

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE April 9, 2021

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Dallas Connector Program & CoC Shelter+Care RFP Updates**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the City Council with a briefing on the Dallas Connector Project's annual performance report and the findings of research into the historical shortfalls of the CoC Shelter+Care RFPs and what will be done to meet these needs for the current RFP.

Dallas Connector Program

The need for a transportation system for individuals experiencing homelessness was well demonstrated during the Connector's first year of operation. Between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020, CitySquare provided rides to 2,289 passengers (unduplicated participants) that resulted in 86 being placed into housing and 157 being added to the Housing Priority List. With the onset of the pandemic, many stops on the Connector's route were eliminated as businesses such as the Central Library and Social Security Administration office closed. At the City's request, service during the last seven months of the contract year focused on transporting clients to and from the temporary shelter at the Kay Bailey Hutchinson Convention Center, hotels used for sheltering clients awaiting COVID-19 test results, and the area shelters who received guests with negative test results. In spite of the unanticipated service changes caused by the pandemic, the Connector continued to be cost effective. When compared to the cost of the participating non-profit organizations providing bus passes to their clients, operation of the Connector resulted in a savings of \$1,232,695 at a cost of \$8.83 per person. On March 25th, 2021, the Citizens Homeless Commission was briefed on this item and voted unanimously to recommend it to the City Council for approval.

CoC Shelter+Care RFP History and Moving Forwards

OHS has submitted requests for proposal for this grant in Fiscal Years, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021. During this time, the grant was sent out for RFP as a shelter+care with rental assistance, which was not successful, and later as a shelter+care with permanent supportive housing, which was also unsuccessful. These were unsuccessful due to a variety of reasons over the 3 fiscal years but the main reasons echoed by area providers are as follows:

- Most programs cannot cashflow the monthly leasing assistance needed for this program while waiting on reimbursement from the granting entity
- Insufficient administrative and operations allocation
- The grant amount has been lower than is feasible for a larger provider to cashflow this as one program and alternatively too large for many providers to take on in terms of client capacity.

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Based on these research findings and conversations with key stakeholders, OHS suggests the following modifications, which are currently with Procurement Services to gauge feasibility, in order to make the grant viable and accessible to smaller nonprofits:

- Break the grant into 2-4 RFPs (addresses capacity issue for smaller nonprofits)
- Carry the grant match (we currently do this so the funding will remain the same)
- Pay the Proposer on the front end of each month (addresses cashflow issue, allowing smaller nonprofits to compete)
- Increase the administrative and operations allotments (this may not be permissible under current HUD guidelines. If so, it is our hope that continuing to carry the grant match will alleviate financial pressure until the programs have been successful long enough to have increased grant amounts).

This is an ongoing process with continued provider feedback and engagement. An RFP is expected to be created and we will provide an update within the next, few weeks.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me or Christine Crossley, Director of Office of Homeless Solutions.



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