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TO: Conan Smith, Chair
Ways & Means Committee

THROUGH: Robert E. Guenzel
County Administrator

FROM: Mary Jo Callan, Director
Office of Community Development

DATE: November 18, 2009

SUBJECT: FY 2009 Funding for Supportive Housing Services

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

It is requested that the Board of Commissioners approve an appropriation of \$250,000 from funding reserved for supportive housing services in the fiscal year 2009 budget. It is further requested that \$175,000 of this appropriation be devoted to an emergency response to the increasing incidence of homelessness in Washtenaw County.

BACKGROUND

In 2008 the Board of Commissioners approved a two-year investment in the provision of supportive housing, an effort spearheaded by the Washtenaw Housing Alliance. The 250,000 in the 2009 budget represents the second year of funding for that commitment, and it is requested that the Board of Commissioners release the earmarked funding at this time.

There is a growing body of research indicating the efficacy and cost-savings of providing homelessness prevention and supportive housing services in conjunction with permanent supportive housing. Supportive housing, whether aimed at keeping people from becoming homeless, or assisting them to move beyond homelessness, is understood to be one of the critical components of ending homelessness in our community.

The 2008 installment of Washtenaw County's investment in this initiative leveraged more than \$500,000, and the 2009 installment is anticipated to leverage commitments of approximately \$400,000 from a wide array of private and public funders and philanthropists. Committed funders include the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, Washtenaw United Way, the Washtenaw Community Health Organization, and the City of Ann Arbor.

The supportive housing initiative has provided supportive housing to individuals and families in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti Township, Manchester, Saline, and Scio Township. These locations were determined by factors including the location of the participant's former residence, participant choice, and affordability of the unit. Thus far, the supportive housing initiative has served 117 households, serving 129 adults and 104 children. Seventy percent of the households served maintained housing for at least one year. This rate of housing maintenance is significant given the multiple challenges faced by the population served.

DISCUSSION

The need to address homelessness in our community becomes more urgent every day.

The challenging economic climate has had broad-reaching negative impacts on residents and communities, and Washtenaw County has not been immune to these impacts. The local poverty rate is nearly fifteen percent, which is an increase of two percent since 2007. The September 2009 unemployment rate is 9.3%, three percent higher than the same period in 2008.

Evictions and foreclosures are on the rise as well. While complete eviction data is not available, it is estimated that at least 1,200 county residents were evicted last year. Foreclosures increased 105% from 2006 to 2008, and the County Treasurer sold forty-five foreclosed parcels at auction in October, compared to an average of eleven in previous auctions.

Other indicators also convey the difficult economic environment. Since 2007, the Humane Society of Huron Valley has seen a fifty percent increase in pet surrenders for reasons of "owner cannot afford" and "owner evicted/foreclosure." From 2008 to 2009 Food Gatherers has seen a thirty-five percent increase in requests for food, and statewide one in seven residents is receiving some form of food assistance. The Department of Human Services, the state agency charged with administering food stamps, Medicaid, and cash assistance to impoverished residents, has experienced an increase in caseloads from 300 to almost 600 per worker.

Our local homelessness system of care is experiencing a twenty percent increase in demand this year for single adults, families, and youth experiencing homelessness or housing crisis. Of those seeking shelter locally, sixty percent report being homeless for the first time, eighty-seven percent of adults identified employment challenges as the reason for being homeless, and sixty-five percent of children served were under ten years of age.

In addition to the increased numbers of homeless people interfacing with the local sheltering system, there appears to be an increased incidence of homeless encampments in Ann Arbor and areas throughout the county. The numbers of individuals sleeping outside - in tents, cars, or other circumstances - is not fully

known, but the impending winter creates a potentially dangerous situation.

The local emergency shelter system is working to ensure that individuals, families, and youth experiencing homelessness have access to needed shelter and support. This system maintains 189 beds for those experiencing homelessness, but demand exceeds this capacity.

To respond to this situation, Community Development is working with the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County, Interfaith Hospitality Network, SOS Community Services, and Ozone House to develop short-term shelter/housing options for some of those experiencing homelessness this coming winter. These agencies provide services to individuals and families from throughout Washtenaw County.

During the past year, they along with collaborating agencies, provided shelter and housing to families coming from the following zip codes:

- 48197 – 574 people, or 35% of those served by shelter and housing agencies;
- 48198 – 458 people, or 29% of those served by shelter and housing agencies;
- 48103 – 247 people, or 15% of those served by shelter and housing agencies;
- 48108 – 114 people, or 7% of those served by shelter and housing agencies;
- 48104 – 101 people, or 6% of those served by shelter and housing agencies;
- 48105 – 44 people, or 3% of those served by shelter and housing agencies;
- 48111 – 24 people, or 1% of those served by shelter and housing agencies;

- 48176 – 18 people, or 1% of those served by shelter and housing agencies;
- 48189 – 17 people, or 1% of those served by shelter and housing agencies;
- 48130 – 15 people, or 1% of those served by shelter and housing agencies;
- 48190 – 9 people, or 1% of those served by shelter and housing agencies;
- 48118 – 7 people, or less than 1% of those served by shelter and housing agencies;

agencies;

- 48191 – 7 people, or less than 15 of those served by shelter and housing agencies;

agencies;

- 48137 – 3 people, or less than 1% of those served by shelter and housing agencies;

agencies;

- 48169 – 2 people, or less than 1% of those served by shelter and housing agencies;

agencies

- 48170 – 2 people, or less than 1% of those served by shelter and housing agencies

Graphic representation of the above numbers, as well as those pertaining to single adults, can be found in the attached maps with memo provided by Commissioner Gun.

The planned intervention to respond to the burgeoning demand for shelter and housing is multi-faceted, and is intended to provide emergency shelter to homeless individuals, and supported housing to homeless families.

Specifically, the Shelter Association will increase its annual rotating winter shelter to provide an additional fifty spaces for homeless individual adults needing emergency,

overnight shelter. Twenty-five of these spaces will be provided by adding cots to the second floor of the Delonis Center, and an additional twenty-five spaces will be provided utilizing space within local faith congregations on a rotating basis. This intervention will be offered from December 1, 2009 through March 31, 2010 to expand access to safety and warmth for single adults experiencing homelessness through the winter months. The City of Ann Arbor has allocated \$30,500 and the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority has allocated \$20,000 to fund this effort.

For families experiencing homelessness this winter, the Interfaith Hospitality Network, SOS Community Services, and Ozone House will work with Avalon Housing and other local landlords to provide eighteen twelve-month housing vouchers (subsidies) with support services. These subsidies with needed housing support services will maximize the ability of homeless parents to move beyond homelessness while providing the safety and stability crucial to the current and future well-being of their young children. The City of Ann Arbor has allocated \$129,000 to fund eight vouchers with support. An additional \$175,000 is needed to fund an additional ten vouchers with support, and it is recommended that Washtenaw County allocate this funding as part of the \$250,000 appropriation reserved for supportive housing in the 2009 budget.

This appropriation will be administered by the Office of Community Development via contracts with nonprofit shelter and housing providers such as SOS Community Services, Interfaith Hospitality Network, Ozone House, and the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County.

IMPACT ON HUMAN RESOURCES

None

IMPACT ON THE BUDGET

The requested action will approve the release of \$250,000, which is currently budgeted.

IMPACT ON INDIRECT COSTS

None

IMPACT ON OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OR OUTSIDE AGENCIES

The requested action will assist local nonprofit housing providers to effectively respond to the increased incidence of homelessness and housing crisis in our community.

CONFORMITY TO COUNTY POLICIES

This request conforms to County policies.

ATTACHMENTS

None

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF \$250,000 FROM FUNDING RESERVED FOR SUPPORTIVE HOUSING SERVICES IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2009 BUDGET AND AUTHORIZING \$175,000 OF THIS APPROPRIATION TO BE ALLOCATED TO AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO THE INCREASING INCIDENCE OF HOMELESSNESS IN WASHTENAW COUNTY.

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

November 18, 2009

WHEREAS, In 2008 the Board of Commissioners approved a two-year investment in the provision of supportive housing; and

WHEREAS, The 250,000 in the 2009 budget represents the second year of funding for that commitment; and,

WHEREAS, There is a growing body of research indicating the efficacy and cost-savings of providing homelessness prevention and supportive housing services in conjunction with permanent supportive housing; and,

WHEREAS, The 2008 installment of Washtenaw County's investment in this initiative leveraged more than \$500,000, and the 2009 installment is anticipated to leverage commitments of approximately \$400,000; and,

WHEREAS, The supportive housing initiative has provided supportive housing to individuals and families in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti Township, Manchester, Saline, and Scio Township, and has served 117 households, including 129 adults and 104 children.

WHEREAS, Seventy percent of the households served maintained housing for at least one year and this rate of housing maintenance is significant given the multiple challenges faced by the population served; and,

WHEREAS, The need to address homelessness in our community becomes more urgent every day; and,

WHEREAS, The challenging economic climate has had broad-reaching negative impacts on residents and communities, and Washtenaw County has not been immune to these impacts.

WHEREAS, The local poverty rate is nearly fifteen percent, which is an increase of two percent since 2007. The September 2009 unemployment rate is 9.3%, three percent higher than the same period in 2008; and

WHEREAS, Evictions and foreclosures are on the rise as well and it is estimated that at least 1,200 county residents were evicted last year. Foreclosures increased 105% from 2006 to 2008, and the County Treasurer sold forty-five foreclosed parcels at auction in October, compared to an average of eleven in previous auctions; and

WHEREAS, Our local homelessness system of care is experiencing a twenty percent increase in demand this year for single adults, families, and youth experiencing homelessness or housing; and,

WHEREAS, The local emergency shelter system is working to ensure access to needed shelter and support and maintains 189 beds for those experiencing homelessness, but demand exceeds this capacity; and

WHEREAS, To respond to this situation, Community Development is working with the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County, Interfaith Hospitality Network, SOS Community Services, and Ozone House to develop short-term shelter/housing options for some of those experiencing homelessness this coming winter; and,

WHEREAS, The Shelter Association will increase its winter sheltering capacity to provide an additional fifty spaces for homeless individual adults needing emergency, overnight shelter.

WHEREAS, This intervention will be funded by the City of Ann Arbor and the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority; and,

WHEREAS, For families experiencing homelessness this winter, the Interfaith Hospitality Network, SOS Community Services, and Ozone House will work with Avalon Housing and other local landlords to provide eighteen twelve-month housing vouchers (subsidies) with support services; and,

WHEREAS, These subsidies with needed housing support services will maximize the ability of homeless parents to move beyond homelessness while providing the safety and stability crucial to the current and future well-being of their young children.

WHEREAS, The City of Ann Arbor has allocated \$129,000 to fund eight vouchers with support and an additional \$175,000 is needed to fund an additional ten vouchers with support.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners appropriate \$250,000 from funding reserved for supportive housing services in the fiscal year 2009 budget; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that \$175,000 of this appropriation be allocated to an emergency response to the increasing incidence of homelessness in Washtenaw County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office of Community Development shall be authorized to administer this appropriation by contracting with nonprofit shelter and housing providers such as SOS Community Services, Interfaith Hospitality Network, Ozone House, and the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County.