



City Council Report

Date: July 3, 2023
To: City Council
Through: Candace Cannistraro, Deputy City Manager
From: Lindsey Balinkie, Deputy Director Community Services
Subject: Accepting \$1M State funding for transitional housing and support services
(District 2, and Citywide)

Purpose and Recommendation

Approve Resolution to authorize the City Manager and/or his designee to execute a funding agreement between the City of Mesa and the Arizona Department of Housing to invest up to \$1M in State awarded funding during FY 23/24 to add temporary, transitional housing and services in Mesa for individuals and families transitioning out of the City's Off the Streets emergency housing program.

Background

Arizona Department of Housing (ADOH) has created a new Homeless Shelter and Services Fund (HSSF). Through the new fund ADOH can award grants to counties, cities, towns, tribal governments, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for programs that serve the unsheltered or those transitioning out of homelessness.

In May 2023 the first opportunity for funding was released. Applicants were given one week to apply for funds with a requirement to activate grant funded services in July 2023. Based on the limited time to submit an application and to stand up services, City of Mesa applied to enhance our Off the Streets (OTS) program to continue and expand the efforts of our existing, effective program that addresses homelessness. This was feasible based on existing relationship with the Windermere Hotel, Community Bridges, Inc. and other community partners.

The HSSF will support the City of Mesa's ability to maintain critical health and safety services at OTS and allow for the addition of new services including 24 transitional rooms allowing pets, and two new navigators that will provide housing stability support for individuals exiting the Off the Streets program.

Services in the City of Mesa will be reimbursed by ADOH through an IGA using the HSSF. Transitional housing services will begin in August 2023 with enhanced housing stability services added more broadly in the fall of 2023. Funding is provided for FY 23/24.

Discussion

Our Housing Path includes the OTS program, a temporary emergency housing program with intensive support services. The program serves Mesa's most vulnerable people including seniors, Veterans, families with young children, single women and people with disabilities. Since May 2020, Mesa has served more than 1500 individuals by utilizing federal funding to lease hotel rooms and support services for this program. There are currently 85 rooms rented that are dedicated to this program.

When people exit the OTS program, each person has a different path. Many go to a more traditional congregate shelter or group home with a stable environment that allows the client to establish a housing plan with a caseworker and continue to address health and safety needs. Others make significant progress in our program and are in need of the next step in independence – transitional housing. Transitional housing continues with built in structure but more independence while clients build work and credit history, establish savings and connect to rental assistance, housing vouchers or other long-term solutions for attainable housing.

Transitional housing is a major tenant or step on the [Housing Path to Recovery](#). This type of housing is currently limited in Mesa.

The HSSF grant will allow Mesa to provide 24 rooms for OTS participants successfully exiting the program that have made positive progress in their housing plan, are ready for more independence and simply need a little more time in a safe living environment as they continue to work their plan to get access to their own housing or other support services. These 24 new rooms will be separate from our current program but still housed at Windemere.

The grant will also include the addition of two housing stability support navigators that will assist those exiting the OTS program with the goal of long-term success for those making positive progress in their housing plan.

This grant gives us an opportunity to pilot transitional services and additional navigation support services and see if it is something we would want to invest in long term.

Alternatives

Without this grant funding, transitional rooms and additional housing stability wrap around services will not be added to the current OTS program. Services may be considered in future programming models.

Fiscal Impact

There will be no fiscal impact to the City's General Fund.

Coordinated With

Community Services in collaboration with CBI and other community partners.