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**Sponsor:** Housing Stability

**Meeting Date:** 11/21/2023

**Title:** Grant Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Human Services Office of Economic Opportunity for Direct Emergency Services

**File Number:** 2023-504

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**Background and Rationale:**

In March of 2023, the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) division, released a competitive solicitation entitled Emergency Services Program (ESP) for providers of Outreach, Drop-in Center/Day Shelter, Emergency Shelter, Scattered-Site, Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, Site-Based Transitional Housing, and/or Permanent Supportive Housing services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness in the state of Minnesota. The Housing Stability department (HSD) of Ramsey County applied for two categories of funding: Drop-in Center/Day Shelter, and Outreach and in July of 2023, was awarded \$650,000 for the two programs.

Additionally, Ramsey County was appropriated funding directly from the Minnesota Legislature during the 2023 Legislative Session. The appropriated funds are designated for services and shelter for persons experiencing homelessness. To distinguish the legislatively directed funding from the OEO ESP funding, OEO has entitled this funding Direct Emergency Services (DES).

Drop-In Center/Day Shelter Program

HSD intends to expand the capacity of its winter warming spaces pilot program. In 2022, Ramsey County used one-time American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds allocated by the state of Minnesota to launch a demonstration of a low barrier, warming centers program. Through the pilot, no one was barred from frequenting the warming spaces. HSD also allowed individuals to bring their personal items into the spaces, which meant HSD was able to serve a significant amount more of people who had been previously barred. The program accommodated over 10,000 warming center visits and provided over 10,000 individual rides to unsheltered individuals between December 1, 2022, and February 28, 2023.

Outreach Program

HSD will be implementing a new single-point-of-entry program. The program will be directed toward individuals seeking emergency shelter and will offer diversion and shelter reservation services. The program will be a centralized access point for emergency shelter, and will conduct intake assessments, offer diversion services for single adults (including adult youth, ages 18 to 24), and make shelter reservations for shelter spaces operated by participating providers. Utilization for both the warming centers and the shelter system will be tracked through the contracted Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

In preparation for the seasonal warming centers, HSD is seeking permission to utilize the status of limited duration for positions as it did during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the warming center pilot, 15 limited duration and temporary positions (five through OEO/ESP funding, and ten through OEO/DES funding ) were dedicated to the warming centers. For this grant funding, these same positions will be used during the winter of 2023 through spring of 2024, and winter of 2024 through the spring of 2025. The county will receive a total of \$2,248,000 for the two programs, of which

\$224,800 (10%) will be retained by the Ramsey County Housing Stability department for administrative oversight, with the remaining \$2,023,200 being dedicated toward the warming centers and single-point-of-entry projects. When executed, funds will be moved to a grant fund and will be allocated through the life of the grant (July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2025).

**Recommendation:**

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Accept a grant award and approve the grant agreement with the Minnesota Department of Human Services Office of Economic Opportunity, PO Box 64951, Saint Paul, MN, 55164 for Direct Emergency Services for the period of execution through June 30, 2025, in the amount of \$2,248,000.
2. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the grant contract.
3. Authorize the County Manager to enter into agreements and execute amendments to agreements in accordance with the county's procurement policies and procedures provided the amounts are within the limits of the grant funding.
4. Authorize the County Manager to enter into expenditure grant agreements and execute amendments to agreements in a form approved by Finance and the County Attorney's Office provided the amounts of funding are within the limits of the approved expenditure grant agreement program budget.
5. Approve extension of ten Full Time Equivalent unclassified limited duration positions from December 31, 2024, through April 30, 2025.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner McGuire, seconded by Commissioner Reinhardt. Motion passed.

Aye: - 6: Frethem, Martinson, McGuire, Ortega, Reinhardt, and Xiong

Absent: - 1: Moran

By:   
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Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board