

AGENDA ITEM #6

POSTING LANGUAGE: Briefing and possible action on the Status of Poverty in San Antonio Report. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Melody Woosley, Director, Human Services]

DEPARTMENT: Human Services

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Melody Woosley

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Briefing and update on the Status of Poverty in San Antonio Report.

SUMMARY: Staff will provide a briefing and update on the Status of Poverty in San Antonio report, which was originally issued in December 2019. The briefing will include an overview of the report's findings and priority recommendations, status on actions taken to date, and next steps.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In 2019, the U.S. Census Bureau released American Community Survey estimates for 2018, showing relevant information on the community's income and poverty rates. Data showed that the overall number of people living below the federal poverty level (FPL) in San Antonio was 18.6% of the entire population (based on five-year estimate methodology). The Census also reported that the San Antonio-New Braunfels Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) ranked highest for poverty among the 25 most populous metro areas.

Using this Census data and other sources, the Department of Human Services and Metro Health developed the Status of Poverty in San Antonio report, which was presented to Council in December 2019. The report included information on various intersecting factors that correlate with poverty, such as employment, income, educational attainment, wealth and assets, business ownership, housing affordability, health, and transportation. The City of San Antonio works to address all of these issues, and the Status of Poverty report looked at the overall City budget investment across these domains. Finally, the report made recommendations for action based on a report from the Asset Funders Network released the same year. In early 2020, these recommendations were in early stages of discussion with relevant Council Committees, with a planned public input series when the COVID-19 pandemic started. Many of the report's recommendations were included in the COVID-19 Recovery and Resiliency Plan.

ISSUE:

This item will provide an update on the progress toward implementation of the recommendations included in the Status of Poverty report. The City's Recovery and Resiliency Plan included key recommendations such as expanding benefits navigation, inter-agency referral processes, workforce training, and access to low-cost financial products. The Strategic Housing Implementation Plan also drew from the Status of Poverty report and sets the path for increased affordable housing preservation and production.

The COVID-19 pandemic yielded significant economic disparities at the same time as unprecedented Federal government intervention provided direct cash assistance through Economic Impact Payments and expanded Child Tax Credits. This presentation will include updated poverty data for San Antonio released by the Census Bureau for 2019 American Community Survey estimates. More recent data collection efforts have been affected by the pandemic, resulting in a planned release in November 2021 of experimental data for the 2020 American Community Survey.

ALTERNATIVES: This item is for briefing purposes only.

FISCAL IMPACT: This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION: This item is for briefing purposes only.