



Memorandum

Memorandum No: 20-094

Date: October 6, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Commissioners

From: Chris Lagerbloom, ICMA-CM, City Manager

Re: **Community Development Block Grant Care Act (CDBG-CV)**

On September 17, 2020 the City received notification, from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, of a special allocation of \$1,640,833 of Community Development Block Grant funds to be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the Corona Virus Pandemic (COVID-19).

The funding source is made available from Community Development Block Grants (CDBG-CV), which may be used for shelter diversion, homeless prevention, and eviction prevention purposes.

City of Fort Lauderdale residents have experienced adverse impacts in housing. The hospitality, restaurant, entertainment, and retail service industries have experienced the greatest job loss. The economic shift will require time for the community and neighbors to retool and adjust to the new normal. As a result, the local community has experienced an increase in homelessness.

The Housing and Community Development (HCD) division of the City Manager's office explored three options to address homelessness, while meeting the COVID-19 CDBG-CV grant eligibility guidelines. The following options were explored:

1. Identify a building to be rehabilitated and used as transitional housing
2. Develop permanent supportive housing solutions using retrofitted shipping containers
3. Enact a Homelessness prevention program through housing options

Options one and two would require financial resources beyond the available fund allocation (\$1,640,833) and would require extensive planning effort and designing duration that could prolong over 18 - 24 months, at a minimum. Both options require ongoing annual financial support to sustain operability over the program life.

The HCD staff recommends option three as the best approach, as proposed initiative may be implemented without any additional general fund requirement or ongoing financial support.

Proposed approach may effectively prevent homelessness, or help those impacted by homelessness, for up to six months per household. The proposed approach will provide an opportunity to Fort Lauderdale constituents to retool themselves with new job skills or obtain new sources of employment without facing homelessness.

Additional benefits of proposed approach include:

- Offers prompt relief to neighbors
- Wider support across greater cross-section of neighborhoods
- Offer sustainable economic benefit to the community by assisting neighbors in returning to the workforce
- Proposed approach may also create new jobs for residents
- Approach has the capability to meet timeliness deadlines for expenditure of grant funds

Various local non-profit agencies who are a credentialed women-and-minority-owned-business could partner with the City to accelerate succession rate of proposed program. A reasonable timeframe for having program up and running is approximately three to four months after City Commission approval.

If the City Commission is open to proceed, HCD staff will proceed to carry out activities necessary to access described federal funds.

c: Tarlesha W. Smith, Esq., Assistant City Manager
Greg Chavarria, Assistant City Manager
Alain E. Boileau, City Attorney
Jeffrey A. Modarelli, City Clerk
John C. Herbst, City Auditor
Department Directors
CMO Managers