

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE

INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE: August 22, 2016

TO: Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Héctor Colón, Director, Department of Health and Human Services
Prepared by James Mathy, Administrator, Housing Division

SUBJECT: **Informational report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, regarding a grant award of \$2.4 million over three years from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) to expand the Housing Division's Housing First Initiative and the Plan to End Chronic Homelessness**

Issue

The Housing Division recently received notification that it had been awarded a SAMHSA grant of \$2.4 million to expand the Housing Division's Housing First Initiative. The grant would begin in October 2016 and each year is funded at \$800,000 over three years. Because there is no local match involved, County Board approval is not required to accept the award per Ch. 56 of the Milwaukee County Ordinances. However, DHHS would like to provide the Health and Human Needs Committee members with details on the programs and services being supported by the SAMHSA grant award.

Background

In 2015, the Housing Division announced its Plan to End Chronic Homelessness by 2018 using the Housing First philosophy. This philosophy changed the way that housing was offered to homeless individuals and families by making housing options barrier free. There are no longer prerequisites to housing such as mandatory services. Since the plan was announced, there has been a 70 percent reduction in chronic homelessness and all participants have accepted voluntary case management services that are offered as a part of the Housing First program. Housing retention rates are currently at 99 percent which is well above the national average for other Housing First Programs.

To continue this progress, the Housing Division has looked for additional funding outside of Milwaukee County. The Division applied for the competitive Cooperative Agreements to Benefit Homeless Individuals (CABHI) grant through SAMHSA and was awarded \$2.4 million based on the results achieved in the previous year. In fact, Milwaukee County received the fourth largest allocation in the country. The grant not only serves chronically homeless individuals, but can also serve homeless families and homeless veterans who do not meet the definition of chronically homeless.

Discussion

There are several main areas of focus of the CABHI grant for the Housing Division. They are as follows:

Case Management and Peer Support

Grant funds will be used to fund additional case management and peer support. These services will be provided by Milwaukee County's nonprofit partners who have expertise in this area. These services have been vital to the high housing retention rates the Division has seen since the adoption of Housing First. These services will focus on mental health and AODA treatment, benefit acquisition, and employment. Peer support continues to play a vital role in this model and this will be expanded especially with serving the homeless veteran population.

Homeless Resource Center

Grant funds will be utilized to staff a new Homeless Resource center. Due to this grant, the center will open by 2017. Homeless individuals will be able to access the Resource Center through homeless outreach workers and case managers. The Milwaukee Police Department's Homeless Outreach Team will also be able to bring individuals to the Resource Center upon encountering an individual that needs immediate assistance. The Resource Center will have showers, laundry, and food available. On-site staff will work on housing placements as well as mental health and AODA referrals.

Additional Housing Division Staff

Grant funds will allow for the hiring of two additional staff to coordinate homeless outreach as well as assist in the wraparound services offered to clients. In addition, the grant will help fund a part-time Project Director.

Enhanced Coordinated Entry

Grant funds will be used to advance the Coordinated Entry System in Milwaukee County for those accessing homeless services and housing. One of the next goals of the system is to incorporate permanent housing into Milwaukee's homeless system.

Recommendation

This is an informational report. No action is necessary.

Fiscal Impact

Acceptance of the SAMHSA grant award will increase both expenditures and revenues in the 2016 Adopted Housing Budget. There is no additional tax levy required. A fund transfer request containing the appropriate revenue and expenditure authority will be submitted to the County Board once grant funds are received.

Respectfully Submitted:



Héctor Colón, Director
Department of Health & Human Services

cc: County Executive Chris Abele
Raisa Koltun, County Executive's Office
Kelly Bablitch, County Board
County Supervisor Peggy Romo-West, County Board
Teig Whaley-Smith, Director, DAS
Steve Kreklow, Director, Office of Performance, Strategy & Budget
Steve Cady, Research Director, Comptroller's Office
Lisa Wozny, Budget Analyst - DAS
Erica Hayden, Research & Policy Analyst – Comptroller's Office