WHATCOM COUNTY

Health Department

Erika Lautenbach, MPH, Director

Amy Harley, MD, MPH, Co-Health Officer
Greg Thompson, MD, MPH, Co-Health Officer

MEMORANDUM

TO: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive

FROM: Erika Lautenbach, Director

RE: Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center – Eviction Resolution Pilot Program Contract

DATE: March 11, 2022

Attached is a contract between Whatcom County and Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center for your review and signature.

- **Background and Purpose**
  Washington State launched the Eviction Resolution Pilot Program (ERPP) in 2021 to address and mitigate disputes about rent owed between landlords and tenants. Potential evictions for unpaid rent from March 1, 2020 until the present are now subject to the ERPP, as enacted in April, 2021 (SB 5160 Section 7, RCW 59.18.630). Landlords must engage the ERPP process before an eviction for unpaid rent may proceed to court. The ERPP requires formal mediation between landlords and tenants through participating Dispute Resolution Centers. Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center (WDRC) is the only Whatcom County agency providing the ERPP and working with the court system for these purposes. ERPP is currently funded as a part of a statewide contract through the Administrative Office of the Courts. State funding is currently insufficient to fully support this service in Whatcom County and WDRC expects to exhaust current State funding by the end of March. This contract provides funding to bridge the gap and meet the demands of the program from March 16th through June 30th, until WDRC receives funding through a new State contract.

- **Funding Amount and Source**
  Funding for this contract, in an amount not to exceed $74,800, is provided by County American Rescue Plan Act funds (CFDA 21.027). These funds are included in the 2022 budget. Council approval is required as funding exceeds $40,000.

Please contact Ann Beck, Human Services Manager at 360-778-6055 (ABeck@co.whatcom.wa.us) or Kathleen Roy, Assistant Director at 360-778-6007 (KRoy@co.whatcom.wa.us) if you have any questions or concerns regarding this request.

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