

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE August 22, 2025

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Office of Housing and Community Empowerment**

We continue to examine our organizational functions to “Build on a **Safe, Vibrant, and Growing** Dallas by transforming our Foundational Structure to become a more **Livable, Sustainable, and Fiscally Sound** city with strong, aligned systems at its **Core.**” Through the merger of the Office of Community Care and Empowerment, Office of Equity and Inclusion, Office of Homeless Solutions, and key functions of the Department of Housing and Community Development, the new Office of Housing and Community Empowerment (OHCE) will achieve positive outcomes by aligning critical services for our residents within a single department. This alignment resulted in \$6.2 million dollar savings in the FY 25-26 proposed annual budget.

The following summarizes the objectives of this departmental reorganization:

Service Coordination & Efficiency

- Centralized point of contact for residents to simplify navigation.
- Streamlined operations to connect residents with housing, services, and economic mobility.
- Incorporation of national best practices and innovations.

Affordable Housing & Homeownership

- Guide production and preservation of affordable housing using land, federal funding, and partnerships.
- Partner with developers on workforce housing, Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) projects, and bond-financed housing and review LIHTC (4% and 9%) applications for Housing Tax Credit program and fair housing compliance.
- Manage vendors to support homeownership (down payments, closing costs, home repairs).
- Oversee monitoring, and compliance for affordable housing portfolio including release of liens.
- Align and support development and redevelopment of affordable housing with the Dallas Public Facilities Corporation (PFC) and the Dallas Housing Finance Corporation (HFC).
- Enforce compliance with local, state, and federal housing regulations.

Fair Housing & Human Rights

- Protect housing choice and eliminate discrimination across all protected classes.
- Promote equal opportunity in employment, housing, and public accommodations.
- Advance accessibility and inclusion through Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliance, disability, veteran, and re-entry support.

Homelessness Prevention & Response

- Manage relationships with Continuum of Care and nonprofit partners.
- Centralize contract management to strengthen the service ecosystem.
- Serve as hub for programmatic funding and citywide homelessness prevention, diversion and response strategies.

Health & Senior Services

- Continue Senior Help Line and Ombudsman Program; implement Age-Friendly Dallas initiatives and support Senior Affairs Commission.
- Administer WIC program (serving 75,000+ families monthly with nutrition and health benefits).
- Operate Vital Statistics program (birth and death records, revenue-generating).
- Continue to support the City's re-entry programming and partnerships to help returning residents access housing, job training and workforce pathways, as well as wraparound support services.

Access & Impact Frameworks

- Leverage Community Centers as Opportunity Hubs and leverage the MLK advisory board.
- Build on Drivers of Poverty to launch Drivers of Opportunity framework in collaboration with key stakeholders and residents.
- Address systemic barriers through service delivery and/or strategic partnerships: employment, neighborhood quality, environment, health, safety.
- Guide investment strategies for maximum impact through data driven tools and research with collaborative partners.
- Lead partnerships with anchor institutions, philanthropy, and community leaders.

Youth Engagement

- Implement new Youth Strategy to advance safety, opportunity, and leadership.
- Support Youth Commission and College Advisory Council.

Together, the operational changes mark a significant step forward in aligning the City’s housing, homelessness, and community empowerment under a single, coordinated structure. By streamlining processes, fostering cross-sector collaboration, and employing data-driven approach, the OHCE will strengthen housing security, expand opportunities and improve the quality of life for all Dallas residents.

Office of Housing and Community Empowerment			
Affordable Housing Division	Homelessness & Supportive Human Services Division	Community Empowerment, Opportunity & Impact Division	Budget & Finance Division
Guide production/preservation of affordable housing, homeownership, administration of Public Facilities Corporation, Housing Finance Corporation, Low Income Housing Tax Credit. Manage compliance to ensure local, state and federal compliance, Advance Fair Housing	Serve as the City’s central point of contact for leveraging existing homelessness system programmatic funding and support for the larger homelessness service ecosystem	Building on the Drivers of Opportunity framework, this division focuses on addressing systemic barriers to opportunity such as employment, education, neighborhood quality, environment, health access and public safety and well-being.	Budget and Finance Management. Monitoring and reporting, contract management, monitoring and compliance, Federal program oversight of federal. State and local grants management and fiscal reporting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the Dallas Housing Plan and the Dallas Housing Resource Catalog 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Engagement • Veteran’s, Disability • Re-entry 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal and Non-Housing Program Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive Human Services (Senior Help Line, Senior Ombudsman Program, WIC Program) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Centers as Opportunity Hubs 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair Housing Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vital Statistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Engagement 	

We look forward to implementing the centralized hub to serve residents through our efficient, effective, and responsive consolidated model. Please see Exhibit A FAQs to address any other questions regarding this new department.

Please feel free to reach out to me or Assistant City Manager, Liz Cedillo-Pereira If you have any questions or should you require any additional information at this time.

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Service First, Now!



Kimberly Bizer Tolbert
City Manager

c: Tammy Palomino, City Attorney
Mark Swann, City Auditor
Biliera Johnson, City Secretary
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
Dominique Artis, Chief of Public Safety
Dev Rastogi, Assistant City Manager
M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Assistant City Manager

Alina Ciocan, Assistant City Manager
Donzell Gipson, Assistant City Manager
Robin Bentley, Assistant City Manager
Jack Ireland, Chief Financial Officer
Ahmad Goree, Chief of Staff to the City Manager
Directors and Assistant Directors

[See Attachment]

Exhibit A

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

New Office of Housing and Community Empowerment (OHCE)

1. What is the Office of Housing and Community Empowerment (OHCE)?

OHCE will be charged with developing a seamless approach to advancing a coordinated, people-centered approach to a new department-wide initiative called Housing Pathways. Housing Pathways help resident access safe and affordable housing, receive the supportive services they need, and connect to opportunities that foster long-term economic mobility. Each OHCE division will play a role in advancing these pathways, creating a seamless, people-centered approach to service delivery.

This year's budget makes a transformative investment in housing as the foundation for stability, opportunity, and empowerment. The Office of Housing and Community Empowerment (OHCE) is a new City office that brings together housing, homelessness services, community care, and realigned equity and inclusion so residents can get support in one place.

2. Why is the City creating OHCE?

Residents asked for housing, social services, and community opportunity to be top priorities. OHCE makes services easier to access, reduces duplication, and helps the City respond faster to community needs. These efforts create operational and programmatic efficiencies to ensure we continue to provide residents with robust and responsive services.

3. What housing help is available?

OHCE supports residents through:

- Affordable housing program development via rental and ownership units
- Home repair assistance
- Help for homebuyers (down payment and closing cost support)
- Resources for fair housing complaints and investigations
- Long-term monitoring to keep homes affordable
- Eviction Advocacy
- Fair housing complaints, enforcement and project review

4. How is homelessness addressed?

OHCE collaborates with local partners to prevent and reduce homelessness by:

- Connecting people to shelter, housing, and supportive services
- Managing contracts with nonprofits
- Coordinating with the Continuum of Care (CoC) to provide citywide support
- Homelessness Prevention
- Funding to create additional shelter beds by moving individuals out of shelter, into housing
- Helping those experiencing unsheltered homelessness connects to housing and support
- Reuniting individuals with family, community, or support systems that offer a path back to housing stability

5. What is the Housing Pathways model?

Home Starts Here	<p>This component focuses on the production and preservation of affordable housing in Dallas by supporting existing homeowners through home repair and down payment assistance programs being outsourced this Fall for more efficient administration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and redevelopment of affordable housing citywide will continue through the City of Dallas Public Facilities Corporation (PFC) and the Dallas Housing Finance Corporation (HFC). • This team will also receive 4% and 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) applications and review them for Housing Tax Credit Program and fair housing compliance.
Dallas At Home	<p>This component prevents displacement through eviction advocacy and homeless prevention strategies, including \$950,000 in the General Fund (does not include rental payments) and \$50,000 in ARPA for eviction advocacy services via community-based partnerships and \$1 million in ARPA funding for housing stability through prevention strategies.</p>
Home After Shelter	<p>This component supports those in temporary shelter moving into stable housing, including \$10 million in ARPA funding for moving individuals out of shelters and into stable housing through the local Continuum of Care (CoC).</p>
Street to Home	<p>This component supports those experiencing unsheltered homelessness to connect to housing and support in collaboration with community partners. Ongoing investment.</p>

Return to Home	This component reunites individuals with family, community, or support systems that offer a path back to housing stability, including \$250,000 in ARPA funding and \$255,000 in the General Fund for diversion services.
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- The establishment of OHCE brings together programs that create housing, that promote housing stability, and that address homelessness to create a continuum of support through a new Housing Pathways model. This newly integrated model is a coordinated, people-centered approach that organizes services into five interconnected tracks:

6. What is the Community Empowerment Division?

The Community Empowerment division will be the backbone to connect residents with resources and connect the City with residents to be more responsive to the services and resources residents need to thrive. OHCE partners with schools, employers, nonprofits, community centers and other community partners to:

- Support youth safety, learning, and career pathways
- Advance human rights and protect against discrimination, including preparation for Dallas’s role in hosting the upcoming FIFA World Cup games and events
- Strengthen of our community centers as hubs where residents can access services
- Promote economic mobility by addressing the key drivers of opportunity: good jobs, quality education, safe neighborhoods, health, and well-being

7. What are the Drivers of Opportunity?

Building on the 2017 *Drivers of Poverty* report and the *Resilience Strategy* commitment to closing disparities, the City is developing the **Drivers of Opportunity (DOO)**, a work-in-progress shaped by meaningful community engagement. This framework will focus City efforts where they have the greatest impact and partner with anchor institutions to advance:

1. Gainful employment
2. High-quality education
3. Opportunity-rich neighborhoods
4. Healthy environment
5. Public safety and well-being

8. What other services does OHCE provide?

In addition to housing, homelessness, and empowerment programs, OHCE also offers:

- **Senior Services:** Creates a one-stop shop for Seniors and other residents to receive resources via help line, advocacy, and Age-Friendly Dallas programs
- **WIC Program:** Nutrition and breastfeeding support for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, babies, and young children
- **Vital Statistics:** Birth and death certificates for Dallas residents

9. What is the budget for OHCE?

The budget is \$78,159,805

- o General fund: \$22,269,417
- o Grant: \$55,891,388

10. How does this benefit Dallas residents?

With OHCE, residents have **one central place** to access housing, empowerment, and community services. It's designed to make programs more effective, more connected, and easier for Dallas residents and families to use.

11. What will happen to the implementation of critical City plans and policies, such as the Dallas Housing Policy and Dallas Housing Action Plan?

The Housing and Community Empowerment team will continue to advance core City policies related to housing, including the Dallas Housing Policy 2033 and Housing Action Plan and all programs listed in the Dallas Housing Catalog and will monitor and report on progress against plan goals and targets.

12. Why are the housing and community development functions being separated to be managed by two different departments?

While many core housing functions will transition to the new OHCE, some functions currently administered by Housing and Community Development will transfer to other departments for administration. OHCE will no longer administer NOFAs for housing developers, and the Office of Economic Development will administer a unified application process for real estate developers seeking gap funding for residential development projects. When projects align with federal funding requirements, the project will transition to OHCE for further review and administration. OHCE is well-poised to manage federal funds administration and compliance for these projects as it brings together staffers and leaders with significant experience administering federal funds.

13. Can the program inventory description for Housing programs be updated to include the Dallas Housing Policy and Housing Action Plan?

Yes, these updates can be made and reflected in the final budget book and documents.

14. What is the anticipated impact on the City's ability implement plans and meet with the reduction in staffing from Housing?

The reduced number of housing positions is not expected to have a negative impact on the team's ability to administer services or advance progress aligned with the Dallas Housing Policy and Housing Action Plan. Two key programs will be outsourced for FY2026. These are the Dallas Homebuyer Assistance Program (DHAP) and the Home Improvement and Preservation Program (HIPP). Housing positions impacted in this transition were primarily those associated with administration of these programs. With this outsourcing in place, the staffing requirements for the City are reduced as staff will be managing 2 large contracts rather than administering the program and managing numerous contracts.

Additionally, the consolidation of departments brings together staff from multiple departments with significant experience administering federal and state grant funds, thus creating opportunities for efficiency in departmental operations, contracts compliance and oversight.

15. Why does homebuyers assistance remain funded at \$400,000 with federal funds and are there plans to increase funding for anti-displacement initiatives?

The DHAP program is funded at a total of \$1.8M for the upcoming fiscal year. This includes \$400,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds, \$400,000 in HOME funds, and \$1,000,000 in TIF district funding for targeted areas.

These programs will be outsourced to a vendor to increase the service provided. Staff under this division will shift from managing hundreds of contracts a year to two, one for home repair and one for down payment assistance, to better utilize staffing resources.