

ORDINANCE 2021-02-18-0104

**ACCEPTING A GRANT AWARD IN THE AMOUNT OF \$46,751,961.10 FROM THE UNITED STATES TREASURY FOR EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE; APPROVING THE BUDGET WITHIN THE RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY PLAN, AND AMENDING PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.**

\* \* \* \* \*

**WHEREAS**, on April 23, 2020, City Council passed and approved Ordinance No. 2020-04-23-0277 which approved the original budget of \$25,595,299 for Phase I of the COVID-19 Recovery and Resiliency Plan which included federal Coronavirus Relief funds to be utilized for the City's COVID-19 Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP). The program provides eligible applicants rental or mortgage assistance, utility assistance, and cash assistance. The EHAP is administered by the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department (NHSD); and

**WHEREAS**, on June 4, 2020 City Council approved Phase II of the COVID-19 Recovery and Resiliency Plan that provided an additional \$26,944,551 in federal Coronavirus Relief Funds to the EHAP; and

**WHEREAS**, on September 17, 2020 City Council approved \$24,247,756 in funding for Phase III and on January 21, 2021 City Council added \$10,063,393.82 in funding amending the Phase III budget to \$34,311,149.82; and

**WHEREAS**, on February 18, 2021 City Council approved Phase IV of EHAP by approving \$46,751,961.10 awarded to the City by the U.S. Treasury for rental and utility assistance which increased the EHAP budget to \$133,600,000 and will fund the EHAP through September 2021; and

**WHEREAS**, as a result of the additional funding the city has received, staff has determined that there is an opportunity to make amendments to the EHAP assistance framework and eligibility criteria; and

**WHEREAS**, these recommendations take into account feedback from various stakeholders including the Mayor and city council, the Cultural and Neighborhood Services Committee, the Housing Commission, NHSD staff that administers the EHAP, applicants, outreach partners and community survey responses as well as the limitations under federal law that impact the city's ability to provide direct cash assistance; and

**WHEREAS**, based on the foregoing, City Staff is recommending the following changes to the EHAP:

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- Staff will expand utility assistance to all families making less than 80% of the AMI. The average AMI of an applicant receiving assistance through the EHAP is approximately 30% AMI. Since December, 15% of all applicants (999) make between 51% to 80% AMI.
  - Staff will keep the proposed term of eligibility to up to 6 months. If an applicant receives 6 months of rental assistance and needs additional assistance, they can request up to 3 months of assistance from the State's recently announced Rent Relief Program and an additional 3 months is available if the program still has funding.
  - Cash will be a tool through the referral system. If through an assessment it is determined that cash assistance is the only tool available to help meet a specific need, a gift card will be provided.
  - City staff will coordinate with the Foodbank as a service provider but will use the City's referral system. The Foodbank's referral system only does federal benefits enrollment. The Financial and Housing Recovery Center is designed to be a hub where residents can get up-to-date info on services and easily connect to benefits not only through Federal assistance programs, but also through state and local programs like unemployment and job training, with particularly close inter-departmental referrals among City of San Antonio departments and programs. The Benefits Navigators' assessment of residents seeking financial benefits navigation is thorough and tailored to each family member's needs.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO:**

**SECTION 1.** The application for and acceptance of a grant for funding in the amount of not to exceed \$46,751,961.10 from the U.S. Department of Treasury for the City's Emergency Rental Assistance Program (EHAP) are hereby ratified and approved. The budget for the EHAP in the amount of \$133,600,000.00 is hereby amended, approved and appropriated to be expended for the purposes set forth in the City's EHAP Policy, the City's Recovery and Resiliency Plan and this Ordinance. The budget may be supplemented by additional contributions and donations and acceptance and appropriate of those funds to the COVID-19 EHAP is approved and authorized. A copy of the application for the funds accepted by this ordinance is incorporated herein for all purposes and on file with the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department.

**SECTION 2.** The following changes to the EHAP as recommended by City Staff are hereby approved:

- Staff will expand utility assistance to all families making less than 80% of the AMI. The average AMI of an applicant receiving assistance through the EHAP is approximately 30% AMI. Since December, 15% of all applicants (999) make between 51% to 80% AMI.
- Staff will keep the proposed term of eligibility to up to 6 months. If an applicant receives 6 months of rental assistance and needs additional assistance, they can request up to 3 months of assistance from the State's recently announced Rent Relief Program and an additional 3 months is available if the program still has funding.

- Cash will be a tool through the referral system. If through an assessment it is determined that cash assistance is the only tool available to help meet a specific need, a gift card will be provided.
- City staff will coordinate with the Foodbank as a service provider but will use the City’s referral system. The Foodbank’s referral system only does federal benefits enrollment. The Financial and Housing Recovery Center is designed to be a hub where residents can get up-to-date info on services and easily connect to benefits not only through Federal assistance programs, but also through state and local programs like unemployment and job training, with particularly close inter-departmental referrals among City of San Antonio departments and programs. The Benefits Navigators’ assessment of residents seeking financial benefits navigation is thorough and tailored to each family member’s needs.
- The framework for the amended EHAP assistance based on the above criteria is shown in the below chart:

Emergency Housing Assistance Program Allowances					
Effective February 18, 2021					
AMI	Term	Rent/Mortgage	SAWS	CPS Energy	Internet
≤50%	9 months	X	X	X	X
51% - 80%	6 months	X	X	X	X

**SECTION 3.** City staff is directed to incorporate the changes to the EHAP program approved by this Ordinance into the City’s current EHAP Policy.

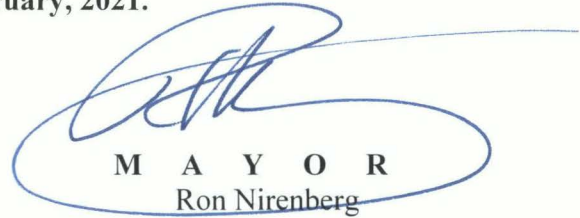
**SECTION 4.** The City Manager or designee, or the Director of Neighborhood and Housing Services, are authorized to initiate, negotiate, and execute any and all necessary documents to effectuate the acceptance of the grant referenced in Section 1 of this ordinance and to take all necessary actions to effectuate the purposes and intent of this ordinance consistent with the COVID-19 Emergency Housing Assistance Program Policy. Staff may adjust or align budgets and plans as necessary consistent with this ordinance without further Council action.

**SECTION 5.** The financial allocations in this Ordinance are subject to approval by the Deputy Chief Financial Officer, City of San Antonio. The Deputy Chief Financial Officer may, subject to concurrence by the City Manager or the City Manager’s designee, correct allocations to specific Cost Centers, WBS Elements, Internal Orders, General Ledger Accounts, and Fund Numbers as necessary to carry out the purpose of this Ordinance.

**SECTION 6.** This Ordinance is effective immediately upon the receipt of eight affirmative votes; otherwise, it is effective ten days after passage.


JYW  
02/18/2021  
Item No. 4A

**PASSED AND APPROVED this 18<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2021.**

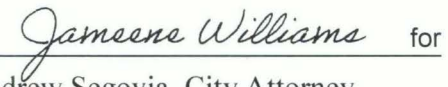


**M A Y O R**  
Ron Nirenberg

**ATTEST:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tina J. Flores, City Clerk

**APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

  
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Andrew Segovia, City Attorney



# City of San Antonio

## City Council

February 18, 2021

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**Item: 4A**

**Enactment Number:**

**File Number: 21-1770**

**2021-02-18-0104**

Ordinance accepting a grant award in the amount of \$46,751,961.10 from the United States Treasury for Emergency Rental Assistance; approving the budget within the Recovery and Resiliency Plan, and amending program eligibility requirements.

Councilmember Rebecca Viagran made a motion to approve. Councilmember Roberto C. Treviño seconded the motion. The motion passed by the following vote:

**Aye:** 9 Nirenberg, Treviño, Andrews-Sullivan, Viagran, Rocha Garcia,  
Cabello Havrda, Pelaez, Courage and Perry

**Nay:** 1 Gonzales

**Absent:** 1 Sandoval