



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Jacky Morales-Ferrand

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** August 19, 2019

Approved

*D. P. Syl*

Date

*8/30/19*

**SUBJECT: FUNDING AWARD WITH LIFEMOVES TO IMPLEMENT THE  
MOTEL VOUCHER PROGRAM FOR FAMILIES WITH MINOR  
CHILDREN AND SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

## RECOMMENDATION

Approve an agreement with LifeMoves in the amount of \$1,950,000 to implement the Motel Voucher Program for vulnerable homeless households through December 31, 2020.

## OUTCOME

The City Council's approval of the recommendation will allow the implementation of a new Motel Voucher Program to serve approximately 60 vulnerable homeless households, which are defined as, families with minor children and survivors of domestic violence, over two years.

## BACKGROUND

While homeless persons in general are vulnerable, families with minor children and survivors of domestic violence are especially vulnerable. For example, homeless children have higher rates of severe hunger, were frequent users of hospital emergency departments and were also found to have higher rates of developmental and behavioral problems.<sup>1</sup> Domestic violence and homelessness are also deeply intertwined for women and their children. A history of domestic violence is prevalent among individuals experiencing homelessness and can be the primary cause of homelessness for many. Lifetime prevalence of domestic violence among women in the general population is estimated to be between 23% and 30%, while prevalence of domestic violence among homeless women is over 60%. Compared to the general population, violence

<sup>1</sup>Roy Grant, Delaney Gracy, Griffin Goldsmith, Alan Shapiro, Irwin E. Redlener, "Twenty-Five Years of Child and Family Homelessness: Where Are We Now?", *American Journal of Public Health* 103, no. S2 (December 1, 2013)

among homeless women is usually more severe and often accompanied by economic domination and threats.<sup>2</sup>

On September 4, 2018, the Housing Department issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) inviting non-profit organizations to submit proposals for operation of a Motel Voucher Program. A Motel Voucher Program allows an operator to quickly place a vulnerable household into a motel when shelter beds or a permanent home is not available. The Department did not receive any responses to the RFP. LifeMoves, is the only nonprofit in the region providing this unique service and has experience implementing a successful program. The Housing Department chose not to issue another competitive RFP but to sole source these funds to LifeMoves based on their experience. This is consistent with City procurement guidelines, which allow for sole sourcing of services if a competitive process results in no responses.

The Motel Voucher Program will be funded by a grant from the State of California (“State”). A recent one-time grant of \$11.4 million from the State, called the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP), provides an opportunity to fund homeless response strategies such as additional emergency shelter beds, rental subsidies, homeless prevention and essential services. HEAP funds must be expended by June 30, 2021 in order to avoid recapture by the State. On November 8, 2018, the Housing Department presented a HEAP preliminary expenditure plan to the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee. The Committee recommended the City prioritize HEAP spending on prevention, essential services and temporary shelter opportunities. Additionally, the committee recommended prioritization of programs that could quickly accommodate the greatest number of participants. Based on the feedback, the Housing Department developed a proposed expenditure plan for the HEAP funds that was approved by the City Council on November 27, 2018. The expenditure plan proposed using \$2 million in HEAP to implement a Motel Voucher Program.

## **ANALYSIS**

While permanent housing is the optimal strategy to end homelessness, emergency shelters and other types of crisis housing, including motel stays, play a critical role in the response to homelessness. Motel vouchers add capacity to the homeless shelter system when emergency shelters are full. Vulnerable households need a safe place to go that is immediately available. Families with minor children and survivors fleeing violent households are especially vulnerable. In San José, the number of emergency shelter beds, particularly for families and survivors of domestic violence, lacks capacity to meet the need.

In Santa Clara County, there are a total of 62 emergency shelter beds and 30 transitional housing beds across five non-profit domestic violence agencies. There is a total of 204 emergency shelter beds for homeless families with children across two non-profit service agencies. All of the family emergency shelters in the County are located in San José, and typically at full capacity,

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<sup>2</sup> DeCandia, C.J., Beach, C.A., & Clervil, R. (2013). “Closing the Gap: Integrating Services for Survivors of Domestic Violence Experiencing Homelessness” The National Center on Family Homelessness.

leaving many without immediate shelter options. For example, in 2018-2019, the YWCA of Silicon Valley received 762 requests for shelter that were unable to be met because their shelter was full. The chart below provides a summary of the County's inventory of domestic violence and family shelters.

Organization	Program	Number of Beds
<i>Domestic Violence Emergency Shelters</i>		
Community Solutions	La Isla Pacifica (Gilroy)	17
Asian Americans for Community Involvement	Asian Women's Home	10
Next Door Solutions to Domestic Violence	Next Door Shelter	19
YWCA of Silicon Valley	YWCA Shelter	16
<i>Total</i>		62
<i>Domestic Violence Transitional Housing</i>		
Maitri	Transitional Housing	18
Community Solutions	El Jardin Pacifico	12
<i>Total</i>		30
<i>Family Emergency Shelters</i>		
Family Supportive Housing	San José Family Shelter	123
LifeMoves	Georgia Travis House	39
LifeMoves	The Villa	42
<i>Total</i>		204

Most City-funded homeless programs include flexible spending in their budgets, which is designed to assist program participants to attain and maintain housing. The flexible spending fund also provides an opportunity for grantees to utilize motels to provide emergency housing for households who need a safe place to stay when emergency shelter beds are not available. This occurs, for example, when a street outreach team comes across a family with minor children in a homeless encampment or when a Rapid Rehousing Program participant is fleeing a violent situation. The motel stay under these programs is usually limited to a few days. The proposed Motel Voucher Program will allow for more vulnerable households to have the opportunity to immediately access a safe bed for a longer amount of time. This would limit safety risks that occur to participants when unsheltered and increase the chances of being rehoused more quickly. The Motel Voucher Program will ensure households are kept together in safe and temporary housing, until a more permanent housing solution is identified. While families with minor children and victims of domestic violence are the target households served with this program, other vulnerable households may be served, for example a senior with medical condition, but would be evaluated for participation on a case by case basis.

#### *Contractor Experience & Cultural Competency*

Serving families in crisis is a core service of LifeMoves. On any given night, LifeMoves houses over 750 people experiencing homelessness, about one-half of whom are children. In San José, there are only three emergency shelters for families, and LifeMoves operates two of them.

Additionally, LifeMoves has significant experience operating a Motel Voucher Program in San Mateo County, where they focus on sheltering families with minor children for up to 15 days on average. With the award of \$1,950,000 in HEAP funding, LifeMoves will use their experience to develop a system in San José that prioritizes participants while assuring that those served through the program are homeless at program entry, or experiencing a life-threatening situation (i.e. domestic violence) that will result in homelessness or harm to the person being served. In line with best practices, the proposed program will be service-rich with the ultimate goal of all participants transitioning to permanent housing. Some of the services and activities in the program include:

- Case management;
- Connectivity to other supportive services such as benefits enrollment, physical and mental healthcare and income support;
- Housing locator services assisting with developing a housing plan, identification of potential housing and assisting with application processes; and
- Linkages to community resources including childcare and food and meal assistance.

LifeMoves has demonstrated success operating a similar Motel Voucher Program in San Mateo County. In Fiscal Year 2018-2019, 91% of LifeMoves' Motel Voucher Program participants in San Mateo County exited to emergency shelter or transitional housing while 7% exited to permanent housing. Those who exited to emergency shelter or transitional housing continued to receive individualized case management that centered around permanent housing placement.

Establishing a Motel Voucher Program is an opportunity to provide a more coordinated approach to serving vulnerable people. Referrals to the Motel Voucher Program will be coordinated with the Housing Department and other service providers, such as family shelters and domestic violence programs in order to efficiently meet the needs of families, seniors and victims of domestic violence. Additionally, LifeMoves and the Housing Department will work closely to develop an outreach plan to ensure a wide variety of collaborative partners are involved, such as school districts, libraries, and law enforcement.

LifeMoves is experienced serving diverse populations. All LifeMoves clients are extremely low-income from ethnically and racially diverse backgrounds. Last year, clients served identified as 41% Caucasian, 19% African-American, 21% Native American, 6% Pacific Islander, 4% Asian, 9% Multiracial/Other, and 33% Hispanic. Almost half of the individuals LifeMoves serves have disabilities, 10% are Veterans, and 5% are formerly incarcerated individuals. Last year, 92% of LifeMoves clients had an annual income under \$25,000. In addition, due to the skyrocketing cost of living in the Bay Area, 72% of the families LifeMoves served last year were experiencing homelessness for the first time.

Cultural competency amongst staff is an integral part of LifeMoves training and programming. LifeMoves administers ongoing, comprehensive annual training to all employees to ensure staff are prepared to work effectively with clients and achieve program performance objectives. Trainings include Housing First best-practices, motivational interviewing, harm reduction, suicide and self-harm prevention, emergency response protocol and procedures, conflict prevention and resolution, mandated reporting, among many more topics. In addition to in-house

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expertise, LifeMoves contracts with a licensed clinical psychologist to provide mandatory, semi-annual training to all LifeMoves staff on cultural competency by integrating multiculturalism into organizational practices. Staff are practiced in cultural competency and sensitivity ensuring clients feel safe and accepted regardless of race, ethnicity or sexual orientation. Finally, LifeMoves employs bilingual staff to effectively assist non-English speaking clients.

### **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

The results of the program will be reported twice a year during a report on HEAP activities to the City's Neighborhood Services and Education Committee. Additionally, updates will be provided in the Housing Department's annual report on homeless programs.

Finally, as a condition of receiving the State grant funds, the City is required to provide reports to the State regarding the number of families served and the types of services they received, until all funds have been expended by the June 30, 2021 deadline. These reports will be posted to the Department's website.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST**

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Council Agenda website for the September 10, 2019 City Council Meeting.

### **COORDINATION**

The memorandum was coordinated with the City Attorney's Office and the City Manager's Budget Office.

### **COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT**

The Housing and Community Development Commission's HEAP funding recommendations were reviewed and considered by the City Council on November 27, 2018.

### **COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS**

All costs described in this memorandum will be funded by the \$11,389,987 HEAP grant received from the State of California that must be fully expended by June 30, 2021.

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**BUDGET REFERENCE**

The table below identifies fund and appropriations proposed to fund the actions recommended as part of this memorandum.

Fund #	Appn #	Appn. Name	Total Appn	Amt. for Contract	2019-2020 Proposed Operating Budget Page*	Last Budget Action (Date, Ord. No.)
448	205Y	Crisis Response Interventions	\$3,289,987	\$1,950,000	X-67	6/18/2019, 30286

\*The 2019-2020 Proposed Operating Budget was adopted by City Council on June 18, 2019.

**CEQA**

Not a Project, File No. PP17-003, Agreements/Contracts (New or Amended) resulting in no physical changes to the environment, and File No. PP17-004, Government Funding Mechanism or Fiscal Activity with no commitment to a specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.

/s/  
JACKY MORALES-FERRAND  
Director, Housing Department

For questions, please contact Kelly Hemphill, Homelessness Response Manager, at [kelly.hemphill@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:kelly.hemphill@sanjoseca.gov) or (408) 975-4483.