

City of Alexandria, Virginia**MEMORANDUM**

DATE: MAY 1, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER *J*

SUBJECT: PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSIDERATION OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE FY 2009 ACTION PLAN FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TO APPLY FOR FEDERAL STIMULUS FUNDING UNDER THE HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND RAPID RE-HOUSING PROGRAM

ISSUE: Consideration of a federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant application, in the form of an Action Plan program amendment, for funding from the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program for housing stability projects within the Office of Community Services, Department of Human Services.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Conduct a public hearing on the Substantial Amendment to the City's FY 2009 Action Plan for Housing and Community Development for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (attached);
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to submit the attached amendment (due May 18, 2009) to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to apply for \$512,214 in federal stimulus funding under the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program; and
- (3) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents associated with the substantial amendment.

BACKGROUND: The City of Alexandria has been allocated, by formula, \$512,214 in federal stimulus funding under HUD's Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) for purposes of housing stability. No City match is required. The funds support renters in danger of losing their residences, as well as homeless individuals ready to relocate into permanent housing.

The federal grant application process for HPRP funds is a substantial amendment to the City's FY 2009 Action Plan for Housing and Community Development. (This is the current Action Plan, as opposed to the FY 2010 Action Plan docketed for Council consideration at this same meeting.) The substantial amendment for HPRP is due May 18, 2009. Please note that an additional CDBG program amendment will be required for the City's allocation of CDBG stimulus funds. Consolidation of the program amendments was not possible because guidance has not yet been issued for the CDBG stimulus funding.

The program amendment for HPRP funds must follow the City's Citizen Participation Plan, with the exception that HUD's 30-day public hearing requirement has been reduced to 12 days for this program. The City's Citizen Participation Plan calls for a public hearing as part of the public comment period. Copies of the program amendment and notices of the public hearing were sent before April 30 to the interested parties list developed for the Consolidated Plan and related HUD documents, as well as to any persons and organizations on the Homeless Services Coordinating Committee list who are not currently on the Consolidated Plan list. At the May 12 Council meeting, staff will report to City Council any comments received by staff prior to the meeting.

DISCUSSION: The intent of the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program funding is to provide housing stabilization to renters. The focus is to serve persons: (1) who are homeless or would be homeless, but for this assistance; and (2) can remain stably housed after the assistance ends. The Department of Human Services, Office of Community Services proposes to develop a Renter's Assistance Plus program to provide rental and utility assistance, security deposits, moving costs, storage, credit repair/counseling services and case management to those individuals who fall within HUD's guidelines for the HPRP funding. Information for all households must be entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), currently used for homeless data collection. Additional detail is provided in the attached program amendment.

Outreach for this time-limited program will be focused on those individuals who are newly unemployed as a result of the economic crisis, those who are being evicted, as renters, from properties experiencing foreclosure and those who are homeless and eligible for re-housing assistance.

The program will require the hiring of 1.5 FTEs for case management, data collection and reporting, outreach, and coordination of community providers and resources. The title of the positions will be Relocation Advisor I. The positions will be considered emergency hires, and will terminate when the grant funding ends. These new hires will be notified in writing of this planned termination merit funding ends. Over the projected two years that the program will run, it is estimated that \$497,214 is budgeted for direct services to the clients. Of that amount, \$109,766 will cover personnel costs for outreach and direct case management. Administrative costs, including data system upgrade, total \$15,000.

On April 21, 2009, as part of the application requirement, the proposed project was presented at the Homeless Services Coordinating Committee, the Continuum of Care group for the City. The membership includes several City agencies, non-profits and the faith-based community representatives who all are engaged with the homeless and at-risk community in various capacities. The program was supported by the committee. The committee will be included in all marketing and outreach efforts.

FISCAL IMPACT: Upon approval of the substantial amendment HUD will release \$512,214 in HPRP funds to the City. This grant requires no City match. Based on the current economic climate in Alexandria, it is anticipated that the funding for this program will last through June 2011. It is intended, because of severe City budget constraints, that no additional City funds will supplement this program after the anticipated grant period. If funding is eliminated and replacement funding cannot be secured, the purchase of services and/or staff positions will likewise be terminated.

ATTACHMENT: Draft Substantial Amendment to the City's FY 2009 Action Plan for Housing and Community Development

STAFF:

Debra Collins, Assistant City Manger for Community and Human Services

Mildrilyn Stephens Davis, Director, Office of Housing

Ann Moore, Director, Office of Community Services, Department of Human Services

Eric Keeler, Division Chief, Program Administration, Office of Housing

**Draft Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan for the
Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)**

A. General Information

| | |
|---|--|
| Grantee Name | City of Alexandria |
| Name of Entity or Department Administering Funds | Department of Human Services Office of Community Services |
| HPRP Contact Person (person to answer questions about this amendment and HPRP) | Ann Moore |
| Title | Director, OCS |
| Address Line 1 | Alexandria Department of Human Services |
| Address Line 2 | 2525 Mount Vernon Ave |
| City, State, Zip Code | Alexandria, VA 22301 |
| Telephone | 703-838-0930 |
| Fax | 703-836-2104 |
| Email Address | Ann.moore@alexandriava.gov |
| Authorized Official (if different from Contact Person) | James K. Hartmann |
| Title | City Manager |
| Address Line 1 | Alexandria City Hall |
| Address Line 2 | 301 King St., Room 3500 |
| City, State, Zip Code | Alexandria, VA 22314 |
| Telephone | 703-838-4300 |
| Fax | 703-838-6343 |
| Email Address | Jim.hartmann@alexandriava.gov |
| Web Address where this Form is Posted | www.alexandriava.gov |

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Amount Grantee is Eligible to Receive* | \$512,214 |
| Amount Grantee is Requesting | \$512,214 |

*Amounts are available at <http://www.hud.gov/recovery/homelesspreventrecov.xls>

Draft Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)

B. Citizen Participation and Public Comment

1. Briefly describe how the grantee followed its citizen participation plan regarding this proposed substantial amendment (limit 250 words).

Response: A notice of amendment to the City's Consolidated Plan was mailed to the interested parties list, consisting of membership or clientele that may be affected by the Consolidated Plan. This list includes City Boards and Commissions, homeless shelter and/or service providers, civic associations, businesses throughout the City, and Alexandria-based organizations representing or serving the low-income populations. In addition, the proposal was presented to the Continuum of Care group – the City's Homeless Services Coordinating Committee – on April 21, 2009 and at a public hearing held the evening of May 12, 2009.

2. Provide the appropriate response regarding this substantial amendment by checking one of the following options:

- Grantee did not receive public comments.
- Grantee received and accepted all public comments.
- Grantee received public comments and did not accept one or more of the comments.

3. Provide a summary of the public comments regarding this substantial amendment. Include a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons for non-acceptance.

Response:

The City of Alexandria's plan to use the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing grant to implement the Renter's Assistance Plus (RAP) program was presented to the Continuum of Care at the Homeless Services Coordinating Committee meeting on April 21st, 2009. The following suggestions/comments were discussed and accepted:

Develop a standard Release of Information form for agencies to share information in order to improve client services and maximize resources;

Develop a RAP hand-out that answers frequently asked questions (FAQ);

Create a training session for non-profits and community-based providers on the services and entitlements offered within the Department of Human Services, including distinction of the RAP project from other existing homeless prevention and rental assistance services;

Provide budget information on the percentage of funding that will be used for direct client services and administrative costs;

Prior to implementation, provide an estimate of the number of clients to be served;

Market and advertise the program through a variety of avenues including partner agencies, community recreational centers, areas churches, newspapers, courts, sheriff's office, and landlords.

C. Distribution and Administration of Funds

Reminder: The HPRP grant will be made by means of a grant agreement executed by HUD and the grantee. The three-year deadline to expend funds begins when HUD signs the grant agreement. Grantees should ensure that sufficient planning is in place to begin to expend funds shortly after grant agreement.

1. Check the process(es) that the grantee plans to use to select subgrantees. Note that a subgrantee is defined as the organization to which the grantee provides HPRP funds.

Competitive Process

Formula Allocation

Other (Specify: **Not Applicable**_____)

2. Briefly describe the process(es) indicated in question 1 above (limit 250 words).

Response:

The Department of Human Services, Office of Community Services will be providing direct services for this project. No sub-grantees will be used.

Draft Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)

3. Briefly describe the process the grantee plans to use, once HUD signs the grant agreement, to allocate funds available to subgrantees by September 30, 2009, as required by the HPRP Notice (limit 250 words).

Response: Not Applicable. Alexandria Department of Human Services, Office of Community Services, will provide direct services. No sub-grantee will be used.

4. Describe the grantee's plan for ensuring the effective and timely use of HPRP grant funds on eligible activities, as outlined in the HPRP Notice. Include a description of how the grantee plans to oversee and monitor the administration and use of its own HPRP funds, as well as those used by its subgrantees (limit 500 words).

Response: Implementation of the plan is projected for September 1, 2009. The Alexandria Department of Human Services, Office of Community Services (OCS), currently coordinates programs for homeless prevention and safety net/emergency services. The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), as well as Harmony, the department's financial/case management data collection system are currently in place to track client data and provide fiscal accountability. As a result, there are no anticipated barriers to initiating a new project of this type. OCS staff is also partnered with several community organizations that will expedite the start-up of the project.

Renter's Assistance Plus, the City's HPRP, has been reviewed and approved by the Continuum of Care, as services are needed to decrease the negative effects of the current economic crisis. The services provided will fill the gaps and remove barriers, for which there are no existing programs. With increased requests for assistance from renters, never having used services before, it is anticipated that the funding for the project will last for two years. With the coordination of the other services within the Office of Community Services, the funding may be available for a third year.

Prior to September 1, 2009, outreach and training regarding the program will be provided to the community, including City agencies, non-profits, faith-based community organizations, landlords and the courts. Press releases will be distributed to local news media, according to the City's press release plan. Simultaneously, the application process will be solidified, and the evaluation and reporting criteria will be finalized. The HMIS will be reconfigured to meet the HUD requirements for the HPRP.

The proposed program will require the hiring of one full-time, and one part-time

emergency hire Relocation Advisor I positions, providing direct and supportive assistance to the homeless ready for re-housing, and renters at risk of being homeless, as well as continued outreach and community involvement. The minimum requirements for the positions in the City are: at least one year of experience in housing or human services delivery and college level courses in sociology, urban affairs, or related field. The process, for personnel recruitment, will be initiated on receipt of the notification of grant approval and City Council acceptance. The cost from the program budget for the position is \$36,588.82 for the full time position and \$18,294.41 for the part-time position. These positions will be in place for the duration of the project only.

D. Collaboration

1. Briefly describe how the grantee plans to collaborate with the local agencies that can serve similar target populations, which received funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 from other Federal agencies, including the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, and Labor (limit 250 words).

Response: The Office of Community Services is also the recipient of Community Services Block Grant funding, some of which will be used for utility education. JobLink, the City's one-stop for employment, will also receive stimulus funding. The Office of Aging and Adult Services will receive funding, as well. All of those offices are under the umbrella of the Department of Human Services. Because much of the stimulus funding is managed by the organizations OCS partners with for other customers, the collaboration will continue for those renters applying for the Renter's Assistance Plus project, as well. Each applicant will develop a service plan, along with the case worker, and be referred to any services being funded through stimulus or regular funding that may assist in meeting any of the barriers to being self-sufficient.

2. Briefly describe how the grantee plans to collaborate with appropriate Continuum(s) of Care and mainstream resources regarding HPRP activities (limit 250 words).

Response: On April 21, 2009, the HPRP proposal, Renter's Assistance Plus, was presented to and accepted by Alexandria's Continuum of Care. Members of that committee discussed the proposal and made suggestions and recommendations to maximize outreach and use of the funds. They are interested in being directly involved in outreach, and committed to partnering with the Office of Community Services to provide application processing on-site at transitional housing and emergency shelters. The Department of Human Services co-chairs the Alexandria Council of Human Service Organizations (ACHSO) with the mission to improve human services through cross sector collaboration to benefit the entire Alexandria

community, resulting in an innovative and integrated human services model. This entity will be utilized for communication and professional development of staff, to include in-depth training, access to research information and templates for policies and procedures.

The Office of Community Services is currently very connected with mainstream resources within Alexandria. As part of the service plans, clients will be linked with organizations that offer credit counseling and repair services, mental health, substance abuse and health care clinics, Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority, furniture and emergency food providers, and moving and storage companies. Within the Department of Human Services exists JobLink, the City's one-stop employment resource center, child care services, benefit and entitlement programs and aging, youth and adult services. A referral process to each of these agencies currently exists, and enhancement of those referrals will allow us to provide wrap-around services for this program.

3. Briefly describe how HPRP grant funds for financial assistance and housing relocation/stabilization services will be used in a manner that is consistent with the grantee's Consolidated Plan (limit 250 words).

Response:

The Renter's Assistance Plus project will follow the general goals, in the Consolidated Plan, of housing stability and preventing homelessness.

The Consolidated Plan provides for servicing the extremely-low to moderate- income renters. The Renter's Assistance Plus project will focus on City of Alexandria renters, whose income is up to 80% of the HUD area medium income limit, and would be homeless without the assistance of this project. The household must have experienced the effects of the current economic crisis, to include unemployment, underemployment, increase of utility costs and health crisis. For those who are homeless, focus will be placed on assistance to eliminate barriers to re-housing, including credit repair/counseling, security deposits for housing and utilities and storage and moving expenses.

The application process will be centrally located at the Department of Human Services, although outreach and on-site processing will be available. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Provisions can be made for special situations. Once an application is filed, and verifications are received, the eligibility determination will be completed within seven business days. Once the application is approved, the service plan will be developed including the amount of the assistance to be provided and linkages needed to encourage self-sufficiency. A key factor to the approval process for rental assistance is the household's ability to remain stably housed after the assistance ends. The service plan will be reviewed by the worker and applicant every three months.

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E. Estimated Budget Summary

HUD requires the grantee to complete the following table so that participants in the citizen participation process may see the grantee's preliminary estimated amounts for various HPRP activities. Enter the estimated budget amounts for each activity in the appropriate column and row. The grantee will be required to report actual amounts in subsequent reporting.

| HPRP Estimated Budget Summary | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| | Homelessness Prevention | Rapid Re-housing | Total Amount Budgeted |
| Financial Assistance | \$ 200,300 | \$182,304 | \$ 382,604 |
| Housing Relocation and Stabilization | \$ 64,610 | \$ 50,000 | \$ 114,610 |
| Subtotal (add previous two) | \$ 240,300 | \$200,304 | \$ 497,214 |
| Data Collection and Evaluation ³ | | | \$ 5,000 |
| Administration (up to 5% of allocation) | | | \$ 10,000 |
| Total HPRP Amount Budgeted⁴ | | | \$ 512,214 |

¹Financial assistance includes the following activities as detailed in the HPRP Notice: short-term rental assistance, medium-term rental assistance, security deposits, utility deposits, utility payments, moving cost assistance, and motel or hotel vouchers.

²Housing relocation and stabilization services include the following activities as detailed in the HPRP Notice: case management, outreach, housing search and placement, legal services, mediation, and credit repair.

³Data collection and evaluation includes costs associated with operating HUD-approved homeless management information systems for purposes of collecting unduplicated counts of homeless persons and analyzing patterns of use of HPRP funds.

⁴This amount must match the amount entered in the cell on the table in Section A titled "Amount Grantee is Requesting."

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F. Authorized Signature

By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete, and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)

Signature/Authorized Official

Date

Title