with homeless prevention service providers to ensure that the City's eligibility criteria for rental assistance dollars does not ineffectively overlap with eligibility criteria for other resources. This will go hand in hand with the need for a coordinated triage or screening tool to ensure that individuals are directed to the most appropriate resources for their specific needs.

In addition, a history of redlining and racially discriminatory housing practices led to segregated and disinvested neighborhoods in San Antonio. Research has shown that those that grow up in neighborhoods that were once subject to redlining are more likely to experience higher rates of poverty, shorter life spans, and higher rates of chronic disease. These groups also faced greater health and economic impacts from the pandemic. When prioritizing eviction prevention resources, focusing on low-income neighborhoods can have the greatest impact on preventing housing instability and homelessness.

The Prevention Subcommittee has already done extensive work with developing a prevention screening tool that considers different vulnerabilities and racial equity considerations. The City can work together with the Prevention Subcommittee to develop an aligned prioritization mechanism for distributing rental assistance funds to ensure these limited resources are going to those most in need.

Develop Eligibility and Prioritization Guidelines for Prevention Programs

Homebase recommends the community take the following action steps to ensure prevention resources are used for the most in need from the community:

Action Steps:

Identify cross-sector team to review and recommend prioritization guidelines.
Review prevention subcommittee’s prioritization tool and consider alignment with new eligibility and prioritization criteria for City housing assistance funds.
Consider racial equity component considering San Antonio’s redlining history (see Grounded Solutions Network’s Anti-Displacement plan).
Evaluate data that is available to better understand who has been served by the different eviction and homelessness prevention programs.
Develop proposed eligibility standards and obtain endorsement from across partner organizations and agencies.
Conduct a funding requirement analysis in coordination with other providers to ensure eligibility criteria does not inhibit access to alternative funding.

4. Develop Protocols and Standards Applied Uniformly Across all Precincts of the Justice of Peace Courts Handling Evictions

While the Justice of the Peace Courts have been tremendously supportive of the City's eviction intervention efforts, more uniformity across the precincts would aid city staff and legal aid attorneys in better assisting landlords and tenants.

City staff and legal aid attorneys have expressed that some precincts are more amenable to court procedures related to educating tenants and landlords about the program. For example, in some precincts, announcements about EHAP may be made at the top of the docket whereas in other precincts, announcements are made before each eviction hearing. Small variations in court procedures could make a big difference in whether an individual or family is made known of available assistance. In addition, the lack of predictability and standardization makes it harder for legal aid attorneys to represent their clients effectively.

Moving forward, there is an opportunity for the Justice of the Peace Courts to work together with the City and legal aid organizations to develop uniform procedures related to eviction proceedings and the City's eviction intervention program. As the funding landscape evolves and eviction prevention and homelessness prevention entities continue to align and streamline services, it will also be pertinent to involve the JP Court staff and justices to ensure the courts are aware of programmatic developments and changes. With a deeper understanding of the eviction prevention program, the JP Courts would be better positioned to propose or discuss procedures related to eviction prevention.

“One major issue is how different it is between the various JP courts. In one court people aren't getting much support. The differences and the lack of ability to get one read on policies from all the various Justices of the Peace is really hard, especially as we try to advise clients.”

- Legal Aid Organization Representative

Adopt Uniform Protocols throughout the Justice of the Peace Precincts

Homebase recommends the community take the following action steps to ensure equitable treatment of households who are parties to eviction proceedings:

Action Steps:

Establish a **quarterly convening of JP Court precincts (staff and/or Justices), legal aid organizations and local law school, and City staff** working on eviction prevention

Identify best practices from Justice of the Peace Courts since inception

Propose to JP Courts **uniform procedures or practices** that can be adopted countywide and used in all 4 precincts.

Develop **educational materials for precinct and court staff** to support proposed procedures and practices.

Community Model: Department of Justice Best Practices for Courts Handling Evictions

The Department of Justice developed **best practices** for eviction courts. In a letter addressed to Chief Justices and State Court Administrators, the Department recommended the following best practices related to eviction proceedings:

- **Require landlords to apply for rental assistance before filing.**

Ex. Philadelphia Municipal Court requires landlords to apply for rental assistance 45 days before filing a complaint.

- **Extend time in pending cases to allow tenants more time to apply for rental assistance.**

Ex. Michigan Supreme Court requires courts to stay proceedings up to 45 days after the pretrial hearing if tenant applies for emergency rental assistance and notifies court of application.

- **Modify summons and other filings to alert litigants of availability of rental assistance & other services.**

Ex. Texas Supreme Court modified notices sent to tenants sued for eviction to ensure they are aware of the state's rental assistance program.

5. Improve Engagement with Tenants and Landlords

There are opportunities in the City of San Antonio to capitalize on relationships with landlords that have strengthened under the EHAP program, especially relationships with large landlords and landlord associations. At the same time, there is a growing need to develop robust landlord engagement with small landlords and individual business owners, who face different challenges and different needs in landlord/tenant conflicts than larger, institutional partners.

The community in the City of San Antonio and Bexar County has been highly successful working with landlords and property managers to resolve eviction cases that end up in the County Justice of the Peace courts. With access to an influx of financial resources to ameliorate the harm toward landlords and tenants impacted by COVID, many cases that would have led to eviction were resolved without resulting in housing instability or homelessness for tenants; at the same time, many landlords have been made whole.

Without the continued influx of financial resources, there is the potential that the momentum to keep people stably housed may be lost. In order to continue to build relationships between the City, the County, landlords, and tenants, the community of San Antonio could benefit from a formal, developed landlord engagement program that expands the scope of solutions landlords and tenants can use to resolve issues without heading toward eviction.

Historically, landlord engagement programs in communities are led either through an eviction prevention program or through the traditional homeless system of care. San Antonio's EHAP program leveraged eviction prevention and homeless prevention resources together to help people retain stable housing. The opportunity to build on that effort and develop a joint landlord engagement campaign that is spearheaded by the City and the County, could have long-term, far-reaching impacts. The good will that was established in the landlord community through the City and County's engagement in EHAP is a strong foundation that can continue.

In addition, there are opportunities engage in more upstream solutions to prevent evictions even sooner. Under the current program, City staff generally get involved after the tenants have already received a Notice to Vacate. The City should continue to deepen tenant and landlord education regarding available resources with the aim of connecting individuals to resources even before an eviction is filed. Mediation is an upstream intervention that is commonly used in eviction prevention programs nationwide, but it is underutilized in San Antonio. The City and County can consider expansion of the County's mediation program to increase opportunities for landlords and tenants to resolve disputes prior to eviction cases being filed. The City's Right to

Counsel Program offers legal assistance to low-income tenants but does not include mediation or representation for landlords. Mediation could help supplement the Right to Counsel Program by resolving tenant and landlord issues before evictions are filed and can be supportive for smaller landlords who may not have the means to afford their own attorney.

Increase Eviction and Homelessness Prevention through a Coordinated Landlord Engagement Campaign

Homebase recommends the community take the following action steps to develop a coordinated landlord engagement campaign to expand the scope of solutions available to intervene in landlord/tenant disputes:

Action Steps:

Establish a county-wide collective landlord engagement strategy that includes year-round staffing support to help providers educate the public, recruit landlords, and engage in outreach to property managers and landlords with collective, consistent communitywide messaging.
Consider a City and/or County-sponsored landlord liaison position that could coordinate community efforts and be the first point of contact for landlords.
Expand the landlord risk mitigation and/or incentive fund that provides compensation to landlords to mitigate any damage caused by tenants and to incentivize renting to formerly homeless people or to retain households who are at risk of eviction.
Engage in more upstream solutions that resolve landlord/tenant conflicts outside of the Justice of the Peace courts, for example a mediation program funded by the City and/or County.
Address barriers that make it difficult for tenants to obtain affordable housing by creating client portfolios that include letters of support from community members who know the client, information about the client's background and the steps they have taken to improve their housing stability.

Community Model: Philadelphia Emergency Housing Protections Act (EHPA)

In response to the COVID pandemic, the City of Philadelphia enacted its Emergency Housing Protections Action (EHPA) that went into effect in July, 2020. The EHPA provides a number of protections for tenants who are struggling to pay rent.

- **Landlord Required Notice of Rights to Tenants**

Landlord wishing to evict tenants must send them the Landlord Required Notice of Rights to Tenants 30 days before taking any other steps to evict. If the tenant submits a Tenant COVID-19 Certification of Financial Hardship, the landlord must then contact the Eviction Diversion Program, which will assign a housing counselor to the tenant and schedule a mediation conference with the landlord and tenant.

- **Temporary Waiver of Late Fees**

The landlord cannot charge tenants any late fees between March 1, 2020 and Sept 30, 2021

- **Mandatory Repayment Agreements**

Tenants experiencing COVID-19 financial hardship are entitled to enter into a mandatory repayment agreement with LL which allows T to pay back rent over a multi-month repayment period

6. Identify and Pursue New Funding Opportunities

By implementing the recommendations identified above such as coordinating and streamlining prevention resources and developing more targeted eligibility and prioritization criteria, the eviction prevention program can adjust and continue to serve those in need with more limited funding. The City and the County's ongoing commitment to funding the program will be imperative for its continued success. In addition to commitment in dollars from general funds, the City and County can continue to coordinate with other prevention providers and the homeless system of care to ensure that eviction prevention resources are not depleted in an inefficient manner. Through streamlining of services, the community can determine whether households are best assisted through short-term rental assistance or whether relocation or more intensive supportive services are necessary. In addition, if households are connected to other mainstream services and other supports such as childcare, food assistance, or financial counseling, they may be able to resolve their housing instability. Determining what each

individual or household's needs are will require coordination between the City's eviction intervention efforts and other prevention providers.

Moving forward, the City, County, and Prevention Subcommittee can establish a coordinated response to eviction and homelessness prevention, which can include a grant committee to research and apply for philanthropic opportunities, such as those with health systems or managed care plans. In addition, a coordinated grant committee can conduct research on state and federal funding opportunities.

The City might consider imposing fees on related businesses to generate funds to support eviction prevention programs. The City has such an existing fee structure program in their mobile home park annual registration fee. Through a local ordinance passed in 2017, the City collects an annual registration and license fee of \$35 for each usable mobile living park site, whether occupied or unoccupied. As part of the program, representatives from all registering mobile living parks are required to participate in one of three scheduled health and safety training classes. In addition, a portion of the fees collected are used to help pay for mobile home repairs.

Explore Alternative Funding streams and Maximize Prevention Resources in the Community

Homebase recommends the community take the following action steps to explore alternative funding streams and maximize prevention resources in the community:

Action Steps:

Coordinate with other prevention providers to determine which resources are best suited for the individual and household needs
Explore funding partnerships with health systems and managed care plans as an investment into keeping individuals housed as a key determinant of health
Establish a coordinated grant committee with City, County, and local providers to research and apply for philanthropic opportunities related to eviction prevention and homelessness prevention
Consider resolution to impose fees by residential units to establish funding stream for rental assistance and eviction prevention

Community Model: Rental Registration Program, City of Portland, OR

Communities have **imposed fees on businesses** in order to fund rental programs. In the City of Portland, OR, their eviction prevention program is funded from fees collected through their Residential Registration Program.

Apartment owners must pay an **annual \$60 fee** on all units that are rented out for more than 30 days per calendar year. The fee generates \$3 million funding stream for the Rental Services Office.

The Rental Services Office uses the fees collected to fund:

- A hotline for tenants and landlords
- Fair housing services
- Upstream services (anti-displacement strategies)
- Mediation
- Landlord-tenant education
- Tenant relocation services
- Legal services, including eviction defense
- Fair housing services

Conclusion

The success of San Antonio's eviction prevention program can be attributed to the dedication of the City, County, including the Justice of the Peace Courts, legal aid organizations and local law school in working collaboratively to prevent evictions. In particular, the City's commitment to holding housing navigator staff positions and the JP Courts' partnership in allowing the staff operate and connect with tenants and landlords in the courts have been imperative to the success of the program thus far. As the funding landscape changes, adjustments to program design will need to be made such as establishing clear and equitable eligibility and prioritization criteria for receiving housing related financial assistance. The City and local partners also have an opportunity to improve the design of the eviction prevention efforts by better streamlining services with homeless prevention providers to ensure that individuals are connected to the most appropriate prevention and mainstream resources. Collaboration can be improved through an aligned triage or screening process and by establishing a data infrastructure for data collection and sharing. Overall, San Antonio is in a great position to build on a strong program foundation and the momentum established through both the Prevention Subcommittee and the Eviction Prevention Oversight Group. Implementing some of the recommendations outlined in this report will help San Antonio's eviction prevention become even stronger and sustainable over the long term.

Glossary

American Rescue Plan (ARP) – national legislation that passed in 2021 to address the public health and economic crises facing the country due to COVID-19. The legislation included economic relief to families (including a child tax credit), as well as programs to address housing and homelessness, including emergency rental assistance.

Area Median Income (AMI) – the midpoint of a region’s income distribution – half of families in a region earn more than the median and half earn less than the median. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines and calculates different levels of AMI for geographic areas across the country by household size.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – is a flexible program run by The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs.

Continuum of Care (CoC) – a community-based local planning group working toward ending homelessness. A CoC’s purpose includes creating a unified plan to organize and provide housing and services to meet the specific needs of people experiencing homelessness as they move to stable housing and maximize self-sufficiency; gathering and analyzing information in order to determine the local needs; implementing strategic responses; and measuring results. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds many homeless programs through Continuums of Care grants.

Coordinated Entry System (CE or CES) – is the process each Continuum of Care (CoC) sets up to ensure that people experiencing or at risk of homelessness are prioritized for resources based on severity of need and that people are matched to available resources most suitable to meet their needs. Coordinated Entry’s primary purpose is to allocate housing resources fairly and appropriately. The Coordinated Entry System in San Antonio and Bexar County is called Homelink.

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) – national legislation that passed in 2020 to provide immediate, direct economic assistance for American workers, families, small businesses, and industries impacted by COVID-19. Many of the one-time, additional funds to communities to address homelessness and housing are authorized by the CARES Act, including under the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG-CV) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG-CV) programs.

Cost burden – is the ratio of housing costs to household income. For renters, housing cost is gross rent (contract rent plus utilities). For owners, housing cost is "select monthly owner costs," which includes mortgage payment, utilities, association fees, insurance, and real estate taxes.

Department of Human Services (DHS) – a City of San Antonio department that provides direct and contractual services under Early Education and Child Care Assistance, Education, Financial and Emergency Assistance, Homeless Assistance, and Senior Services.

Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP) – a City of San Antonio program created to respond to the increases for housing assistance as a result of the Covid-19 crisis for qualifying individuals. With an influx of federal funding, the program provided individuals and families rent, mortgage, utility and internet access assistance in the event of a hardship. While cash assistance is no longer available the program continues to provide a navigator to assist individuals and families to enroll in long-term benefits.

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) – is a federal grant program that provides funds to assist people to quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis and/or homelessness.

Eviction – a court-ordered removal of a tenant from the property where they reside, for any number of reasons, including non-payment of rent.

Eviction Moratorium – was initially a federal effort announced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to protect people from evictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The moratorium prevented landlords from evicting tenants and helped households retain stable housing during the pandemic. The U.S. Supreme Court in 2021 determined the federal moratorium was unconstitutional, so the CDC had to lift the moratorium. Some states, counties, or cities, however, kept their local eviction moratoriums in place.

Eviction Notice (also known as a Demand for Possession) – in Bexar County, a landlord who wishes to evict a tenant needs to provide an Eviction Notice that is written and delivered in a specific manner. If the eviction is for non-payment of rent, they have to first provide a Notice to Vacate for Non-payment of Rent and a Notice of Tenant's Rights.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) – is a local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness.

Housing navigators – help tenants complete rental assistance applications or other needed forms and connect them to additional resources in the community, including legal assistance. In the City of San Antonio, they act as neutral parties to provide advice and counsel to both tenants and landlords. Because housing navigators are located on-site at the Courts, they can provide interventions on the day of eviction proceedings.

Justice of the Peace Courts (JP Courts) – based in Bexar County, the Justice of the Peace Courts handle civil proceedings, including traffic tickets and evictions. There are four Justices, each elected by residents of Bexar County, each seated in one of four precincts in Bexar County. The Justice of the Peace Courts participate in a Texas Eviction Diversion program and partnered with the City of San Antonio in the EHAP program.

Landlord incentive programs – provide education and incentives to landlords to make it more likely they will rent to people experiencing homelessness or who are housing unstable. They can provide funding to support risk mitigation (compensating landlords if tenants harm their premises) and financial incentives that make landlords more likely to rent to people transitioning out of homelessness. Most programs include an education component and address racial inequities in voucher acceptance and access to housing.

Mediation – a process when two or more parties to a court case discuss their disputes with the assistance of a third-party who is trained to be impartial, known as a mediator. The mediator assists the two parties to reach a settlement or resolution without going to court.

Neighborhood & Housing Services Department (NHSD) – a City of San Antonio department dedicated to housing, economic stimulation, reinvestment, rehabilitation, and supportive funding for public services.

Notice of Tenant's Rights – In the City of San Antonio, a new 2020 law requires that all housing providers must provide tenants with a Notice of Tenant's Rights within one business day after delivering a Notice to Vacate based on Non-Payment of Rent. The notice is intended to help both landlords and tenants avoid costly and traumatic eviction proceedings by encouraging communication and highlighting financial assistance resources. The Notice includes information that encourages dialogue between tenants

and landlords, connects tenants to available resources, and makes clear that a Notice to Vacate is not an eviction, but is the first step toward an eviction.

Notice to Vacate for Non-payment of Rent – in Bexar County, before a landlord can issue a Notice of Eviction, they are required to give a tenant a Notice to Vacate for Non-payment of Rent. A tenant does not actually have to vacate the unit by the date on the Notice to Vacate. If the tenant does not pay rent by the date on the notice, the landlord can file an Eviction Notice at the Justice of the Peace Courts.

Public Housing Agencies (PHAs – also known as local housing authorities) – are local agencies that implement public housing programs and services. The San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) is the local housing authority for the City of San Antonio. SAHA provides access to affordable housing and social services for City residents.

Right to Counsel – the City of San Antonio’s Right to Counsel program is a partnership with Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid (TRLA), which offers legal aid services to households with low incomes who are experiencing eviction or other housing issues that threaten their housing status.

San Antonio Legal Services Association (SALSA) – is a corps of attorney volunteers coordinated by professional staff to provide free civil legal services to those with limited means and those who are vulnerable or at-risk. Through a partnership with Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid (TRLA), SALSA provides legal assistance to tenants facing eviction in the Justice of the Peace Courts, as part of the City of San Antonio’s Right to Counsel program.

South Alamo Regional Alliance for Homeless (SARAH) – a nonprofit organization designated as the lead Continuum of Care (CoC) agency for San Antonio and Bexar County. SARAH secures and distributes funding for direct service providers in the housing and homeless community and provides guidance to strengthen policies and programs.

Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs (TDHCA) – is a state department that provides funds to local residents in need through partnerships with cities and counties, nonprofit and community-based organizations, private developers, and Public Housing Authorities (PHAs). They programs they offer include a home buying program, rent payment assistance, and poverty and homelessness prevention.

Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid (TRLA) – is the nation’s second largest legal aid provider and the largest in Texas. TRLA provides free civil legal services to residents in 68 Southwest Texas counties and represents migrant and seasonal farm workers throughout the state and in six other southern states. TRLA provides legal assistance to tenants facing eviction in the Justice of the Peace Courts, as part of the City of San Antonio’s Right to Counsel program.

Appendix A: Comparison of Data Collected from Entities Participating in Eviction Prevention and Homelessness Prevention Efforts

Key Data Points	City of SA	Bexar County	SALSA	SAMMinistries	CES Homelink (Prevention Assessment Tool)	St. Mary's Law School
Specific reason for help (rental assistance, mortgage assistance, utility assistance, housing counseling and corresponding sub-categories)	X					
Household (HH) receiving advice and counsel	X		X			X
HH receiving negotiation or limited legal assistance			X			X
HH receiving extended representation on a housing matter			X			X
HH where negotiated settlement with litigation						X
HH where eviction was prevented			X			
HH where eviction was delayed			X			
HH obtaining repairs or otherwise enforced rights to decent, habitable housing			X			
HH obtaining restored access to personal property			X			
HH with court decision contested						X
Tenants and household members who received a favorable legal resolution to a housing discrimination case			X			
Clients obtaining advice and counsel for expunction/non-disclosure			X			
Clients obtaining expunction/non-disclosure			X			
Total number of people assisted through right-to-counsel			X			
HH type (single individual, two adults, etc.)	X					
HH includes student, veteran, foster child, person with disability, a live-in attendant	X					
Name (last and first)	X				X	
Plaintiff and defendant names		X				
Plaintiff and defendant address		X				
Date of birth	X				X	
Age of clients (year of birth)	X		X	X		X
Children per HH	X		X	X		X
Gender of clients	X		X	X	X	X
Race/ethnicity of clients	X		X	X	X	X
Preferred language	X					

Key Data Points	City of SA	Bexar County	SALSA	SAMMinistries	CES Homelink (Prevention Assessment Tool)	St. Mary's Law School
Relationship to HH					X	
HH size of clients	X		X			X
Education level	X				X	
Have you received income in last 2 months (if yes, how much)	X					
Social Security Number	X				X	
Family income of clients	X		X		X	X
Cash income ranges	X			X		
Cash income sources	X			X		
Types of non-cash benefits	X			X		
Number of non-cash benefits				X		
At or below 80% AMI					X	
Address	X					
Zip code of clients	X		X	X	X	X
Council district of clients	X		X			
Rent or own (if rent, ask additional landlord questions)	X					
Lease status					X	
Does anyone pay all or part of monthly rent	X					
Disability status of clients	X		X		X	
Veteran status					X	X
Immigration status						X
Domestic violence (DV) history	X			X		
Persons fleeing DV (or suspected DV in the residence)	X			X		
Prior living situation					X	
Living situation at start	X			X	X	
At imminent risk of homelessness					X	
Have they received notice to vacate, notice of eviction, judgment from eviction court, writ of possession	X	X			X	
Contact information (phone, email and ask for specific information)	X					
Grounds for eviction (e.g., unpaid rent, other lease violations, holdover)		X				
Specific landlord questions (e.g, verify property is a "covered dwelling," verify they read the Texas Eviction Diversion Program, verify whether plaintiff is a "multi-family borrower," verified they produce a notice to vacate, etc.)		X				
Whether there is a suit for unpaid rent		X				
Attorney's fees question		X				

Key Data Points	City of SA	Bexar County	SALSA	SAMMinistries	CES Homelink (Prevention Assessment Tool)	St. Mary's Law School
Relief sought	X	X				
Military status affidavit		X				
Eviction history					X	
Felony history					X	