

## AGENDA



Thursday, July 24, 2008

**Health and Human Services  
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION****Item No. 34**

**Subject:** Approve negotiation and execution of a 29-month contract with CARITAS OF AUSTIN, Austin, TX for a collaborative pilot project to rapidly re-house homeless/near homeless families and individuals in an amount not to exceed \$282,000.

**Amount and Source of Funding:** Funding in the amount of \$136,000 is available in the Fiscal Year 2007-2008 Operating Budget of the Health and Human Services Department. Funding for the remaining contract amount is contingent upon available funding in future budgets. The contract period is August 1, 2008 through December 31, 2010.

**Fiscal Note:** There is no unanticipated fiscal impact. A fiscal note is not required.

**For More Information:** Vince Cobalis, Assistant Director for Human Services, 972-5011, Susan Gehring, Community-Based Resources Manager, 972-5026, Linda Terry, Agenda Coordinator, 972-5023.

**Prior Council Action:** Council approved the Fiscal Year 2007-2008 Fiscal Year Budget, September 10, 2007.

**BACKGROUND**

In May 2008, the City of Austin Health and Human Services Department (HHSD) issued a Request for Applications (RFA) for a Rapid Re-Housing Pilot Project. The award for a 29-month period, beginning approximately August 1, 2008, or upon execution of the contract, and continuing through December 31, 2010, would be \$282,000. Of the \$282,000 funding, \$154,000 is for project expenses, including a Housing Specialist to be hired by Caritas, and \$128,000 is available for direct client assistance to address barriers to the rapid re-housing of clients.

The application from Caritas of Austin is the only application HHSD received in response to the RFA. Eight social services agencies that serve the homeless and/or the near homeless are collaborating with Caritas of Austin as the lead applicant to provide rapid re-housing services. The application was reviewed by representatives from the City of Austin HHSD, Travis County and United Way. It is the recommendation of the panel to award the contract to the collaboration led by Caritas of Austin.

Finding and securing affordable permanent housing is a significant challenge for homeless/near homeless people in the Austin area. Consequently, HHSD is interested in supporting a demonstration/pilot project designed to address some of the challenges and barriers that homeless/near homeless families and individuals face when seeking affordable permanent housing in Austin. The goals of the Rapid Re-Housing Pilot are to move homeless/near homeless families and individuals quickly into permanent housing and to reduce their time in shelter or other temporary housing facilities.

The Rapid Re-Housing RFA was modeled after successful projects in Hennepin County MN, Columbus OH, New York City NY, Washington DC, and other areas around the nation. In addition, members of the Ending Community Homelessness Organization (ECHO) and the Basic Needs Coalition (BNC) have requested that a model such as this be considered for our community.

In supporting the pilot, HHSD intends to explore the feasibility of a rapid re-housing model utilizing a designated Housing Specialist to build the supply of available rental units for homeless/near homeless people, to assist with the identification of housing for specific project clients and to act as a liaison between property managers/landlords and case management staff at collaborative partner agencies; the use of direct assistance funds to assist with some financial barriers that may otherwise prevent people from acquiring permanent housing; building ongoing working relationships with housing organizations, property managers/landlords; providing follow-up services to placed clients to support their maintenance of permanent housing and, when necessary, to intercede with landlords in problem resolution and eviction prevention efforts; and reducing the costs of supporting people in a homeless-services system when relatively minor financial assistance may facilitate the rapid re-housing of some clients.

Caritas of Austin will serve as the lead agency and fiscal agent for the collaboration comprised of the following partners: AIDS Services of Austin, Any Baby Can, Catholic Charities, Foundation for the Homeless, Goodwill of Central Texas, LifeWorks, SafePlace and Salvation Army, and City HHSD. The City will provide the funding for the project and the agencies will provide services.

The collaboration will pool resources to effectively transition citizens out of homelessness or near homelessness by providing: a rapid re-housing Specialist to identify available housing and make housing placement; financial assistance to overcome barriers to permanent housing; outcome-oriented case management; and rapid exit to permanent housing.

The primary target population for the pilot project will be families, with secondary populations being veterans, the disabled, HIV positive individuals, individuals recently released from prison, youth, and the elderly. Clients served through this program will be referred by the collaborator's partners. The collaboration intends to identify housing for approximately 150 households of one or more citizens who are homeless. In addition to placing approximately 150 households annually, the collaboration will place 32 households into housing who are receiving outcome oriented case management services from one of the collaborative partners. These families will be followed on a more intensive basis for at least one year.

The collaboration will use existing data systems currently utilized in the community to track clients who receive housing as a result of the programs.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Related Goals: Promotion/Prevention/Protection: Social Services – Promote and foster increased self-sufficiency, healthy behaviors and lifestyle among targeted populations.

### Outputs

Number of housing placements made through the Pilot Project for clients of the collaborative partners: 150 (annual)

Number of housed clients who receive case management from collaborative partners: 32 (annual)

Number of Memorandums of Understanding signed with area housing entities: 10 (annual)

### Outcomes

Percentage of case-managed households who remain in safe and stable housing for six months: 85% (annual)

Percentage of case managed households who remain in safe and stable housing for twelve months: 85% (annual)