



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Edward D. Reiskin
City Administrator

FROM: Estelle Clemons
Interim Director, Human
Services

SUBJECT: Winter Relief Funding FY 22-23

DATE: January 6, 2023

City Administrator Approval

Date: Jan 12, 2023

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt a Resolution:

- 1. Accepting And Appropriating Up To One Hundred Forty Thousand Dollars (\$140,000) From Alameda County For The North County Winter Relief Efforts, And Authorizing Agreement For Receipt Of Said Funds;**
- 2. Authorizing Amendment Of The Grant Agreement With East Oakland Community Project To Increase The Amount By Fifty-Five Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty-Eight Dollars (\$55,758) For The Provision Of Winter Shelter Beds;**
- 3. Authorizing Amendment Of The Grant Agreement With Operation Dignity To Increase The Amount By Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000) For Winter Supplies And Hotel Vouchers For Vulnerable Homeless People;**
- 4. Authorizing 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;**
- 5. Authorizing Amendment Of The Grant Agreement With The Society Of Saint Vincent De Paul Of Alameda County To Increase The Amount By Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000) For The Provision Of Additional Shelter Beds And Increased Services During Winter Months; And**
- 6. Authorizing The City Administrator To Accept And Appropriate Any Additional Funds Awarded By Alameda County For The Provision Of Fiscal Year 2022-23 North County Winter Relief Efforts And To Amend The Above-Mentioned Grant Agreements To Increase The Amounts Using Any Additional Funds.**

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

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Temperatures at night during the winter months in the Bay Area can often drop to freezing or below freezing. This is particularly brutal, and even life threatening for homeless folks living outside. Temperatures began dropping in November, and several of the providers we contract with have reported increases in the number of homeless folks they serve.

For a number of years, the City has been fortunate to receive funding from Alameda County to help support our winter relief efforts. In prior years the funding was provided by Alameda County Housing and Community Development Agency. This year the Alameda County Social Services Agency (ACSSA) is administering the funding. It is expected that ACSSA will go to the Board of Supervisors with the funding request on January 24, 2023. Staff is requesting that this be heard by the City Council as soon as possible in order to facilitate distribution of the winter relief funding to service providers.

The most recent data available from the February 2022 Point-In-Time (PIT) Homeless Count and Survey estimated that there were 5,055 people experiencing homelessness in Oakland on a given night. This represents an increase of 984 individuals (24%) from 2019. Of the 5,055 people experiencing homelessness in Oakland, 3,337 were unsheltered with 32% in tents, 31% in cars or vans, 27% in RVs, 9% on the street, and 1% in abandoned buildings. With each Point-In-Time Count since 2015, the number of people experiencing homelessness is increasing.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Alameda County Social Services Agency has confirmed that the City of Oakland can expect to receive the same amount of winter relief funding as the last fiscal year - \$140,000. 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, the Human Services Department (HSD) Community Homelessness Services has General Purpose Winter Shelter funding (\$85,758) allocated by City Council to support these efforts and high priority projects. Total Winter Relief funding available is \$225,758.

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 22-23, the City is proposing the following winter relief interventions:

- *Senior Services:* The City will amend its grant agreement with St. Mary's Center, as initially authorized by Resolution No. 88160 C.M.S., 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-19 pandemic.
- *East Oakland Targeted Efforts:* The City will amend a grant agreement with East Oakland Community Project (EOCP), as initially authorized by Resolutions No. 88160 C.M.S. and No. 89247 C.M.D., 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 individuals. 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 November 2022 through June 2023, and amend a grant with SVDP, as initially authorized by Resolution No. 89247 C.M.S. 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.
- *Street Outreach:* The City will amend its grant agreement with Operation Dignity (OD), as initially authorized by Resolution No. 89247 C.M.S., to procure additional supplies for the winter months and to offer hotel vouchers to temporarily shelter vulnerable unhoused people.

Since the 2019 PIT count, the number of emergency beds/spaces in Oakland (City, County and privately funded) has increased by more than 1,000. 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.

The allocation of these funds addresses several Citywide priorities:

- **Holistic community safety** is addressed by ensuring that those community members who are most vulnerable and unsheltered have access to appropriate shelter during inclement weather.
- **Housing, economic, and cultural security** is also a focus of the allocation of these funds as those who are living outside are provided temporarily shelter and are offered the resources and tools to obtain permanent housing.

- **Responsive, trustworthy government** is what the City exemplifies when it works to provide funding and resources to the most vulnerable members of our community, particularly the unhoused members of our community. The allocation of these funds will greatly assist our unsheltered neighbors and move us one step closer to ending homelessness in our community.

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 1005625, Organization 78411, Expense 54912, Task NB41, Award 24172, Fund 2160.

In addition to the \$140,000 proposed in this report from Alameda County, there is an estimated \$85,758 in General Purpose Fund Winter Shelter project funds historically used for this purpose. As a result, the total funds available, after approval of this resolution, for Winter Relief is \$225,758. Approval of the resolution will authorize the City Administrator to amend the grant agreements with the following homeless service providers to increase the amount of funding for FY 2022-2023.

Table 1:

Provider	Funding Source	Purpose	Funding to Be Added
EOCP	1.1010.78411.54912.1005631.SC22	Shelter Beds	\$55,758
OD	1.1010.78411.54912.1005631.SC22	Supplies/Vouchers	\$30,000
St. Mary's Center	1.2160.78411.54912.1005625.SC22	Vouchers/Housing Navigation	\$100,000
SVdP	1.2160.78411.54912.1005625.SC22	Shelter Beds	\$40,000
TOTAL			\$225,758

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), City Administrator's Office, 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 Project served 65 clients with winter relief funding from November 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. During that time 10 extra winter shelter beds were provided each night with an overall utilization rate of 65%. Of the 65-people served, 13 obtained a year-round bed at Crossroads, 3 of whom ultimately obtained permanent housing.

Operation Dignity provided winter supplies such as blankets, hand warmers, and other supplies to protect vulnerable individuals from inclement weather conditions. They have experience with placing and working with homeless individuals in hotels and will support the homeless population this winter with this service option.

St. Mary's Center served 25 vulnerable seniors experiencing homelessness with FY 21-22 winter relief funding. Services included intensive street-based housing navigation, case management and medical navigation. Of the 25 people, 20 (80%) reported having a physical disability, and 16 (64%) reported a chronic health condition. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of participants in FY 21-22 were African American and 40% were aged 65+. Eight clients exited to housing, with four exiting to permanent housing and four to transitional housing. In addition, eight clients received hotel vouchers and spent a total of 492 days of hotel stays. All current and exited participants were connected with a permanent medical home and have health insurance as of their exit interview.

Saint Vincent de Paul served 226 persons experiencing homelessness in FY 21-22. Most of the program participants were male – 132 (58%). As with most other providers of services to people experiencing homelessness, most program participants, 147 (65%), were African American. Nearly half, 106 (47%), of the participants reported a mental health problem. A total of 13,145 bed nights were provided in FY 21-22.

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 2022 PIT count, 60 percent of the population experiencing homelessness in Oakland identifies as Black or African American; however, this demographic is only 24 percent (24%) 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 C'Mone Falls, Acting Manager, Community Homelessness Services, at 510.238.6186.

Respectfully submitted,



ESTELLE CLEMONS

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