



# AGENDA REPORT

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

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

**SUBJECT:** Funds for Transitional Housing and  
Emergency Shelter Improvements

**DATE:** January 3, 2022

City Administrator Approval

Date: Jan 31, 2022

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution:**

- 1. Awarding A Grant To Bay Area Community Services, Inc. In An Amount Not To Exceed Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000) For Improvements To The Henry Robinson Multi-Services Center; And**
- 2. Awarding A Grant To Covenant House California In An Amount Not To Exceed Four Hundred Thirty-Three Thousand, Five Hundred Dollars (\$433,500) For An Expansion Project At Their Emergency Shelter.**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Adoption of the proposed resolution will authorize grant agreements with two existing Human Services Department grantees. Covenant House California is undergoing an expansion project to add twenty (20) beds to its existing shelter for homeless youth ages 18-30 at 200 Harrison Street in Oakland. This resolution authorizes funds to support this work. The legislation also authorizes a grant to Bay Area Community Services (BACS) to purchase and install an emergency generator and additional security cameras at the Touraine Hotel, a City-owned property located at 559 16<sup>th</sup> Street which houses transitional and medical respite beds for homeless individuals. Funding for both projects is available from Oakland's allocation under the State's Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Grant Program.

## **BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

The Redevelopment Agency of the City of Oakland acquired the Touraine Hotel in 1991 and it has operated as an emergency or transitional housing facility since that time. The Touraine was built in 1915 and since the City acquired it, there have been several upgrades, including to the fire safety, Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC), and elevator systems. The City and BACS sign a lease annually that stipulates that BACS provides day to day property management of the building while the City remains responsible for larger projects. There is an

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urgent need to upgrade the security camera systems and add a back-up generator to the building to address life safety issues when the power goes out.

Covenant House will be renovating their existing space to add 20 additional emergency shelter beds. The overall cost of this project is \$3 million, the majority raised from other sources. Covenant House has already expanded the shelter's dining area and upgraded the kitchen, built a fully operational on-site clinic for residents and youth in the community, and upgraded the HVAC system. HHAP funding will be used to expand the shelter beds, taking the program from 18 to 38 nightly beds.

HHAP funds are a one-time block grant offered by the State of California to assist local governments in their response to the statewide homelessness crisis. Eligible municipalities include counties, Continuums of Care (CoC) and large cities with populations exceeding 300,000. Each jurisdiction had a specific amount of funds allocated by the State based on 2019 Point In Time (PIT) Count numbers.

On May 12, 2020, City Council adopted Resolution No. 88109 C.M.S., which authorized the City Administrator to accept and appropriate Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Round One funding provided by the State of California and in alignment with the PATH Framework, to sustain existing interventions in FY2020-21 and to authorize various new homeless programs as directed by City Council.

Authorization for the Covenant House grant was included in this legislation with a timeframe of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Due to contracting delays, the agreement with Covenant House was unable to be executed within the timeframe of the spending authority. Staff are now seeking authority to re-execute the agreement.

## **ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

Staff recommends that the City Council authorize funding for these two projects.

The most recent Point-in-Time Homeless Count (PIT count) and Survey in January 2019 estimated that there were 4,071 persons experiencing homelessness in Oakland on a given day. Of these, 3,210 persons are unsheltered. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many communities across the country, including Alameda County, have decided to postpone the unsheltered street count scheduled for January 2021 and to conduct it in January 2022. Estimates are that the numbers will increase.

The City of Oakland's Permanent Access to Housing (PATH) Plan states that there is not one single solution to homelessness; a wide range of permanent and temporary housing options are required in order to serve Oaklanders experiencing homelessness. Temporary housing facilities like the Henry Robinson and Covenant House's Emergency Shelter require ongoing maintenance and improvement in order to continue operating. By adopting the recommendation to fund expansion improvements at these sites, temporary housing slots will be preserved and expanded, and unhoused residents will be able to move off the streets, thus advancing the Citywide Priorities of **housing security** and **holistic community safety**.

### **The Henry Robinson**

The Henry Robinson offers 137 beds of transitional housing and serves over 200 people experiencing homelessness every year. The program follows a Housing First philosophy and has extremely low barrier for entry. The program welcomes all individuals, including those with active substance use, who have zero income, and who are experiencing mental health symptoms. Participants work with a care team that provides a variety of supportive services, including assistance with benefits advocacy, employment support, budgeting and rental assistance, and mental healthcare.

A back-up generator for some essential systems will contribute to **housing security** and a more sustainable infrastructure for the program. At any given time, the program may have between 25-40 residents that have mobility restrictions and thus cannot use the stairs to navigate the 7-floor building during a power outage. This endangers their ability to get essential care and/or sustenance, especially during prolonged blackouts – which occurred twice in 2021 alone. Evacuating residents for a blackout leads to significant direct costs like moving residents into motels temporarily, and indirect costs including engaging emergency services and the Oakland Fire Department. Additionally, BACS operates a recuperative care program serving houseless, vulnerable residents in medical recuperation serving 30-45 people at time. Many of these individuals require equipment for oxygen, respiration, or other needs for their care that run on electricity. The back-up generator will allow for the elevator and other essential systems to continue working during a blackout, keep the program operating, and will give residents more stability in maintaining their housing.

The Henry Robinson serves both highly vulnerable individuals and individuals who frequently engage in high-risk behaviors that at times have the potential to cause great harm to themselves or other residents. In order to increase **holistic community safety** and maximize staff's ability to respond to issues as they arise and intervene before they become a crisis, staff must be able to view multiple vantage points throughout the building. An existing security system provides coverage over much of the building but some additional cameras in key locations would increase safety and security further. New cameras will be placed in common spaces inside the building, such as the stairwell and reception areas.

### **Covenant House**

The 2019 PIT Count also showed that there were 468 unaccompanied transitional-aged youth (ages 18-24) experiencing homelessness in Oakland on a given day. Most youth experienced abuse and neglect in their formative years and are re-victimized on the streets, impacting holistic community safety. They often are forced into illegal and dangerous activities just to stay alive. Covenant House's current emergency shelter provides 18 beds per night and serves approximately 88 youth per year. In addition to a safe place to sleep, youth are provided with case management, residential supervision, crisis intervention, meals, restrooms and showers, linkages to physical and mental healthcare, substance use and recovery services, and education and life skills resources. In 2019, Covenant House launched a capital campaign to expand the emergency shelter by 20 beds in order to serve more youth and reduce the waiting list of youth seeking shelter. Without access to shelter youth may enter into compromising situations that endanger their health and safety in order to have a place to sleep. Some trade sex for money or food; others become victims or perpetrators of theft or violent crime.

The City's funds to Covenant House will support the \$3 million renovation of their current emergency shelter facility to add 20 beds. The renovations will include framing, drywall,

painting, flooring, plumbing and electrical work, and will create a safe and supportive environment for youth. This helps build trust with Covenant House staff which is needed to move them forward in achieving positive outcomes. The addition of 20 new beds plus the other work Covenant House is undertaking will lead to **housing and economic security** for youth who rely on Covenant House for shelter and services.

If this legislation is not approved, the Covenant House 20 bed expansion will be significantly delayed as Covenant House seeks other funding. This will keep 20 homeless young people on the streets who could otherwise be using the new beds. At the Henry, the risk of not installing an emergency generator endangers their older and/or disabled clients with mobility issues who may be trapped in their rooms during prolonged blackouts – which occurred twice in 2021 alone.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Projects funded under the grant agreements will be funded by the one-time block grant HHAP funds from the State. Eight percent of HHAP funds are required to be set-aside for projects serving youth, including the Covenant House shelter expansion. The funding has been appropriated to State of California Fund (2159), Community Housing Services Organization (78411) in project (1005248) and will be awarded in the grant agreements below.

<b>Provider</b>	<b>Grant Agreement</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Covenant House California	Expansion	\$433,500.00
Bay Area Community Services	Improvements	\$200,000.00

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

This report did not require public outreach other than the posting of this report on the 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**

The Henry and Covenant House's emergency shelter have a history of serving some of the most vulnerable Oakland residents experiencing homelessness and providing them with services to create a pathway to permanent housing, see table below for outcomes.

<b>2020-21 Outcomes</b>	<b>BACS' Henry Robinson Transitional Housing Totals</b>	<b>Covenant House Emergency Shelter Totals</b>
Total number of program participants served	210	75
Literally homeless at program entry	100%	100%
Participants with one or more disabling conditions	94%	33%
Chronically homeless (homeless for over 12 months with a disability) prior to program entry	69%	32%
Participants served with zero income	9%	53%
Participants who exited the program	119	59
Participants who exited to permanent housing*	46%	24%
Black or African American participants who exited to permanent housing <sup>1</sup>	49%	18%
Youth who exited to transitional housing from emergency shelter		35%
Black or African American youth who exited to transitional housing from emergency shelter		55%
<b>2020-21 Demographics</b>	<b>BACS' Henry Robinson Transitional Housing Totals</b>	<b>Covenant House Emergency Shelter Totals</b>
Black or African American	74%	61%
White	16%	16%
Multiple Races	9%	12%
American Indian or Alaska Native	3%	4%
Asian	2%	1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1%	3%
Declined to State	0.5%	3%
Hispanic or Latinx	9.5%	17%

\*Exits to permanent housing during FY2020-21 were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many Henry Robinson participants exited to the county-operated Safer Ground program which gave them a better opportunity to self-quarantine; however, these exits were considered exits to emergency shelter. If these participants are removed, 60 percent of all participants and 73 percent of Black or African American participants who exited went to permanent housing.

<sup>1</sup> This does not include participants who identify as multiple races

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## **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

***Economic:*** All funds in this report are for the purpose of improving housing and services for people living in emergency shelter and transitional housing.

***Environmental:*** The provision of housing for at-risk and homeless persons is intended to address the environmental degradation caused by individuals 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

In FY 2020-21, 68 percent of people served across Oakland's entire system of homeless services were African American. As mentioned above, the population at the Henry Robinson is 74 percent Black or African American, as is 61 percent of the population at Covenant House's emergency shelter.

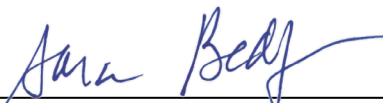
**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt a Resolution:

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

Respectfully submitted,



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