



## Recommendation for Action

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**File #:** 21-2930, **Agenda Item #:** 81.

9/30/2021

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### **Posting Language**

Ratify an agreement with Front Steps to provide staffing for protective lodges for individuals experiencing homelessness with serious underlying health conditions that increase their risk of complications and hospitalization related to COVID-19, in an amount not to exceed \$151,000 for a three-month term ending on September 30, 2021.

### **Lead Department**

Austin Public Health.

### **Fiscal Note**

Funding in the amount of \$151,000 is available in the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 General Fund Emergency Reserve Fund operating budget.

### **Prior Council Action:**

July 29, 2020 - Council approved ratification of an agreement with Front Steps, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$904,673 for a six-month term ending December 31, 2020, on a 10-0 vote with Mayor Adler off the dais.  
April 9, 2020 - City Council approved Resolution No. 20200409-081, which authorized the City Manager to negotiate and execute new emergency contracts funded from the Relief in a State of Emergency (RISE) Fund to offer immediate support services and direct financial assistance to residents impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis, on an 11-0 vote.

April 9, 2020 - Council approved Ordinance No. 20200409-87 amending the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 General Fund Emergency Reserve Fund (Ordinance No. 20190910-001) to appropriate an amount not to exceed \$15,000,000 for the RISE Fund to support COVID-19 emergency relief, on an 11-0 vote.

### **For More Information:**

Adrienne Sturup, Interim Director, 512-972-5167; Laura LaFuenta, Interim Assistant Director, Health Equity and Community Engagement Division, (512) 972-5077; Akeshia Johnson Smothers, Community Based Resources Unit Manager, 512-972-5567, Ruth Dalrymple, Acting Agenda Coordinator, 972-5024.

### **Additional Backup Information:**

Approval of this item will authorize Austin Public Health to negotiate and execute Amendment No. 3 to an agreement with Front Steps, Inc. to provide staffing for the continuation of Protective Lodging for people experiencing homelessness who have serious underlying health conditions placing them at greater risk of severely negative outcomes and hospitalization should they contract COVID-19.

Amendment No. 2 extended the agreement term to July 1, 2021.

The original agreement was approved in an amount not to exceed \$904,673 for a six-month term ending on December 31, 2020.

Protective Lodging, also referred to as ProLodges, have been activated through the Austin/Travis County Emergency Operations Center as an emergency response to COVID-19 and is an important component of the

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infection control strategy to prevent and mitigate spread of COVID-19.

The priority population for this project is persons receiving temporary emergency shelter in a ProLodge operated by the City during the emergency response to COVID-19. Persons receiving temporary emergency shelter in a ProLodge are those experiencing homelessness who have been identified as high risk for severe complications and hospitalization if they are exposed to or contract COVID-19. Services provided at a ProLodge include a private room to safely isolate the individual from exposure to COVID-19, daily symptom checks, meals, laundry services, access to mental/behavioral health services, connection to necessary medical care, and assistance connecting to case management and community resources to move to permanent housing upon discharge from a ProLodge.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (also known as the CDC), “community coalitions should identify resources to support people sleeping outside as well as additional temporary housing, including sites with individual rooms that are able to provide appropriate services, supplies, and staffing. These sites should include:

- Overflow sites to accommodate shelter decompression and higher shelter demands.
- Isolation sites for people who are confirmed to be positive for COVID-19 from laboratory testing.
- Quarantine sites for people who are awaiting testing or test results, or who were exposed to COVID-19.
- Protective housing for people who are at highest risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Depending on resources and staff availability, housing options that have individual rooms, such as hotels or motels, and separate bathrooms should be considered for the overflow, quarantine, and protective housing sites. In addition, it is necessary to include a plan for how to connect clients to housing opportunities after they have completed their stay in these temporary sites.

**Strategic Outcome(s):**

Economic Opportunity and Affordability.