

City Council to vote on possibly adding millions to housing assistance fund

By Darian Trotter Wednesday, April 22nd 202

SAN ANTONIO - Thousands of local families affected by the coronavirus pandemic may soon be getting help to make ends meet.

The exact amount of money to be able to do that will be decided in a vote at City Council tomorrow.

"We hope they do the right thing tomorrow," said Linda Davila.

San Antonio's city council will vote Thursday on the so-called Risk Mitigation Fund.

It's a fund aimed to help thousands of San Antonio families with emergency housing assistance during the COVID-19 outbreak.

"Because it's the most important, it's one of the basic things we all need, especially the rent and utilities you know," said renter Lupita Valdez.

Lupita Valdez was able to pay April's rent with her stimulus check, but she like so many others, are worried about next month.

"It's not enough, especially if you're single," Valdez said.

Right now, \$15.8 million have been identified for the COVID-19 emergency housing assistance package.

Because it's federally funded, there are strings attached, which could delay distribution or prevent families from applying.

"If you don't have a social security number, you're not eligible for those funds," said Linda Davila.

Linda Davila works with **COPS Metro** to help families find affordable housing and keep them there.

The non-profit has been working with Councilman Roberto Trevino to increase the emergency fund by \$10 million to help with rent, mortgage and utilities payments.

"These dollars will come with less restrictions and so more citizens will be able to take advantage," Valdez said.

Councilman Trevino has identified the following funding sources:

- Tax increment finance zones



- The San Antonio public finance corp.,
- City council budget carry-forward balances
- The parking fund

The combined funding sources would total \$25.8 million to help more families pay essential bills and stay in their homes.

"Executive order is stay home, work safe," Davila said. "Well if they're without a house they're not going to be safe anywhere."

The emergency housing fund is intended to help 10,000 families over the next three months.

Councilman Trevino thinks the number of families in need will be closer to 30,000.