



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 6

Agenda Date: November 14, 2022

In Control: Planning and Community Development Committee

DEPARTMENT: Neighborhood and Housing Services

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Veronica Garcia, Interim Director

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Housing Assistance Program Update

SUMMARY:

The Housing Assistance Program (HAP) provides financial assistance to stabilize eligible households experiencing emergency situations affecting their ability to pay rent.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In response to the pandemic, the City launched the Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP) in April 2020 to support households negatively affected by the pandemic with rental, mortgage, and utility assistance. EHAP approved over \$206 million in assistance to nearly 66,000 households before closing in March 2022.

In May 2022, EHAP transitioned into the Housing Assistance Program (HAP), which is based on the Risk Mitigation Policy adopted by City Council. The rental assistance application period closed

on June 10, 2022, and NHSD processed over 10,000 applications. To date, the City has approved over \$13 million in financial assistance to more than 5,000 eligible households through HAP.

A variety of state, federal and local funding sources continue to support the city's response to housing instability. As such, NHSD temporarily reopened the HAP application period for rental assistance for eleven days from October 7 through October 17, 2022 and received over 4,000 online applications. Due to new federal and county rental assistance allocations, the overall budget for rental assistance increased to \$10.1 million for Fiscal Year 2023, and the City will be able to fund all eligible households in the HAP queue.

To be eligible, households must have income no greater than 80% of the area median income; demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing stability; and experience financial hardship due, directly or indirectly, to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, households will not be eligible for an additional rental assistance award if they received previous assistance from HAP within the last 12 months. Eligible households could receive up to three months of rental assistance not to exceed \$3,500. Households may also be eligible for assistance with utilities and internet service. Households facing eviction are prioritized for assistance.

Households with incomes in the lowest income brackets are at the greatest risk of housing instability and, therefore, in the greatest immediate need of rental or relocation assistance. Currently, staff is evaluating existing HAP policies and associated eligibility requirements to better target these high-risk households as additional funding becomes available. Any key recommendations will be shared with PCDC for approval.

ISSUE:

While the demand for housing stability services in our city remains high, the HAP portal continues to accept new applications for the Resident Relocation Assistance Program (RRAP). RRAP provides financial assistance with moving expenses and applicable fees and deposits for eligible low-income families facing housing instability. Additionally, the Eviction Intervention Team is active at all Bexar County precinct courts providing the latest information on eviction intervention services and free legal aid resources. In addition to rental assistance, the FY2023 budget includes Right to Counsel (\$1.2 million) and Relocation Assistance (\$2.2 million), bringing the total HAP budget to \$13.6 million.

NHSD also continues to refer families needing mortgage assistance to the Texas Homeowner Assistance Fund, which provides up to \$65,000 per eligible household for mortgage payments, past due property taxes, property insurance, homeowner association fees, and utilities.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.