

Eviction Defense Project Development Plan

Who: Convened by Denver City Council and the Mayor's HOPE Office in partnership with Denver District Court

Purpose: Expand Access to Civil Legal Assistance for Eviction Defendants

Outcomes: A single proposal or several alternative proposals for providing free/low cost legal advice and/or representation to eviction defendants that could be implemented in 2018, and which incorporates feedback from tenant advocates, landlords, policy experts, and the broader legal community

Process: Best Practice Research and Stakeholder Feedback Process

Background: The City and County of Denver has recognized the negative impacts to families and communities of the high number of evictions taking place in the City (more than 8000 in 2016). Many defendants come to court unrepresented, or do not appear at all, limiting their ability to understand the process and evaluate their options. National best practices are emerging for the provision of legal advice and/or representation in eviction courts. At the behest of the City Council, and with support from the Mayor's HOPE Office, the District Court has agreed to partner in the exploration of which if any best practices may be appropriate for Denver.

The following phases are intended to efficiently evaluate existing best practices through a transparent and inclusive process where stakeholders have input at key junctions in the development of project proposal(s).

Phase I: Research

- Present best practices gathered so far
 - National eviction models
 - Supervising Attorney; Support Staff; Volunteers
 - Supervising Attorney; Students
 - (Hybrid) Supervising Attorney; Volunteers and Students
 - Staff Attorneys
 - Local models from other sectors (e.g. Protection Order model by Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center)
- Seek input from stakeholders on other models/cities that should be researched, initial feedback on the broad models being explored

Phase II: Report Back on Initial Findings

- Present the pros/cons of the models researched
- Get feedback on additional pros/cons
- Narrow down the field of models to one or two

Phase III: Refining Model Components

- Further develop the preferred models into final proposals, including:

- Costing
- Sponsorship/partnerships required
- Timeline and steps for implementation
- Present final proposal to stakeholders for feedback on details

Phase IV: Seek Final Approval

- Pursue funding and/or any necessary approvals to set the program up
- Finalize partnership agreements if needed
- Launch

Stakeholders	Why Included
9to5 Colorado	Renter’s advocacy organization
Colorado Legal Services	Expertise
Denver University Sturm College of Law	Denver’s only law school clinical program; experience with similar models
Apartment Association of Metro Denver	Landlord perspective
Colorado Affordable Legal Services	Legal Expertise
Enterprise Community Partners	Policy Expertise, Potential ideas about funding
Metro Volunteer Lawyers	Potential volunteer base
Women’s Bar Association	Eviction disproportionately impacts women, potential volunteer base, civic-oriented organization
Other minority bar associations?	
Lisana/DHS Staff	Client perspectives from Outreach Pilot