

Memorandum

REPORT TO: City Commission

FROM: Cola Rowley, Assistant City Manager

SUBJECT: Authorize City Manager to Sign a Professional Services Agreement with Montana Legal Services Association to implement and provide legal services to residential tenants in Bozeman under the City's Bozeman Tenant Right to Counsel Program.

MEETING DATE: August 4, 2026

AGENDA ITEM TYPE: Agreement - Vendor/Contract

RECOMMENDATION: I move to approve the City Manager sign a Professional Services Agreement with Montana Legal Services Association to implement and provide legal services to residential tenants in Bozeman under the City's Bozeman Tenant Right to Counsel Program.

STRATEGIC PLAN: 3.3 Friendly Community: Ensure Bozeman continues to welcome diversity through policies and public awareness.

BACKGROUND:

In January of 2023, the City Commission, pursuant to [Resolution 5626](#) (adopted August 6, 2024), established a priority to develop a tenant right to counsel program. On May 13, 2025, the City Commission held a work session on Tenant's Right to Counsel (TRC). At the conclusion of that [work session](#), all members of the City Commission indicated their support to move forward with developing an ordinance for a civil right to legal counsel for tenants in the city and a majority of commissioners expressed interest in a mediation program open to both landlords and tenants to resolve disputes prior to or in lieu of litigation.

On December 2, 2025, the City Commission adopted [Resolution 2025-77](#) and provisionally adopted [Ordinance 2025-11](#) creating a Tenant Right to Counsel Program and a Landlord Tenant Mediation Program. Final adoption of the ordinance was December 16, 2025. The City went through two public request for proposal processes for the legal services program during the spring of 2026. This contract is a result of that procurement process and will create and implement a program to provide residential tenants in Bozeman access to legal counsel for housing related issues.

In entering into this contract the City takes the final steps and becomes the first City in Montana with a Tenant Right to Counsel Program that provides access to legal counsel for tenants in our community.

UNRESOLVED ISSUES: None.

ALTERNATIVES: At the discretion of the Commission.

FISCAL EFFECTS: This Agreement authorizes up to \$200,000 be paid for the one year contract.

Attachments:

[PSA with MLSA for TRC Legal Services.pdf](#)

[Exhibit A Scope of Services with MLSA.pdf](#)

Report compiled on: July 24, 2026