

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: REQUEST FROM EMERGENCY RESIDENCE PROJECT (ERP) FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING DUE TO COVID-19

BACKGROUND:

Emergency Residence Project (ERP) has requested additional funds through ASSET for Emergency Shelter services (Attached). ERP closed their shelter facility on March 22nd in order to safely implement social distancing amongst clients and staff. ERP is presently utilizing motel rooms to shelter individuals, and this has significantly increased the cost of the service. **The unit of service cost increases from \$28.75 to \$143.84 per day.**

ERP is able to operate at half of the bed capacity under these circumstances but needs \$52,650 to return to full capacity through June 30, 2020. Of the \$52,650 request, \$22,600 is being asked of the City, \$20,007 from United Way of Story County, and \$10,000 from Story County. As long as the social distancing requirements are in effect, ERP will need to utilize the hotel rooms option to help in reducing the spread of COVID-19.

ERP exhausted City funds in the amount of \$76,909 for Emergency Shelter services in February 2020. At the April 14th Council Meeting, Council approved ERP's request to re-allocate \$6,569.31 from Service Coordination to Emergency Shelter services. This brings the City's current total funding for Emergency Shelter services for FY 2019/20 to \$83,478.31.

Given the negative impact that COVID-19 has had on the Local Option Sales Tax Fund, it is difficult to justify additional funding from that source at this time. However, a possible funding source for Council to consider using in these extenuating circumstances are the remaining funds from the Human Services Capital Funding Program. United Way of Story County is the contracted entity administering this program on the City's behalf and reports a balance of \$121,500 for a second round of project requests. The total amount requested for the projects submitted is \$90,500 and if the total amount is approved, then that would leave a balance of at least \$31,000.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve ERP's request of \$22,600 in additional funding to help increase bed capacity for Emergency Shelter services. Funding for this request would come from the balance of the Human Services Capital Funding Program.
2. Modify ERP's request for additional funding to help increase bed capacity for Emergency Shelter services. Funding for this request would come from the balance of the Human Services Capital Funding Program.
3. Deny ERP's request.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The additional funds requested by ERP would enable them to increase bed capacity for Emergency Sheltering while practicing pandemic guidelines that support the health and safety of clients and staff and is justified because of the additional costs to continue serving clients during the pandemic.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1 as described above.

ERP COVID Motel Funding Request

Q&A for ASSET Funders

April 8, 2020 – Prepared by Jodi Stumbo, Executive Director

1. Amount Requested (total and by funder?) and estimate of period of time covered (the ABF5 should reflect the amount requested by funder)

On the updated ASSET application, I increased our expense of occupancy by \$52,650. The \$52,650 is the dollar amount we are requesting to return to our full capacity and provide shelter to those seeking shelter in the Ames Motor Lodge. This allows us to return to our full capacity of 26 beds and stay there until the end of this fiscal year, June 30, 2020. The request is broken down as shown below based on the location of residents served.

- \$22,600 – City of Ames ASSET
- \$20,007 – United Way of Story County ASSET
- \$10,043 – Story County ASSET

2. Proposed description of how funding will be used

The new funding will pay for motel rooms so we can continue to provide safe shelter for those experiencing homelessness in our community. We can provide invoices from the motel(s) to demonstrate that the money is only being used for this purpose.

3. Other funding sources and amounts currently in place

As of April 8, we have \$15,000 available to cover the cost of motel rooms. **Note:** We moved our residents into motel rooms on March 22 utilizing six rooms, providing 12 beds for shelter, which is half our normal capacity so nearly half of these funds are already expended and will be completely expended at the current capacity in approximately the next three weeks.

- \$6,500 of this is the reallocated RRH money from the city ASSET fund
- \$5,000 of this is a gift from a private donor
- \$3,500 of this is reallocated RRH money from the county ASSET fund

4. Estimate of the number of individuals that would be turned away if 12 beds; or 26 beds (hotel shelter only) are provided

- FY19 we turned away 236 individuals while operating at full capacity.
- FY20 through January we have turned away 90 individuals operating at full capacity
- Using the numbers above, we turned away 13-20 people a month
- An estimate for the next three months of individuals turned away would be between 39 and 60 under normal conditions. There is a possibility that this number will be higher due to the COVID-19 outbreak as more people look to isolate and get out of the elements or their cars to remain healthy.

5. Description of public health threat that results from reduced service to homeless residents and/or sheltered residents' inability to social distance

Per the CDC, Lack of housing contributes to poor health outcomes, and linkage to permanent housing should continue to be a priority. In the context of COVID-19, the risks associated with sleeping outdoors in an encampment setting are different than with staying indoors in a congregate setting such as an emergency shelter or other congregate living facility. Outdoor settings may allow people to increase distance between

themselves and others. However, sleeping outdoors often does not provide protection from the environment, quick access to hygiene and sanitation facilities, or connection to healthcare. The balance of risks should be considered for each individual experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

The following link is the guidelines from the CDC for shelters. We have based all of our protocol, procedures and plans on this. The problem with our shelter is the inability to social distance and the inability to provide isolated space. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/plan-prepare-respond.html>

6. Possible funding sources due to COVID-19 (are there additional dollars being pursued and/or for which ERP's eligibility has been determined)

- We have applied for a \$3,000 grant from the United Way Community Fund.
- We have applied for a \$10,000 Economic Injury Disaster Loan Emergency Advance and are awaiting any response.
- We are waiting to hear from IFA regarding funds that may become available through the Emergency Solutions Grant.

7. Are you pursuing other options to help – Payroll Protection funds; Small Business Funds; funds for which services for elderly residents, homeless veterans, families, or similar populations might be available

We have applied for the pay roll protections funds and are waiting for a response. On a daily basis we review information on additional funding that may be appropriate and available.

8. Updated ABF – 5 for shelter only to help determine new unit cost

- Provided