



**Community Development Commission CDBG Request
Presented by Tod Marvin, President, Easterseals Central Texas
April 12, 2022**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you this evening. My name is Tod Marvin and I am the President of Easterseals Central Texas, a nonprofit organization serving people with disabilities in this community for the past 85 years. Eight years ago Easterseals acquired Vaughn House, a nonprofit organization located at 1701 Evergreen Avenue in south Austin. Vaughn House has been in operation since the 1960's, serving deaf individuals with multiple physical and/or intellectual disabilities.

Since 1984, Vaughn House has been operating a Day Habilitation program at 1701 Evergreen Avenue as well as a janitorial employment program. These programs are an important resource for the deaf community in Austin with multiple disabilities, and their families. The Day Habilitation program provides meaningful day activities for clients, and needed respite for their caregivers. Prior to the covid pandemic, the program was serving 10 clients. Unfortunately, many Day Habilitation programs did not survive the pandemic. Today, our program is serving 28 adults and we have a waiting list of other clients needing services that we're unable to serve today.

When Vaughn House acquired its current property in 1984, it worked with the city of Austin to secure CDGB funds to upgrade and expand the facility. For the past 38 years, those funds have supported critical services to deaf citizens with multiple disabilities. Vaughn House and Easterseals have been excellent stewards of those funds, leveraging them to the greatest degree possible in service to our mission. We've provided direct services to nearly 1,600 hearing-impaired people with disabilities while supporting the mental and physical health of countless additional family members and caregivers.

Today, the need is greater than at any time in Easterseals Vaughn House history. The pandemic has undermined the community's ability to provide quality services to our people and if we do not respond, the consequences could be serious. I am here to request Community Development Block Grant funding needed to expand and repurpose our existing facility in order to meet the current need for Day Habilitation services in Austin. We have the property and the existing space, but currently it is not appropriately configured nor constructed to provide Day Habilitation services. The space has been used primarily as storage and staging for our Janitorial Services Employment program.

Renovating our existing building would allow us to serve everyone currently on our waiting list and more, ensuring that future generations of deaf individuals with multiple disabilities, and their family members, can live and thrive in Austin, while continuing the history of impact and service that CDBG funding has delivered to our community for the last half century. Thank you for your time and consideration this evening.