



Department Source: Law

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: March 6, 2023

Re: Addition of Source of Income to Protected Categories for Non-discrimination

Executive Summary

This bill would add "source of income" as a protected category for purposes of prohibiting discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodation.

Discussion

On October 3, 2022 the Human Rights Commission submitted a report to the City Council requesting the addition of source of income as a protected category in Chapter 12 of the City Code to ensure persons who utilize housing vouchers are not discriminated against in the sale or rental of dwellings. At that time, the City Council requested staff to bring back an ordinance to incorporate source of income protections in the city code.

Source of income is not a protected class under the Federal Fair Housing Act; however, there are protections in place for use of housing choice vouchers if the property owner receives assistance under the HOME program or is a participant in the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program. The Columbia City Code currently has "receipt of governmental assistance" as a protected category; however, the addition of source of income and a definition including housing voucher programs would ensure express application across all housing providers and not only those currently participating in HOME, LIHTC or other similar federal program.

For consistency throughout the city code, a comprehensive amendment has been drafted that would add a definition for source of income and add it as a protected category throughout Chapter 12 as well as in Chapter 19 (personnel policies) for Council consideration. The recommended code amendments provide an opportunity to immediately decrease barriers to housing and increase affordable housing availability. In addition, the source of income protections should improve positive outcomes for individuals and families at risk of or experiencing homelessness as well as housing stress.

In the bill, source of income is defined as:

Source of income. Any source of money paid to an individual or family or on behalf of an individual or family, including, but not limited to:

(a) Money derived from any lawful profession, occupation, or activity;

(b) Money derived from any contract, agreement, loan, settlement, court order (such as court-ordered child support or alimony), gift, grant, bequest, annuity, or life insurance policy; and



(c) Money derived from any benefit or subsidy program. Benefit or subsidy programs include, but are not limited to: Any housing assistance, such as Housing Choice Vouchers, Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) Vouchers, tribal grants or vouchers, or any other form of housing assistance payment or credit, whether or not paid or attributed directly to a landlord; public assistance; emergency rental assistance; tribal or Native American benefit programs; veterans benefits; Social Security or other retirement program; supplemental security income; or other program administered by any federal, state, or local agency or nonprofit entity.

A copy of the original report from the Human Rights Commission as well as a study conducted in 2018 on the effectiveness of non-discrimination laws based upon source of income is included as supplemental information.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: Not applicable.

Long-Term Impact: Not applicable.

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

[Strategic Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Inclusive Community, Secondary Impact: Not Applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

[Comprehensive Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Not Applicable, Secondary Impact: Not applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Legislative History

Date	Action
10/03/2022	REP80-22: Correspondence from the Human Rights Commission – Source of Income Laws.

Suggested Council Action

Passage of the ordinance.