



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Edward D. Reiskin
City Administrator

FROM: Estelle Clemons
Interim Director, Human
Services

SUBJECT: Family Homelessness Challenge
Grant

DATE: August 26, 2022

City Administrator Approval 

Date: Sep 6, 2022

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution:

- 1. Accepting, Appropriating, And Authorizing An Agreement For Receipt Of Grant Funds From The California Business Consumer Services And Housing Agency In The Amount Of \$2,001,152 For A Term Of September 1, 2022 To June 30, 2024 To Implement The Family Homelessness Challenge (FHC) Project;**
- 2. Awarding Grant Agreements To Four Homeless Services Providers Using The Above Funds To Implement The FHC Project Through June 30, 2024;**
- 3. Accepting And Appropriating Additional FHC Funds That Become Available For The Same Purposes Through June 30, 2024, and Authorizing the City Administrator to Amend the Above Grant Agreements to Increase the Amounts Within the Limits of the FHC Funds; and**
- 4. Authorizing A Contribution From The General Purpose Fund In An Amount Equivalent To The Central Services Overhead Charges In An Estimated Amount Of \$37,000.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Family Homeless Challenge funds will target two distinct challenges in the family housing system: 1) address Oakland's family crisis system capacity by expanding the number of available beds for families through the coordinated entry system; and 2) improve the quality of services available to families experiencing homelessness.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The Family Homelessness Challenge Grant

The Family Homelessness Challenge (FHC) grant was announced in the Spring of 2022 by the California Business Consumer Services and Housing Agency (BCSH) to provide competitive grants and technical assistance to local jurisdictions to promote innovation, accelerate new programs, and build on promising practices to address family homelessness. The City of Oakland in partnership with Building Futures for Women and Children and the Oakland Transitional Housing Alliance (OTHA), applied for and was awarded \$2 million over two years to 1) expand the number of available beds for families in crisis through coordinated entry; and 2) improve the quality of services available to families experiencing homelessness.

The Family Coordinated Entry System

Family Front Door (FFD) began in 2015 as one of the first Coordinated Entry Systems (CES) in Alameda County. FFD provides Housing Problem Solving (HPS) to explore the family's housing crisis, provide concrete advice, and help the family think creatively about housing options. HPS tries to resolve the family's homelessness permanently and, if needed, assists in finding a temporary solution while additional services are provided (e.g., childcare, employment services, legal services, public benefits, and health care). Each FFD family is assigned a Housing Navigator who conducts an in-depth needs assessment and works with the family to create a Housing Stability Plan. FFD uses flexible funds for costs directly associated with obtaining housing, including move-in costs, homelessness prevention, and Rapid Rehousing. Families with the highest needs and no other viable housing options are prioritized on the "By Name List" for a range of interventions in the family homelessness response system, including emergency shelter, transitional housing, and rapid rehousing.

The current iteration of the FFD is a partnership between the City of Oakland and two service providers: Building Futures for Women and Children (BFWC) and East Oakland Community Project (EOCP). EOCP operates an emergency shelter, transitional, and rapid rehousing programs in Oakland for families experiencing homelessness, and BFWC operates the FFD CES along with emergency shelter and rapid rehousing. Adoption of this legislation would increase BFWC's capacity and expand the circle of agencies providing family homelessness services in Oakland by adding three small Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) led agencies.

Oakland Transitional Housing Alliance

Oakland's Strengthening Organizations to Address and End Homelessness capacity-building program was launched in 2020-2021 to increase the number of small BIPOC-led agencies in the City's pool of qualified housing and homeless services provider organizations. Two participating agencies, Elizabeth House Oakland and Diamond in the Ruff joined with a third small BIPOC-led agency – Urban University – to form the Oakland Transitional Housing Alliance (OTHA). The OTHA partners have successfully completed the City's rolling Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process. Adoption of the proposed resolution will bring OTHA into the FFD system, and provide 16 additional units of recovery-oriented, culturally responsive, interim housing for families experiencing homelessness in Oakland.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

The funding recommendations in this resolution specifically aligns with the Permanent Access to Housing (PATH) Framework goals to:

- **Reduce unsheltered homelessness** by adding 16 new units of recovery-focused interim housing to the family system
- **Return people to housing as quickly as possible** by providing additional workforce and mental health services for families in the homelessness system to more efficiently address barriers to obtaining permanent housing
- **Increase and stabilize income** through enriched workforce services

Reducing Unsheltered Homelessness by Improving System Capacity

The current FFD system includes:

- 35 family shelter units, of which 20 have a Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) component to support exits to permanent housing;
- 23 family transitional housing units, all of which have an RRH component;
- Oakland Path Rehousing Initiative (OPRI) (40 families), a partnership in which the Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) provides long-term housing subsidies and the City provides funding for services that support the household's long-term housing stability. Services are provided until the family is stabilized, after which they may be eligible for a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV).
- HUD CoC-funded Rapid Rehousing (40 families), which is short-term rental assistance and services to help families exit homelessness and access housing quickly.

The current FFD system capacity does not currently have enough crisis housing placements, leaving families unsheltered. Approximately 20-25 new homeless families contact FFD for assistance each month. At any given time, FFD has approximately 20 unsheltered homeless families on the wait list who are unable to access crisis housing due to capacity limitations. According to FY 20-21 data (the most recent year for which complete data is available), 75.9% of families entering emergency shelters or transitional housing were unsheltered for six months or more before being placed. In addition to needing more beds, the system needs beds that are responsive to the cultural and service needs of families experiencing homelessness in Oakland. African Americans are disproportionately represented in the population experiencing homelessness in Oakland (23% of the City's population is Black while 60% of the unhoused population is Black) and of those individuals returning to homelessness after being successfully housed (21% vs. 18% system average). There is a growing recognition that the response to homelessness in Oakland must be informed by what works for African Americans. Additionally, our system needs more interim housing options for families seeking a recovery-oriented living environment.

The FHC grant will expand the current inventory of crisis housing linked to FFD by 16 recovery-focused interim housing units (a 29% increase in crisis housing beds). This will be accomplished by adding three small BIPOC-led transitional housing providers – Oakland Elizabeth House, Urban University Transitional House, and A Diamond in the Ruff – with the potential to grow and scale. Currently these providers operate largely with private funding and volunteer help and serve a mix of homeless and at-risk families. The FHC grant will support the additional staffing, technology and technical assistance needed by these agencies to serve families with the highest needs and comply with the City's data collection, contracting and reporting

requirements. Bringing these providers into FFD expands culturally responsive services in the family homelessness response system and ensures that the families in greatest need are prioritized for placement. Interim housing will be recovery focused and operate according to harm reduction principles.

Returning People to Housing as Quickly as Possible and Increasing and Stabilizing Income Through Improved Quality of Services

More services are needed to support families in obtaining permanent housing and to do so more quickly so beds can be used for more unsheltered families. In FY 2020-21, 19.5% of persons entering the family homelessness response system had mental health and/or substance use disorder conditions. While FFD Housing Navigators make referrals to mainstream services, they cannot provide ongoing services or support families in following up. Families in mental health crisis need brief crisis therapy services that follow the family regardless of program or housing and can connect them to longer-term mental health support. County mental health systems can be hard to access, and the stigma around mental illness can make families reluctant to seek services.

The system needs to support families who could quickly become rehoused (and maintain housing) if they had flexible, individualized workforce support through the transition out of homelessness. Only 34.5% of adults entering the family homelessness response system have employment income, and only 23% have income of any type adequate to secure housing. Families experiencing housing instability struggle to comply with participation requirements of mainstream employment services.

The FHC grant will embed enriched mental health and workforce support services within FFD operations that will be coordinated with Housing Navigation services. Families will be matched to the services based on need, and services will follow the family no matter where they go in the system, unlike services that are attached to a specific program or facility. Clinical mental health services will allow families in mental health crisis to receive assessment, short-term crisis therapy and linkage to longer term mental health or co-occurring treatment (i.e., through their Medi-Cal managed care plan or County behavioral health services). Individualized workforce support services will provide access to employment assessment and counseling, job search assistance, and referrals to training, education, transportation, and childcare services needed for employment. These services will ensure that families who can benefit from rapid rehousing assistance obtain and maintain the income needed to secure and retain housing.

Adoption of this legislation is aligned with the goals adopted by Council under the PATH Framework to reduce unsheltered homelessness, return people to housing quickly and increase and stabilize income, thus advancing the Citywide Priorities of **housing and economic security** and **holistic community safety**.

The FHC proposal included three aggressive but attainable goals:

1. By the end of year two, the percent of families exiting the family homelessness response system to permanent housing will increase from 72% to 85%.
2. By the end of year two, the percent of FFD families placed in emergency shelter or interim housing who transition to permanent housing within six months will increase from 45% to 65%.

3. By the end of year two, the percentage of families with employment income at exit from the family homelessness system will increase from 43% to 60%.

If the recommendations included in this resolution are not adopted by the Council, the current system will remain intact, but Oakland will lose the \$2,001,152.00 in State funding (over two years), and the opportunity to increase the availability of 16 recovery-focused interim housing units (a 29% increase in crisis housing beds) that is necessary to achieve these goals. The three additional service providers will continue to operate outside of the Family Front Door in their current capacity, and no additional mental health or workforce development services will be added.

FISCAL IMPACT

The funds discussed in this report will be appropriated in the State of California Other Fund (2159), Community Housing Services Organization (78411), Family Homelessness Challenge (FHC) Project (Project 1006508), Homeless Services and Support (Program NB41). Funds are allocated towards the Activities detailed in **Table 1** below to support the programs and activities presented in this report.

Table 1: California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency Family Homelessness Challenge - Funded Projects				
Grant Term	Grantee/Recipient	Amount	Activity	City of Oakland Project Code
9/1/2022 – 6/30/2024	Building Futures for Women and Children	\$1,015,370	Supportive services, including coordinated entry, mental health, workforce development, and housing navigation	1006508
	A Diamond in the Ruff	\$119,192	Three units of recovery-oriented transitional housing	
	Oakland Elizabeth House	\$652,106	Ten units of recovery-oriented transitional housing and supportive services	
	Urban University	\$119,192	Three units of recovery-oriented transitional housing	
	City of Oakland, Human Services Dept	\$95,292	Contract management and administration of the grant	

The City of Oakland’s Human Services Department will receive approximately \$95,292 for the administration and management of the grant. These dollars will support personnel costs associated with current staff in the Community Housing Services Org (78411). Additionally, it has been determined that this grant will need a contribution of General Purpose Funds in the estimated amount of \$37,000 to pay Central Services Overhead charges for the grant. This contribution is needed due to the administrative cap of 5 percent on the grant.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

No outreach was deemed necessary for the proposed policy action beyond the standard City Council agenda noticing procedures.

COORDINATION

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

PAST PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

City of Oakland-funded family emergency shelter, transitional, and rapid rehousing programs served 394 people in 134 households in FY2020-21 (the most recent year for which data is available). These programs were operated by two service providers, Building Futures for Women and Children, and East Oakland Community Project. Participants in these programs achieved the following outcomes:

2020-21 Outcome Measures	Temporary Housing	Rapid Rehousing	Total
Persons (clients) served	264	190	454
Clients with one or more disabling conditions	32%	34%	33%
Chronically homeless (homeless for over 12 months with a disability) prior to program entry	39%	13%	28%
Clients served who entered the program with zero income	22%	14%	19%
Clients who exited to permanent housing	59%	97%	72%
Percent of permanent housing exits that were Black or African American clients	84%	75%	77%
2020-21 Outcome Measures	Temporary Housing	Rapid Rehousing	Totals
Black or African American	64%	75%	66%
White	9%	9.5%	10%
Multiple Races	19%	13%	18%
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	6%	1.5%	4%
Asian	1%	1%	1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%	0%	1%
Hispanic or Latinx	17%	13%	16%
Notes: -Temporary housing includes emergency shelter and transitional housing -Total column is de-duplicated. Families that were enrolled in multiple programs during the reporting period are only counted once			

During the same time, the OTHA agencies and prospective grantees, achieved the following:

- 41 families served
- 87 percent of families that exited went to permanent housing
- 32 percent of families increased their income
- 73% of families have one or more disabling conditions

One of the components of the FHC grant is to expand these agencies' data and reporting capacities in alignment with the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: All funds proposed in this report will provide interim housing and services to prevent, address, and end family homelessness.

Environmental: The provision of housing and services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness is intended to address the environmental degradation caused by those who are precariously housed or living on the streets and will support cleaner and safer city 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 redlining and employment discrimination, are most vulnerable to losing their homes. According to the 2022 Point in Time Count for Oakland¹, 60% percent of people experiencing homelessness identify as Black or African American; however, this demographic is only 23% percent of the general population.

In FY 20-21, 134 families were served in the City of Oakland's emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Rapid Re-Housing programs for families. Of these families, 68.6% of adults and children in families served identified as Black/African American. Given the overrepresentation of Black families in the population experiencing homelessness in Oakland, approval of this resolution will bring three new small BIPOC-led homelessness services providers into the family homelessness system. These three providers will provide an additional 16 units of culturally responsive, recovery-oriented interim housing.

¹ <https://everyonehome.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Oakland-PIT-2022-Infographic-Report.pdf>

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt The Following Legislation:

Resolution:

1. Accepting, Appropriating, And Authorizing An Agreement For Receipt Of Grant Funds From The California Business Consumer Services And Housing Agency In The Amount Of \$2,001,152 For A Term Of September 1, 2022 To June 30, 2024 To Implement The Family Homelessness Challenge (FHC) Project;
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4. Authorizing A Contribution From The General Purpose Fund In An Amount Equivalent To The Central Services Overhead Charges In An Estimated Amount Of \$37,000.

For questions regarding this report, please contact C'Mone Falls, Acting Manager, at cfalls@oaklandca.gov.

Respectfully submitted,



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