

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE May 4, 2021

TO Honorable Members of the Ad Hoc Committee on COVID-19 Recovery and Assistance

SUBJECT **Update on Rental Assistance Programs**

This memo is to provide an update on the status of rental assistance being administered by the Office of Community Care (OCC). OCC has been administering multiple rental assistance programs throughout the last year in response to the urgent need arising from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. OCC is currently administering four rental assistance programs – the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), the Texas Emergency Rental Assistance Program (TERAP), CARES Emergency Solutions Grant – Homelessness Prevention (ESG) and CARES CV-COVID-19 Community Development Block Grant – Emergency Assistance Program.

EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

A total of \$40,700,000.00 was made available via the Consolidated Appropriations Act to support rental and utility assistance and housing assistance. ERAP provides up to 12 months of rental and utility assistance to low-income clients, defined at 80% Area Median Income (AMI) and below, who have been directly and indirectly impacted by COVID-19, and clients who are at 50% AMI or below and/or unemployed for 90 or more days at the time of application.

OCC has executed subrecipient agreements with five partner organizations, each of which provided rental assistance through Coronavirus Relief Funds in 2020. These organizations include Abounding Prosperity, Inc., Dallas Leadership Foundation, International Rescue Committee, First Presbyterian Church of Dallas dba the Stewpot, and United Way of Metropolitan Dallas with its Dallas Rental Assistance Collaborative (DRAC).

Most ERAP programming partners launched service delivery during the month of March, 2021. Members of United Way's (DRAC) have been delivering rental assistance services continuously since May 2020, most recently using Community Development Block Grant Funds. The data below reflects reported clients served through March 2021, however initial data shows that the numbers of clients served via ERAP has increased significantly during the month of April.

Partnering with Dallas Housing Authority

As of the date of the memorandum, OCC is in the final stages of executing an agreement with Dallas Housing Authority to administer \$20M in rental assistance by the end of the year. This will build upon DHA's successful rental assistance program administered in 2020 under the Coronavirus Relief Funds. As part of the agreement, the City will lead outreach and promote the availability of the program. The DHA program is scheduled to launch on June 1, 2021.

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SUBJECT **Update on the CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund Nonprofit Assistance Program**

Program	Emergency Rental Assistance Program
Funding Level	\$40,700,000.00
Implementation Partners	Abounding Prosperity (\$1,080,000) Dallas Leadership Foundation (\$537,000) International Rescue Committee (\$324,000) First Presbyterian Church dba the Stewpot (\$268,500) United Way of Metropolitan Dallas (\$10,000,000)
Implementation Period	Through December 31, 2021 (recently extended via American Recovery Plan Act to September 30, 2022)
Obligation/Priority Deadline	65% of award obligated by September 30, 2021
Clients Served (as of March 31, 2021)	Approx. 215 Average: ~\$3,500 assistance

EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT – HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

The Office of Community Care has been administering CARES Act Emergency Solutions Grant – Homelessness Prevention programming since May 2020 in accordance with the CARES Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program Statement (Attachment A). CARES ESG funds can support clients earning 50% Area Median Income (AMI) or less who are housed and at risk of homelessness. In July 2020, the City received an additional allocation, increasing available funding from \$600,000.00 to \$1,800,000.00. OCC has administered \$363,022 of this initial allocation as of March 31, 2021.

OCC released a Request for Proposals (RFP) in December 2020 to identify one or more subrecipients to administer ESG Homelessness Prevention Short Term Rental Assistance Program. This represents the first time that the City has administered ESG Homelessness Prevention programming via subcontractors and there are a limited number of local organizations with experience administering these specific grant dollars. OCC and Budget & Management Services (BMS) view this as an opportunity to build capacity for ESG service delivery. A total of 7 proposals received, among which four nonprofit organizations met the criteria set forth in the RFP were deemed to be most advantageous. Three organizations accepted the award and one, Abounding Prosperity, Inc., declined the award. The subrecipient agreements for ESG Homelessness Prevention were authorized by City Council on February 24, 2021. Each subrecipient has received training and technical assistance from OCC and BMS on ESG criteria, reporting and data entry to support their efforts. OCC will receive monthly reports for clients served from these subrecipients beginning with April 2021. The clients served data below reflects clients served by OCC social services staff since. As these ESG funds are available through September 30, 2022, ERAP funding administration will be prioritized in the coming months.

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SUBJECT **Update on the CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund Nonprofit Assistance Program**

Program	Emergency Solutions Grant – Homelessness Prevention
Funding Level	\$1,800,000.00
Implementation Partners	Dallas Leadership Foundation (\$225,000) First Presbyterian Church dba the Stewpot (\$172,000) Harmony Community Development Corporation (\$362,000) COD OCC (\$600,000)
Implementation Period	Through September 30, 2022
Obligation/Priority Deadline	Obligated by March 2021; 20% spent by 9/30/2021 (deadline met); 80% by 3/31/2022; 100% by 9/30/2022
Clients Served (as of March 31, 2021)	104 households; Subrecipient programming launched in April. Reports are forthcoming.

TEXAS EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TERAP)

On February 10, 2021, City Council authorized the acceptance of \$3,382,585.24 in CARES Act Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs for the Texas Emergency Rental Assistance Funds. CDBG funds can support low-income individuals earning 80% AMI or less.

The Program was initially developed to serve as both a rental assistance and eviction diversion program when the application was released by TDHCA in December; however, the availability of ERAP funding and subsequent launch of TDHCA's Texas Rent Relief Program caused the agency to amend the program parameters. This slightly delayed implementation and service delivery as the City worked to align subrecipient agreements and reporting with agency directions. TDHCA also put into place an obligation deadline of July 15, 2021 for all grantees and subrecipients to commit client services.

OCC released a Request for Proposals (RFP) on January 29, 2021 to identify subrecipients to administer TERAP. There were 6 proposals received, among which 5 were determined to have met the requirements set forth in RFP. One proposal scored below 70% and did not submit required Audited Financials and was not awarded funds. A total amount of \$2,457,644 has been awarded to the five subrecipients. Service delivery for the TERAP program launched during April 2021 and April 2021 reports should be available soon.

Program	Texas Emergency Rental Assistance Program
Funding Level	\$3,382,585.24
Implementation Partners	Bridge Steps dba The Bridge (\$283,475)

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	First Presbyterian Church dba the Stewpot (\$684,022) Jubilee Park and Community Center (\$132,000) Open Arms Inc. dba Bryan's House (\$287,500) Services of Hope Entities, Inc. (\$1,070,647)
Implementation Period	Through September 30, 2022
Clients Served (as of March 31, 2021)	Programming launched in April. Reports are forthcoming.

CV-COVID-19 CDBG EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

A total of \$2,750,000.00 of funding from the third-round of allocations of CARES Act Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding was allocated for the COVID-19 Emergency Assistance Program. CDBG funds can support low-income individuals earning 80% AMI or less. The EAP will provide assistance to Dallas residents who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in the form of rental assistance, mortgage assistance, and utility assistance, including internet and phone service assistance. On February 24, 2021, City Council authorized the Emergency Assistance Program and the execution of all documents and agreements necessary to implement the program. OCC has received proposals via an RFP process and scoring is underway to determine awardees and anticipates notifying awardees and entering the contract negotiations stage by May 15, 2021.

PARTNERSHIPS AND OUTREACH

Coordinating Outreach

OCC is working with Communications, Outreach and Marketing to develop outreach materials and an educational campaign related to rental assistance availability. Additionally, the OCC and the Office of Equity and Inclusion are partnering with the Eviction Prevention Task Force, and a group led by CitySquare, United Way and Child Poverty Action Lab (CPAL), to develop educational materials about evictions, tenants' rights, and appeals processes for the general public.

Additionally, through the Eviction Prevention Task Force, providers are encouraged to use the data published by CPAL to identify communities for outreach and service delivery targeting. Similarly, the new online application system will flag applicants who state that they have had an eviction filed against them so that the application can be expedited.

With multiple programs and multiple providers, OCC staff is maintaining a webpage, www.dallascityhall.com/rentrelief, that serves as an information hub for available rental assistance programming. This page will have current rental assistance programs, application information and links, and other information and will be updated as new programs launch. Residents in need of rental assistance can visit www.dallascityhall.com/rentrelief for information on available assistance.

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Working with Landlords

In April 2021, the OCC social services team hosted its first on-site rental assistance workshop in partnership with the Dallas Apartment Association. The workshop identified local landlords with which to pilot the project and coordinated closely with the landlord and leasing office to host a pop-up event on site. This first event was successful due to the support of the landlord in outreach and targeting of residents who were past due on rent as well as their ability to provide tenant lease agreements other necessary documentation to facilitate client application completion prior to the appointments. Because of this success, the team will be continuing to implement service delivery using this model. OCC has 4 additional similar events scheduled and will continue to work with local landlords where possible to reach residents in need of rent help.

Managing Multiple Programs

Among the most difficult aspects of programming is the management of multiple programs with overlapping timelines and the prevention of duplication. Early this year, OCC launched a rental assistance call center, staffed by intake specialist caseworkers. Calls to the City's social services lines are routed to this call center and staff support clients in seeking services, applying for rental assistance, or other needs. Call center staff are able to route clients to social services staff and/or implementation partners.

The OCC team is also working closely with Information Technology Services Department to launch a new web-based application system that will also serve as a duplication management system for various program subrecipients. Subrecipients and staff can search the system based on a client address to ensure that the client they are serving has not previously been served by another partner or program for the same services and time period. Subrecipients will also be able to opt in to receiving applications through the system to supplement their own client application processes and/or refer rental assistance clients to other agency partners based on capacity, expertise, or other criteria on a case-by-case basis.

OCC will continue to provide updates at future Ad Hoc Committee meetings on the status of the rental assistance programs. If you have any questions regarding any of the above programs, please contact me or Office of Community Care Director, Jessica Galleshaw



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