



Date: November 21, 2022

To: Wanda S. Page, City Manager
Through: Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager
From: Reginald J. Johnson, Director
Community Development Department
Subject: Contract with Open Table Ministry, Inc. for White Flag Non-Congregate
Emergency Shelter and Supportive Services

Executive Summary

The Homeless System received a substantial investment of Federal Emergency Solutions Grant-COVID (ESG-CV) funds over the last two years. These ESG-CV funds were used in coordination with funding from Durham County to provide supportive services and shelter to people experiencing homelessness who had tested positive for COVID. The funds were also used to provide non-congregate emergency shelter while physical distancing was recommended as well as to expand rapid rehousing.

ESG-CV funded contracts for non-congregate shelter, service and rapid housing ended on June 30, 2022. Based on the need for continued social distancing, the Durham Homelessness Continuum of Care (CoC) recommended continued operation of a non-congregate shelter with supportive services, expanded rapid rehousing and a new landlord engagement program to increase the number of units available to households existing homelessness.

The City of Durham, Community Development Department (CDD) worked with Durham County to develop a strategy to extend non-congregate shelter facilities and related services. Durham County will be providing funds to ensure non-congregate housing will be rented and available to those experiencing homelessness. The City of Durham will be supplying funds provide the supportive services to the people staying in the non-congregate shelter(s).

The City of Durham issued a request for proposals on April 25, 2022 for providers to provide supportive services, rapid rehousing and landlord engagement assistance. Staff are requesting that City Council authorize the City Manager to execute a contract with Open Table Ministry, Inc. to provide White Flag non-congregate emergency shelter and supportive services to households experiencing homelessness during cold weather.

Motion

To authorize the City Manager to execute a seven-month contract in the amount of \$200,000 with Open Table Ministry, Inc. funded with city funds to provide non-congregate emergency shelter and supportive services to households experiencing homelessness during cold weather.

Background

The Homeless System has been responding to the COVID-19 pandemic for the last two years using the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Emergency Solution Grant-COVID (ESG-CV) funds as well as Durham County funds for non-congregate shelter. ESG-CV funds have allowed the City to provide supportive services to households

experiencing homelessness staying in non-congregate shelter as well as to provide additional rapid rehousing resources to help exit households from homelessness to permanent housing. Durham County has been using County funds to rent motel rooms as well as a duplex to provide temporary emergency shelter to medically vulnerable and/or households experiencing homelessness who test positive for COVID-19.

Although the community at large is beginning to shift to a post-COVID normal, it is still recommended to practice physical distancing. The physical distancing guidelines discourage the homeless system from returning to a full congregate shelter, especially for those who are medically vulnerable.

The ESG-CV funds that have been used to pay for food, security, case management, laundry, and other required supportive services at the non-congregate emergency shelter were fully expended on June 30, 2022. The Durham CoC members raised the issue, prior to funds being fully expended, that there will still be a need in the community to continue non-congregate emergency shelter and expanded rapid rehousing, as well as a need to begin a new landlord engagement program. This request was made formally to the Homeless Service Advisory Committee (HSAC) on February 23, 2022. The HSAC voted and agreed that continuing funds were needed and a request was forwarded to the City and to the County to fund these projects in the amount of \$4.1 million.

City and County staff worked together and identified funding for these vital services so there would not be an interruption in services when current funding expired. Under the agreed upon plan, Durham County will provide funds to pay for the cost of leasing non-congregate shelter space, for example, through the rental of hotel rooms. City funds will be used to provide supportive services at County-funded non-congregate shelter site(s). In addition, City funds will be used to support weather-related emergency shelter and non-congregate shelter for persons fleeing intimate partner violence, as well as rapid rehousing and landlord engagement.

The City of Durham issued a request for proposals (RFP) on April 25, 2022, for providers to provide supportive services, rapid rehousing and landlord engagement assistance. An evaluation committee composed of City and County and HSAC representatives reviewed the proposals received. Based on the committee's recommendations, Open Table Ministry, Inc. is being recommended for \$200,000 in funding to provide white flag non-congregate emergency shelter and supportive services for the cold weather season beginning November 1, 2022.

OTM will utilize approved funding to support emergency shelter for individuals on winter nights when the temperature drops below 32 degrees. The project has a goal of serving 50 persons in non-congregate emergency shelter, primarily through the rental of hotel rooms. Referrals for emergency shelter will be accepted from the Durham Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry Program.

Issues and Analysis

Currently there are 72 single adults experiencing unsheltered homelessness and waiting for emergency shelter beds. The emergency shelter for single adults is operating at reduced capacity to ensure social distancing and the non-congregate shelter is being reduced this year compare to last year as we return to pre-pandemic operations. Establishing a winter non-congregate shelter for individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness will provide safe housing on cold nights.

Due to the COVID pandemic and physical distancing recommendations still in place the homeless system is unable to return to pre-pandemic full capacity congregate shelter safely. At the same time, as a result of the housing market in Durham, the cost of renting housing and exiting homelessness is becoming more difficult as rents rise and rental property owners are less willing to accept less than highly qualified renters in their units.

In an effort to reduce the impact of these two issues homeless service providers and the HSAC recommended that funds from the City and County are needed to extend non-congregate shelter, This contract in particular will expand non-congregate emergency shelter and supportive services on cold weather nights through the rental of hotel/motel rooms for persons experiencing homelessness.

Alternatives

The City Council could choose not to approve funding this contract. If the contract is not funded up to 400 people experiencing homelessness during the cold weather would not be temporarily housed in non-congregate shelter and will not have access to critical supportive services.

The City Council could choose to reduce the amount of funding for this project in which case the scope of the project would be reduced proportionately.

Financial Impact

The Community Development Department has funds available and budgeted from Bond Program Income in the amount of \$200,000 for this contract. The MUNIS codes for this contract are 3410D900-728600-DB170.

Equal Business Opportunity Summary

The Finance Department reviewed the proposal submitted by Open Table Ministry, Inc. and determined they are in compliance with Ordinance to Promote Equal Business Opportunities in City Contracting.

This is a project in which there were no subcontracting opportunities identified by the Community Development Department. In the absence of subcontracting opportunities, there were no MUBE or WUBE goals set.

Contractor Workforce Diversity & Hiring Practices

Open Table Ministry, Inc. completed the required Workforce Diversity Questionnaire. The Questionnaire is an attachment to this memo.

Attachments

Contract
Scope of Work
EBOP Form
Workforce Diversity Questionnaire