



Legislation Text

File #: 65267, **Version:** 1

Fiscal Note

The proposed resolution approves providing up to \$427,000 of Community Development Block Grant-CV (CDBG-CV) funds to Porchlight for the agency's continued operation of the First Street temporary men's shelter through the end of 2021. Porchlight recently participated in a local Dane County Continuum of Care (CoC) funding process, through which it requested supplemental funds for shelter operations and was ultimately awarded, \$162,000 leaving a significant gap in financing to operate the shelter through 2021. Funding for the proposed \$427,000 disbursement is included in the community development grants fund in CDD's 2021 adopted operating budget. No additional City appropriation is required for the proposed resolution.

Title

Authorizing an allocation of up to \$427,000 in federal Community Development Block Grant-CV (CDBG-CV) funds, authorized via the CARES Act, to Porchlight, Inc. to support the agency's operations at the First Street temporary men's homeless shelter through the end of 2021; and authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute an agreement with the agency for this purpose.

Body

BACKGROUND

For the past 35 years, the Madison/Dane County community has relied on the generous support of downtown churches for space to accommodate homeless men overnight. The COVID-19 pandemic created the need for safer space for men facing housing insecurity. The most vulnerable shelter users were relocated to hotels, and the City established alternative temporary shelter space, first at Warner Park Community Recreation Center and subsequently at the former Fleet Service building at First Street.

The unprecedented circumstances brought about by the pandemic forced Porchlight, the agency that has operated local men's shelter sites for the last 35 years, to alter its service structure to limit the exposure and ensure the safety of shelter guests and staff within a congregate setting. Those changes included, for example, developing screening protocols at intake and referring symptomatic persons to a Medical Respite Center, purchasing personal protection equipment, robust daily cleaning, providing individually boxed meals, and offering dedicated daily transportation services between the shelter and the day resource center. To support clients who typically would not use the shelter, Porchlight also took steps to reduce barriers to entry. The 90-day limit on overnight stays was suspended and accommodations were made to allow use of the shelter by persons under the influence of alcohol or other substances. To improve their ability to interact with and support shelter users, Porchlight increased the number of on-site employees from its previous model. The combined costs associated with these measures have raised annual operating costs to four times what they were prior to the pandemic.

The City of Madison and the Dane County Continuum of Care (CoC) have financially supported a portion of the men's shelter operations during 2021 through the utilization of Emergency Solutions Grant-CV (ESG-CV) funds awarded to the City and the State of Wisconsin through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. In March 2021, the Dane County CoC held an additional local funding application process to allocate supplemental ESG-CV funds awarded to it by the State of Wisconsin. That process provided Porchlight \$162,000 for shelter operations at the First Street location, an amount insufficient to support operations through 2021.

To ensure the continued shelter operations at First Street, the City's Community Development Division

recommends supplementing Porchlight's ESG-CV funds with up to \$470,000 in Community Development Block Grant-CV (CDBG-CV) funds. These funds were also authorized through the CARES Act. The proposed allocation of CDBG-CV funds will enable Porchlight to continue its operations at the First Street temporary men's shelter through the remainder of 2021.

ACTION

WHEREAS, Porchlight, Inc. has a long and proven track record of operating local shelter sites for men facing housing insecurity in the Madison/Dane County community, including sites at Warner Park Community Recreation Center and the First Street Fleet Services building during the current COVID-19 pandemic; and,

WHEREAS, Porchlight recently participated in a local Dane County CoC funding process, through which it requested supplemental funds for shelter operations and was ultimately awarded \$162,000 leaving a significant gap in financing to operate the shelter through 2021; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Madison has received substantial allocations of supplemental grant funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that was authorized through the 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act (RES-20-00550, Legistar #61295), including Community Development Block Grant-CV (CDBG-CV) and Emergency Solutions Grant-CV (ESG-CV) funds administered by the Community Development Division (CDD), to fund local activities that help prevent, prepare for, and/or respond to coronavirus during the COVID-19 pandemic; and,

WHEREAS, among the eligible uses of CDBG-CV grant funds are costs associated with the operation of programs for the homeless, such as staffing, utilities and maintenance; and,

WHEREAS, the City's CDBG-CV allocation are available to provide needed gap financing for Porchlight's shelter operation costs at the First Street temporary men's shelter through the end of 2021;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Common Council hereby approves the CDD's recommendation to provide up to \$427,000 in federal CDBG-CV funds to Porchlight for the agency's continued operation of the First Street temporary men's shelter through the end of 2021; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Common Council hereby authorizes the Mayor and City Clerk to execute an agreement with Porchlight, Inc. to provide the above described First Street shelter operations through December 31, 2021.