

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE October 6, 2023

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Housing Preservation: Update on Home Repair Programs**

On September 19, 2023, the Department of Housing & Neighborhood Revitalization (Housing) briefed the Housing and Homelessness Solutions Committee (HHSC) on amending the multiple home repair programs into one streamlined program statement. In short, challenges and barriers with the current program processes create an obstacle to providing effective customer service as the programs compete with one another. These challenges and barriers include the use of multiple applications, applying residents' needs to understand each unique program and requirements, and the administrative burden of operating multiple programs, which has impacted the output of services provided.

As home repair is the most sought-out assistance in Housing, the proposed amendment will allow for better customer service and consistency across programs in terms of eligibility and eligible repairs. This memorandum recounts the questions and concerns raised in the HHSC meeting for further discussion in upcoming scheduled meetings with Council Members.

The new program statement will allow for all funding sources to be applied without creating one-off programs. Housing is exploring a single application for staff evaluation to determine right fit for the applicant to the appropriate program, eligibility and affordability requirements appropriate for assistance provided, grant or loan terms appropriate for the amount of assistance provided, and a focus on a major systems approach rather than whole home approach to allow more people to be served. By streamlining the application process and creating one general home repair program, Housing can also improve external partnerships with other agencies, which may offset the burden of cost to the City of Dallas and increasingly leverage the resources of philanthropic communities and non-profit partners.

There were four questions raised at the HHSC meeting on September 19, 2023, which will be addressed and presented at an upcoming HHSC meeting. The questions include:

- 1) A request for current program budgets and expenditures with total people served over the past few years including the Historical Freedman's Town.
- 2) A request to explore both internal and external partnerships which would help offset costs to the City of Dallas which could prove to be more effective in leveraging resources (i.e., Dallas Area Agency on Aging, Small Business Center, Philanthropic communities, and real estate non-profit partners).
- 3) A request for an update on the contractors and how they are qualified.
- 4) An inquiry regarding the imposing of penalties on contractors who do not complete home repairs in a consistent and timely manner.

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Concerns and suggestions presented at HHSC on September 19, 2023, include:

- 1) A concern that effort should be made to ensure minority developers and contractors are properly equipped and trained for development and construction.
- 2) A concern for effectively meeting both goals for residents to have a healthy and safe place to live and preserving affordable housing within the City of Dallas.
- 3) A concern for targeting low/very low-income residents as we should be their last resort, rather than serving higher income families.
- 4) A suggestion for a simplified home repair application and high-level review, rather than in-depth in the early stages of applying for assistance.
- 5) A suggestion for the department to explore the best practices of other cities and municipalities that have been successful in operating a home repair program.
- 6) A suggestion for the department to explore the possibility of focusing on limited specific repairs annually or health and safety only, rather than all possible repairs.
- 7) A suggestion to provide assistance based on geographic area of the City.
- 8) A suggestion for staff to create a flow chart used internally for best case management.

For questions or input for this program, please contact Cynthia Rogers-Ellickson by email at Cynthia.Rogersellic@dallas.gov or at 214-670-3601.



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