



Legislation Text

File #: 2021-0612, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors of Sonoma County and Board of Commissioners of the Community Development Commission

Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Staff Name and Phone Number: Martha Cheever, 565-7521

Vote Requirement: 4/5th

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Emergency Housing Voucher Program

Recommended Action:

Adopt a resolution authorizing budgetary adjustments to the fiscal year 2021-2022 adopted budget to accommodate Emergency Housing Voucher Program revenues and expenditures of \$2,910,060. (4/5th Vote Required)

Executive Summary:

To combat homelessness and help mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 provided Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program vouchers to Housing Authorities throughout the nation. The Sonoma County Housing Authority received 153 EHV program vouchers.

The EHV program is intended to assist individuals and families who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, or were recently homeless or have a high risk of housing instability.

Approval of this item will appropriate funding for this new Emergency Housing Voucher program. The Housing Authority will be working to update its Administrative Plan to allow for the implementation of the EHV program. After public hearing at the Community Development Committee, staff will bring the amended Administrative Plan to the Board of Commissioners for consideration.

Discussion:

To combat homelessness and help mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 provided Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program vouchers to Housing Authorities throughout the nation. The Sonoma County Housing Authority received 153 program vouchers.

EHV program vouchers are unlike traditional Housing Authority program vouchers in that all EHV target populations were set by the Sonoma County Continuum of Care in collaboration with the Housing Authority. Additionally, all referrals for the EHV program must come through the Sonoma County Coordinated Entry System. Service providers and the Housing Authority will be coordinating to ensure that housing search assistance is provided to each EHV program voucher recipient during their initial housing search (first lease-up). Housing search assistance is a broad term which can include many activities, but with respect to EHV

program requirements it must at a minimum include (1) helping individual EHV families identify potentially available units during their housing search, (2) providing transportation assistance and directions to potential units, (3) conducting owner outreach, (4) assisting EHV families with the completion of rental applications and Housing Authority forms, and (5) helping expedite the EHV leasing process for the family. Where housing search assistance services are not available through service providers, existing Housing Authority staff will ensure the required services are provided.

The Sonoma County Continuum of Care met on June 28, 2021 and approved the following target populations for the Emergency Housing Voucher program:

- 30% Chronically Homeless clients who are actively engaged with case management and/or consistently engaging with street outreach and beginning active engagement with case management.
- 30% Chronically Homeless or formerly chronically homeless individuals currently in Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) beds who are ready to move-on from PSH to other housing with reduced supportive services.
- 10% Chronically Homeless individuals who are high users of medical services.
- 20% Homeless families or formerly homeless families who are participating in a rapid rehousing (RRH) program and will be at risk of homelessness/housing instability when the RRH program ends.
- 5% Survivors of Domestic Violence/Human Trafficking.
- 5% Transitional Age Youth Experiencing Homelessness.

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) required that all Housing Authorities enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with their local Continuum of Care prior to July 31, 2021. To meet this requirement, the Housing Authority entered into an MOU with the Sonoma County Continuum of Care outlining the target populations, the referral process, and the background check requirements. A copy of the MOU is included as Attachment 2 to this Agenda Item.

In the coming months, the Housing Authority will be working to update its Administrative Plan to clarify local policies related to the implementation of the EHV program. After public hearing at the Community Development Committee, staff will bring the amended Administrative Plan to the Board of Commissioners for consideration.

HUD has provided the Housing Authority with 18 months of funding for EHV program rental assistance (\$2,076,072), EHV program administrative expenses (\$237,288), EHV program housing support services (\$535,500), and funding for immediate EHV program start-up costs (\$61,200). This item is requesting budgetary adjustment to allow for the immediate use of these funds. HUD has provided a mechanism for the Housing Authority to request and receive additional rental assistance funds once these initial funds are expended.

The EHV program will begin to sunset September 30, 2023. After that date, the Housing Authority will be unable to reissue turn-over vouchers unless the program is extended. HUD will continue to provide funding for EHV program vouchers that are actively in use through September 30, 2030.

The EHV program adds an additional and unique tool to the Housing Authority's portfolio of programs to assist in combating homelessness in the County. While traditional Housing Authority voucher programs are available to persons experiencing homelessness, they are more difficult to obtain, require a more extensive applicant background check, and do not necessarily have attached housing search support. The EHV program has served

to bring the Continuum of Care and the Housing Authority together in conversation as to how to most effectively prioritize and serve some of the most vulnerable persons in our community.

Prior Board Actions:

None

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 21-22 Adopted	FY 22-23 Projected	FY 23-24 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested	2,910,060		
Total Expenditures	2,910,060	0	0
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal	2,910,060		
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	2,910,060	0	0

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

All rental assistance funds are being budgeted for use within twelve months with the attached resolution. Funding for Emergency Voucher Program is broken down as follows: rental assistance (\$2,076,072), EHV program administrative expenses (\$237,288), EHV program housing support services (\$535,500), and funding for immediate EHV program start-up costs (\$61,200).

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Budget Resolution

Attachment 2 - Memorandum of Understanding with the Sonoma County Continuum of Care

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None