

**CULTURE & NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES  
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, JUNE 29, 2020  
2:00 PM  
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

<b>Members Present:</b>	Councilmember Roberto Treviño, <i>Chair, District 1</i> Councilmember Jada Andrews-Sullivan, <i>District 2</i> Councilmember Rebeca Viagran, <i>District 3</i> Councilmember John Courage, <i>District 9</i> Councilmember Clayton Perry, <i>District 10</i>
<b>Staff Present:</b>	Ed Guzman, <i>Deputy City Attorney</i> , Lori Houston, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Melody Woosley, <i>Director, Department of Human Services</i> ; Jennifer Herriott, <i>Deputy Director, Community Health Division</i> ; Jennifer Hixon, <i>Health Program Manager</i> ; Ian Benavidez, <i>Housing Administrator, Neighborhood &amp; Housing Services</i> ; Nancy Cano, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>

**Call to Order**

Chairman Treviño called the meeting to order.

**Public Comment**

Father Bill Kraus, Pastor, Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church, submitted written testimony. Father Kraus stated that the Parish assisted over 20 families with their Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP) applications. He acknowledged Verónica Soto, Director, Neighborhood Housing Services Department (NHSD) and her staff for their assistance.

Esmerelda “Mere” Rodriguez, St. Timothy COPS/Metro Leader, submitted written testimony. She stated that Ms. Soto collaborated with COPS/Metro Leaders on the application process and as a result many residents avoided the loss of their residences. She stated that Ms. Soto was tasked with a huge undertaking to establish a database for EHAP and the program was successful due to Ms. Soto’s hard work and dedication.

Juanita Galindo submitted written testimony. She stated that she had difficulty filling out the EHAP application and when she placed calls for help, she was sent to various voicemails. Finally, someone put her in touch with Ms. Soto who was so attentive and followed up with her to make sure her application was completed.

Kathy Martinez submitted written testimony. She stated that she was furloughed from her job in March 2020 and put in her EHAP application with the assistance of St. Timothy COPS/Metro; a few weeks later, she was informed that her application was on hold and was put in touch with Ms. Soto who contacted her right away and corrected the error. She noted that if it were not for Ms. Soto’s timely assistance, she would have lost the opportunity to receive financial assistance.

Linda Davila, St. Timothy COPS/Metro Leader, submitted written testimony. She stated that the COPS/Metro organization represented approximately 100,000 residents across the City. She added that COPS/Metro commended the City for the additional \$27 million allocated to the EHAP and COPS/Metro would continue to do their part to prevent evictions.

Sister Maria Patricia, Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church, COPS/Metro Leader, submitted written testimony. She stated that she wanted to share the immense joy of a single mother of three teenagers that was furloughed from her catering job and left on the edge of eviction. She stated that Ms. Soto and Ms. Peralta of NHSD were the real heroes for this family and thanked them for their kindness, generosity and bringing hope to those who suffered.

Claudio and Gerardo submitted written testimony. They thanked the City for the EHAP funding and NHSD for saving her, her husband, and their three daughters from eviction.

Alma Vargas submitted written testimony. She stated that she received assistance from NHSD for three months of rent and money to buy food for her family.

Sister Jane Ann Slater, COPS/Metro Leader, Sisters of Divine Providence, submitted written testimony. She urged the City to continue to work with its neediest residents to meet their rental costs. She recognized that it was not an easy process due to the rapidity with which the EHAP program needed to be set up and staff to be trained. She asked the City to continue to find improved processes to keep EHAP going.

**1. Briefing and Possible Action on the implementation plans for the strategies within the Housing Security Pillar of the COVID19 Recovery and Resilience Plan. The strategies to be presented are the Digital Referral Platform for Joint Case Management, Homeless Shelter options with services, and Domestic Violence prevention and intervention strategies.**

Melody Woosley reported that City Council approved the COVID-19 Recovery and Resiliency Plan on June 4, 2020 which embedded equity in the decision making and developed five Guiding Principles: 1) Public Health and Safety; 2) Equity; 3) Braided Funding; 4) Community Resiliency; and 5) Well-being. She stated that the Housing Security Pillar Strategy was allocated a \$50.5 million budget: CARES Act Fund: \$43.4 million; and Other Federal Grants: \$7.01 million. She provided a detailed budget allocation as follows:

<b>Housing Security Estimated Budget</b>	
Fair Housing Counseling & Family Resource Center	\$27.87 million
Homeless Services	\$9.24 million
Financial Recovery & Resilience Hubs	\$4 million
Family Independence Initiative	\$4 million
Domestic Violence	\$3.3 million
Case Management Technology	\$1.5 million
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$50.5 million</b>

Ms. Woosley reported that a Collaborative Community Process was conducted by the City, South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless, and Bexar County on June 17, 2020, and included funding categories for homeless prevention, street outreach, rapid rehousing, and emergency shelter. She stated that the City allocations would include funding authorized through the Community Resilience Plan and additional allocations.

Ms. Woosley reported on expected outcomes and outreach for the homeless services strategy: CoSA Homeless Diversion Fund: \$200,000 to divert 50 families from shelters; Haven for Hope (HFH) Lease: 313-unit hotel to shelter 500 homeless individuals through December 2020;

Emergency Shelter Bed Capacity: 300 additional units; and Rapid Rehousing Fund: 400 households would receive up to \$4,681 of rent and utility assistance up to 24 months. She stated that outreach capacity extended to homeless hubs and cooling centers; and the homeless connection hotline would expand its hours and staff to assist 100 additional families per month.

Ms. Woosley reported on the selection/application process for the Homeless Services Strategy: Outreach teams would canvas designated areas and the Homeless Connections Hotline would assess, triage, and connect clients; Homeless Service Providers would utilize a vulnerability assessment tool that considered equity factors to prioritize individual client needs.

Ms. Woosley reported on the equity and engagement process for the homeless services strategy: Evaluation panels comprised of internal and external stakeholders and included members that had experienced homelessness. She stated that HFH, Bexar County, and the San Antonio Regional Alliance for the Homeless (SARAH) would utilize the HFH Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Team to prioritize services based on data analysis.

Ms. Woosley reported on the strategic timeline for the Homeless Services Strategy: Funding solutions would be selected and contracts would be awarded to homeless providers in July 2020. She added that CARES Act Grant funding would continue through FY 2022.

Ms. Woosley reported on the comprehensive Domestic Violence Strategy. She stated the City adopted a \$3 million budget allocated to the Human Services Department and Health Department budgets to support domestic violence prevention and intervention services for FY 2020. She noted that an additional \$3.3 million from CARES Act funding would be allocated to the SAPD budget to address increased incidents of domestic violence due to COVID-19. She added that communitywide prevention and education campaigns would be combined with direct services, high-risk teams, and cognitive behavioral therapy for children exposed to violence.

Ms. Woosley reported on the expected outcomes for the Domestic Violence Strategy. She stated that by December 2020, media campaigns would generate more than 2 million media impressions; 400 families would enroll in online parenting programs; 200 professionals would enroll in online training; 1,000 therapy sessions would be provided to students who experienced violence in the home; and the Domestic Violence High Risk Team would provide case management services to 400 high-risk families.

Ms. Woosley reported on the equity and engagement process for the Domestic Violence Strategy: Targeted zip codes with the highest equity scores and targeted school districts with the highest number of referrals for children exposed to violence would be prioritized. She added that UTSA would conduct a community survey regarding domestic violence services and how COVID-19 has changed the needs of families experiencing violence.

Ms. Woosley reported on the strategic timeline for the Domestic Violence Strategy: An expanded media campaign would begin in July 2020, online parenting programs would begin in August 2020, and program evaluation and assessment would be completed by December 2020.

Ms. Woosley reported on the Case Management Strategy: \$1.5 million would be allocated to provide a streamlined, integrated case management and referral program across service sectors and providers in order to track client progress and outcomes.

Ms. Woosley reported on the expected outcomes for the Case Management Strategy: 70 non-profit human services agency partners would utilize the joint case management and referral platform; 95% of enrolled families would receive two or more service referrals; and 90% of referred families would have wraparound access to services across agencies.

Ms. Woosley reported on the strategic timeline for the Case Management Strategy: Full implementation across partner agencies would be completed by July 2020, and the first phase would roll out to City departments in January 2021.

Ian Benavidez reported on Eviction Protections: The Texas Supreme Court extended the moratorium on evictions for federally backed mortgages or properties until July 25, 2020; an estimated 50% of all rental properties within the City were under the protection of the CARES Act; and Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac extended their moratorium on foreclosures until August 31, 2020.

Mr. Benavidez reported that the City and Bexar County coordinated efforts to support and mitigate evictions. He stated that docket information was collected for each Court and then contact was made with the San Antonio Apartment Association to inform its members of the EHAP and the Bexar County Rental Assistance Measure (TRAM). He added that EHAP and TRAM information was included with each notice to tenants and landlord scheduled for eviction hearings. He noted that City and County staff would be present at eviction hearings to inform landlords and renters of available assistance, start the EHAP application process, and negotiate agreements with the Court to avoid evictions. He reported that Right to Counsel (RTC) services were expanded through the extended contracts with Texas Rural Legal Aid (TRLA) and the San Antonio Legal Services Association (SALSA). He added that contingency funding would be used as needed for court support or additional case management and would include additional Know Your Rights training for renters. He reported that 250 eviction court cases had been dismissed, 94 staff interactions were completed, 70 residents were referred to rental assistance programs, 11 residents were referred to RTC services, and 91 residents that called the housing hotline were referred to EHAP.

Mr. Benavidez reported that the Notice of Tenant Rights (NTR) Ordinance would become effective on July 25, 2020. He stated that the Ordinance would require landlords to furnish a NTR when issuing a Notice to Vacate for Non-Payment of Rent. He added that the NTR emphasized that a Notice to Vacate did not require a tenant to leave the premises; advised payment plan with landlord; provided resources for rental assistance and fair housing counseling; outlined the eviction process; applied beyond the COVID-19 emergency period; and applied to all landlords.

Assistant City Manager Lori Houston reported that City Council approved the Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP) on April 23, 2020. She stated that EHAP offered eligible residents funding for rent, mortgage, utility, internet, and up to \$300 cash for groceries. She added that residents must have an area median income (AMI) of 100%; provide proof of hardship related to COVID-19; provide a copy of identification, signed lease or mortgage statement, income verification documents; and proof of other benefits or assistance.

Assistant City Manager Houston provided detailed EHAP funding allocation as follows:

<b>COVID-19 Emergency Housing Assistant Program Funding Source</b>	
San Antonio Housing Trust Foundation (SAHTF), San Antonio Housing Trust Public Facilities Corporation (PFC), and San Antonio Housing Trust Finance Corporation (FC)	\$5,000,000

Risk Mitigation Fund (RMF) Balance	\$350,000
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Income and Savings	\$5,240,586
CARES Act CDBG	\$7,707,015
Houston Street, Midtown, Inner City Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ), and Affordable Housing Budget Reallocations	\$4,036,233
General Fund (Parking Fund Transfer)	\$2,500,000
COVID-19 Relief Fund	\$26,616,051
Outside Contributions	\$200,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$55,649,885</b>

<b>COVID-19 Emergency Housing Assistant Program Use</b>	
Program Administration	\$1,279,012
Supports rent, mortgage, utilities for those that are eligible for federal funding	\$33,166,900
Supports rent, mortgage, utilities for those that are not eligible for federal funding	\$8,177,596
Direct cash assistance for groceries, fuel, and medicine	9,026,377
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$55,649,885</b>

Assistant City Manager Houston reported on EHAP outreach strategy: Door-to-Door outreach to 4,000 homes and 13,000 individual rental units in 90 rental properties located in target census tracts with low equity scores; COPS/Metro, faith-based churches, and community organizations would assist with intake services; and public safety announcements were made through social media, radio, and television broadcasting.

Assistant City Manager Houston reported on EHAP enrollment and process to date: Applications received: 12,528; Applications processed: 9,706; Applications approved: 5,507; and Applications Pending: 338. She stated that 3,861 denied applications due: Outside City limits: 1,500; non-responsive: 1,500; Duplicates: 800; and Over-income: 60. She stated that policy required the documentation of 2 phone calls and 2 emails followed by 48 hours of non-communication before an application is denied. She added that the application would be placed back in the queue if the applicant responded to the denial. She stated that the EHAP process was 15 days. She highlighted that \$15.1 million had been disbursed to over 5,500 families to date: Mortgages and rents: \$13.3 million; Utilities: \$575,000; SAWS: \$100,000; Internet: \$1,623; and Cash assistance: approximately \$1 million (\$300 per family).

Assistant City Manager Houston provided an update on a proposed Renters Commission. She reported that a Council Consideration Request for a Renters Commission was submitted by Councilmember Treviño in June 2019, but community outreach was paused due to COVID-19. She stated that staff continued to work with several stakeholder groups to obtain feedback from renters serviced through the Risk Mitigation Fund and the Right to Counsel Program. She provided potential next steps: Virtual town hall meeting: July 2020; Focus Groups: July and August 2020; and recommendations to the Committee and City Council: September 2020.

Councilmember Courage asked if the Homeless Strategic Plan prioritized families that were newly homeless or if focus was placed on homeless individuals. He noted that some homeless individuals were not receptive to outreach. He voiced concern for direct cash assistance and stated that the City has a responsibility to monitor cash funding. He voiced support for a Renters Commission

that consisted of a balanced stakeholder representation. Ms. Woosley stated intensive case management support and rehousing funds were available to assist newly homeless families and very marginalized families to prevent homelessness. She added that funds and assistance were also in place to stabilize the most chronic homeless individuals as well.

Councilmember Viagran asked how the City was partnering with the Food Bank to provide outreach opportunities for homeless services, domestic violence assistance and cash assistance. She asked how online domestic violence training would be provided to residents that do not have internet. Assistant City Manager Houston reported that 10,000 EHAP flyers were distributed to Food Bank drive-thru participants. Ms. Woosley reported that the Food Bank provided food to the homeless sheltered at the HFH hotel. She stated that the Food Bank also worked with faith-based organizations to ensure that marginalized populations had food and helped distribute flyers regarding homeless hubs. Ms. Woosley stated that professionals, teachers and students had access to the internet through their jobs and schools. Jenny Hixon replied that funding was allocated to provide equipment for remote access for professionals and teachers. She added that children and parents could complete the courses on their cell phones and parents were given a \$25 gift card upon completion of the course.

Councilmember Viagran voiced concern for the rental properties and mortgages under the protection of the CARES Act and the lifting of those eviction moratoriums at the end of July 2020 and August 2020, respectively. She requested that staff remain vigilant in tracking federal acts and federal deadlines and to continue to locate additional COVID-19 funding sources in anticipation. She asked that staff collaborate with the City's Federal Delegation team with funding efforts. She asked if EHAP applicants denied funding were able to qualify for funding through Bexar County. Assistant City Manager Houston stated that she would provide information on EHAP applicants referred to Bexar County for funding assistance.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked if the EHAP application process could be added to the COVID-19 Dashboard and if status updates could be provided to applicants via text. She asked of the number of calls received to the Domestic Violence hotline during COVID-19. She asked if additional food or housing vouchers were received through SARAH or Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH). Assistant City Manager Houston stated that she would provide the information regarding calls received to the Domestic Violence hotline. Ms. Woosley stated that no additional veteran vouchers were received. She added that SAHA did receive additional funds and provided 100 vouchers to the South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless. Assistant City Manager Houston stated that she would provide an update from SAHA regarding additional federal funding received.

Councilmember Treviño requested clarification regarding funding assistance for individuals not eligible for federal funding. He asked if there was flexibility to divest additional funding from the General Fund, if needed. He noted the large number of eviction court default judgments (260) and asked staff to continue outreach efforts to residents undergoing eviction. Assistant City Manager Houston reported that \$8.1 million of CARES Act funding was reserved for those not eligible for federal funding. She stated that an additional \$9 million in funds was divested from the SAHTF, TIRZ, RMF, and the General Fund (Parking Fund Transfer) to help provide for those not eligible for federal funding. She added that if there was more need for additional funding, proposed adjustments to the General Fund could be presented to the Committee and to City Council.

Councilmember Treviño requested that staff provide the Committee with an outreach and engagement plan for the public regarding a Renters Commission. He noted the importance of a

balanced representation on the Renters Commission. He stated that local realtor Jackie Galvan recently appeared on CBS news magazine TV show “60 Minutes” and discussed her experience as a newly unemployed renter. He recommended that Ms. Galvan meet with Councilmember Courage to discuss balanced representation and her possible role on the proposed Renters Commission.

## **2. Briefing on the future Culture and Neighborhood Services Council Committee Agenda**

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan recommended a review of the Battered Women’s Shelter, the Children’s Shelter, and Youth Advocates for children aging out of the foster care system to determine how the residents are managing COVID-19 and what resources have been provided.

Chairman Treviño requested a follow-up on the next steps for the proposed Renters Commission.

Chairman Treviño requested a briefing on the Haven for Hope feeding program to include amount of persons fed, location and number of sites, data collection system, outreach strategy for wraparound support services, how neighborhoods are affected, and when the program will sunset.

Councilmember Viagran requested an update on the implementation plans for the strategies within the Housing Security Pillar: Digital Referral Platform for Joint Case Management, Homeless Shelter options with services, and Domestic Violence prevention and intervention strategies.

Councilmember Viagran requested an update on the implementation plans for the strategies within the Housing Security Pillar regarding the Fair Housing Counseling and Family Resource Center and Virtual and Placed Base Financial Recovery and Resilience HUB, to include the Right to Counsel program, Notice of Tenants Rights ordinance, the Emergency Housing Assistance Program, Family Independence Initiative Up Together Investment, Low Cost Financial Products, and door to door engagement with hard-to-reach micro businesses and families to connect them to resources.

Councilmember Viagran requested a discussion about the homeless and public safety issues and concerns (not policing).

## **Adjourn**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 pm.

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***Roberto Treviño, Chairman***

***Respectfully Submitted,***

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***Nancy Cano***  
***Office of the City Clerk***

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