



# AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Edward D. Reiskin  
City Administrator

**FROM:** Sara Bedford  
Director, Human Services

**SUBJECT:** Winter Relief Funding FY 2021-22

**DATE:** October 18, 2021

City Administrator Approval

Date:

Nov 3, 2021

## RECOMMENDATION

**Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt a Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Take The Following Actions To Provide Winter Relief Efforts:**

- 1. Accept And Appropriate Up To One Hundred Forty Thousand Dollars (\$140,000) From Alameda County For The North County Winter Relief Efforts;**
- 2. Authorize Amendment Of The Grant Agreement With East Oakland Community Project (ECOP) To Increase The Amount By Sixty-Seven Thousand Dollars (\$67,000) For The Provision Of Winter Shelter Beds;**
- 3. Authorize Amendment Of The Grant Agreement With St. Mary's Center To Increase The Amount By One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) For The Provision Of Street Based Housing Navigation Services And Hotel Vouchers For Seniors During Winter Months;**
- 4. Authorize Amendment Of The Grant Agreement With The Society Of Saint Vincent De Paul (SVdP) To Increase The Amount By One Hundred Thirty-Three Thousand One Hundred Ninety-Three Dollars (\$133,193) For The Provision Of Additional Shelter Beds During Winter Months; And**
- 5. Accept And Appropriate Any Additional Funds Awarded By Alameda County For The Provision Of Fiscal Year 2021-22 North County Winter Relief Efforts And To Amend The Above-Mentioned Grant Agreements To Increase The Amounts Using Any Additional Funds, Without Returning To Council.**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Adoption of the proposed resolution would allow the City Administrator to accept and allocate funds from Alameda County for the purpose of implementing a Winter Relief strategy. The funds will be used to support increased shelter needs during inclement weather months including the provision of hotel/motel vouchers, additional shelter beds, and supporting street-based housing

City Council  
November 16, 2021

navigation. Funds will support those living on the street with a focus on sensitive populations such as individuals with underlying serious health conditions and seniors.

## **BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

The most recent data available from the January 2019 Point-In-Time (PIT) Homeless Count and Survey estimated that there were 4,071 people experiencing homelessness in Oakland on a given night. This represents an increase of 1,310 individuals (47%) from 2017. This includes an increase of 2,449 unsheltered individuals (63%). In 2019, 79% of the people experiencing homelessness in the City of Oakland were unsheltered compared to 69% in 2017. With each Point-In-Time Count since 2015, the number of people experiencing homelessness is increasing. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that had the count occurred in 2021 the number would have increased to more than 5,000, and probably even more given the wide-reaching effects of the pandemic.

In the 2019 PIT county, over one-third (35%) of the population were residing in vehicles. An additional 32% were residing in tents or makeshift shelters and 10% were identified sleeping on the streets and in other outdoor locations. One percent (1%) were identified in non-residential buildings.

## **ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

Alameda County Housing and Community Development Agency typically provides winter relief support to the City of Oakland each year. While it is unlikely that Alameda County will provide additional funding, the resolution includes language to accept additional funding for same purpose so that actions could be taken in a timely way to address extreme winter needs of the unsheltered community. In addition, HSD Community Homeless Services has an allocation of \$30,000 from the City of Emeryville to support winter relief shelter beds as well as General Purpose funding (\$120,238) allocated by City Council to support these efforts and high priority projects. Total Winter Relief funding available is \$290,238.

As the crisis of unsheltered homelessness has grown over the past several years, the City has adapted and expanded its winter relief strategy. In FY 2020-21, the City determined that the best way to address the ongoing homelessness crisis while simultaneously responding to a global pandemic was to use available funds to provide hotel/motel vouchers and support street-based housing navigation for seniors during the inclement weather months. This strategy was successful, as demonstrated in the performance section below.

For FY 21-22, the City is proposing the following winter relief interventions:

- *Senior Services:* The City will amend its grant agreement with St. Mary's Center to fund intensive street-based housing navigation (case management focused on housing goals) to vulnerable seniors who are unsheltered. As part of this program, funding will also be available for temporarily sheltering vulnerable seniors in hotel rooms. It should be noted that historically St. Mary's operated a winter shelter for seniors but found that model to be unsustainable for them during the COVID pandemic.

- *East Oakland Targeted Efforts:* The City will amend a grant agreement with East Oakland Community Project (EOCP) to provide an additional 10 emergency winter shelter beds at the Crossroads Shelter located at 7515 International Boulevard. The 10 additional winter shelter beds will be available nightly, on a first come first serve basis, to single men and women. A special effort will be made to target people in encampments located in East Oakland. Winter Shelter participants will be offered emergency shelter beds in the main Crossroads shelter as they become available.
- *Expansion of beds at SVDP:* The proposed resolution would fund SVDP to open a second room of shelter during the months of December 2021 through June 2022. Due to COVID restrictions, the current one room configuration can only support 45 socially distanced beds. The addition of a second room would increase the bed count to 70 beds during COVID restrictions and to 100 beds, if the restrictions are lifted.

In addition to the winter relief efforts authorized by this resolution, the City is also including winter relief funding in the FY 2021-22 grant agreement with Operation Dignity for the following services:

- *Motel/Hotel Vouchers:* Operation Dignity will have a small allocation of funds to provide Motel/Hotel vouchers for those who are literally homeless, highly vulnerable due to age or health status, and are unable to secure any other accommodations during the inclement weather months between November and June.
- *Supplies:* Operation Dignity will also have funding for the purchase of winter relief supplies, including but not limited to: blankets, ponchos, warm hats, handwarmers. These supplies are used by the Operation Dignity street outreach teams as well as distributed in partnership with other street-based service providers.

Since the 2019 PIT count, the number of emergency beds/spaces in Oakland (City, County and privately funded) has increased by over 1000. However, the number of unsheltered people still far exceeds capacity. Providing access to additional shelter beds, motel/hotel rooms, and winter outreach supplies helps mitigate the impact of unsheltered homelessness.

Failure to approve these funds means that the City will not increase its capacity to serve unsheltered individuals during inclement weather months.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The proposed resolution authorizes the acceptance, appropriation, and expenditure of funds from Alameda County for the Winter Relief. This funding will be appropriated into Project 1005624, Organization 78411, Expense 54912, Task 1 DEFAULT, Award 23417.

In addition to the \$140,000 proposed in this report from Alameda County, the City of Emeryville (appropriated in Council Resolution No. 88817 C.M.S.) allocated \$30,000 for the FY 21-22 Winter Relief Effort, along with an estimated \$120,328 in General Purpose Fund winter and high priority project funds historically used for this purpose. In addition, \$9,955 in Emergency Solutions Grants- COVID (ESG-CV) (appropriated in Council Resolution No. 88416) is available for this purpose. As a result, the total funds available, after approval of this resolution, for Winter Relief

is \$ 300,193. Approval of the resolution will authorize the City Administrator to amend the grant agreements with the following homeless service providers for the term of November 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

Table 1:

Provider	Funding Source	Purpose	Funding To Be Added
<b>EOCP-</b>	1.1010. 78411.54912.1005630.SC22	Shelter Beds	\$67,000
			<b>\$67,000</b>
<b>St Mary's</b>	1.2160.78411.54912.1005624.SC2 2	Vouchers and Housing Nav.	\$100,000
			<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>SVdP</b>	1.2994.78411.54912.1003911.SC2 2	Shelter Beds	\$30,000
	1.1010. 78411.54912.1005630.SC22		\$22,758
	1.1010. 78411.54912.1005626.SC22		\$30,480
	1.2160.78411.54912.1005624.SC2 2		\$40,000
	1.2103.78411.54912.1005315.SC2 2		\$9955
			<b>\$133,193</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$300,193</b>

**PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

This report did not require public outreach other than the posting of this report on the City's website.

**COORDINATION**

Coordination has occurred between the Human Services Department (HSD), Office of the City Attorney and Budget Bureau in the preparation of this report and resolution.

**PAST PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

**East Oakland Community** from November 15, 2020 through April 15, 2021 EOCP served 62 clients with winter relief funding. During that time 10 extra winter shelter beds were provided each night with an overall utilization rate of 63%. Of the 62-people served, 16 obtained a year-

round bed at Crossroads, six of whom exited to an improved housing situation, while one person exited to permanent housing.

**St. Mary's Center** served 21 vulnerable seniors experiencing homelessness with FY 20-21 winter relief funding. Services included intensive street-based housing navigation. Of the 21 people, 12 (57%) reported having a physical disability, and 10 (48%) reported a chronic health condition. 90% of participants in FY 20-21 were African American which is a 20% increase from past years when the winter relief services were primarily emergency shelter. All participants stayed at least 90 days in the program, and 20 participants were moved into interim housing at the Lake Merritt Lodge. Of the 20 in the lodge, six now have permanent housing and seven more are pending permanent housing, meaning either they are getting a voucher or are slated to move into a permanent place soon. All participants were connected with a permanent medical home and all exited with health insurance in place.

**Saint Vincent de Paul** served 234 persons experiencing homelessness in FY 20-21. Most of the program participants were male – 142 (61%). As with most other providers of services to people experiencing homelessness, most program participants, 142 (61%), were African American. Nearly half, 110 (47%), of the participants reported a mental health problem. A total of 15,681 bed nights were provided in FY 20-21.

## **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

**Economic:** All funds identified in this report are for the purpose of providing housing and services to the homeless to eliminate and prevent homelessness. Such outcomes are achieved through rapid rehousing assistance, homelessness prevention, transitional housing, shelter services, homeless encampment services, outreach and the like.

**Environmental:** The provision of housing for at-risk and homeless persons is intended to address the environmental degradation caused by homeless families and individuals precariously housed or living on the streets.

**Race & Equity:** In Oakland, the drivers of homelessness fall most squarely on the backs of the African American community who, due to long standing structurally racist practices such as red lining and employment discrimination, are most vulnerable to losing their homes. Ending homelessness in Oakland must be defined by what works for African Americans first and foremost in order to reduce the racial disparities. These drivers of homelessness include:

- Structural racism
- Insufficient controls on the rental housing market that create vulnerability and housing instability for tenants
- Insufficient housing units that are affordable to households with the lowest incomes, including particularly those whose incomes are below 20 percent of Area Median Income (AMI)
- Systematic barriers that often prevent residents who are returning home from incarceration from living with family members and/or accessing both public and private rental housing and employment opportunities

- Inadequate pay and benefits for many of the jobs that are available in the community, and insufficient access to quality employment opportunities that pay wages that meet the cost of housing

One of the goals of Oakland's Permanent Access to Housing (PATH) Plan is to eliminate racial disparities in the rates at which people experience homelessness, and in exits to stable housing. The City utilizes data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track client demographics and outcomes.

Black or African American Oakland residents are disproportionately over-represented in the homeless population. According to the most recent PIT count in 2019, 70 percent of the population experiencing homelessness in Oakland identifies as Black or African American; however, this demographic is only 24 percent of the general population. The programs and services funded through this legislation will primarily serve African American clients.

### **ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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For questions regarding this report, please contact Lara Tannenbaum, Manager, Community Housing Services Division, at 510-238-6187.

Respectfully submitted,



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