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# CITY OF POMONA

## COUNCIL REPORT

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January 27, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Mark Gluba, Acting City Manager

Submitted By: Benita DeFrank, Neighborhood Services Director

**SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT TO FUND A FAMILY UNIFICATION PROGRAM FOR QUALIFIED TRANSITIONAL-AGED YOUTH**

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council, sitting as the Governing Board for the Pomona Housing Authority, take the following actions:

- 1) Adopt the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION NO. 2020-11 - AUTHORIZING THE SUBMITTAL OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT TO FUND A FAMILY UNIFICATION PROGRAM KNOWN AS THE FOSTER YOUTH TO INDEPENDENCE (FYI) THAT WILL PROVIDE RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR TRANSITIONAL-AGED YOUTH (TAY) FACING HOMELESSNESS OR AT-RISK OF BECOMING HOMELESS AND HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM**

- 2) Approve a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) as required by the FYI application, subject to City Attorney review and approval;
- 3) Authorizing the City Manager/Executive Director to execute appropriate contracts and documentation requested for submittal of application to HUD.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

On July 26, 2019, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced a funding opportunity for Public Housing Authorities to assist Transitional-Aged Youth (TAY), ages 18 to 24 years old, through the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) program. Implementing such a program will

invest in local, collaborative efforts with the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to prevent and end homelessness among transitional-aged youth with a current or prior history of child welfare involvement. The Pomona Housing Authority (PHA) requests the Board's approval to submit a grant application to support the FYI program.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

Although the FYI program is for a 36 month duration, there is no fiscal impact associated with this action. Any award of vouchers will be brought to City Council to amend revenue estimates and appropriations.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Through the FYI Program, HUD will provide Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPV) for TAY who meet the eligibility criteria. These vouchers are referred to as FYI TPVs. HUD is investing in local, cross-system collaborative efforts to prevent and end homelessness among youth with a current or prior history of child welfare involvement. The success of this effort requires that community partners coordinate effectively to identify, target, and connect eligible youth at-risk of becoming homeless or currently experiencing homelessness to housing and related supports such as mental health services and health care needs. This program calls for the collaboration and partnership between the PHA and DCFS.

The youth who are eligible for FYI TPV must be at least 18 years old and not more than 24 years old who:

- Left foster care at age 16 or older or will leave foster care within 90 days, in accordance with a transition plan described in section 475(5)(H) of the Social Security Act; and
- Are homeless; or
- Are at risk of becoming homeless

The PHA will administer the FYI in partnership with the DCFS who is the responsible party for referring TAY to the PHA for determination of eligibility for rental assistance. Once the DCFS makes the referral, the PHA will determine whether the youth meets the voucher eligibility requirements, and conducts all other processes relating to voucher issuance and administration.

In addition to rental assistance, supportive services to address the youth's needs beyond the housing stabilization must be provided by the DCFS or contracted provider for a period of at least 18 months for which the TAY participates in the program. Examples of the skills targeted by these services include: information/counseling on money management, use of credit, housekeeping, proper nutrition/meal preparation and access to health care (e.g., doctors, medication, and mental and behavioral health services). PHA will refer qualified youth to the existing Family Self Sufficiency Program (FSS), a program with the objective to alleviate the dependency on voucher assistance, welfare assistance, or any federal, state, or local rent subsidies. The FSS program will ensure that transitional-aged youth are connected to community resources to achieve economic independence.

Only Public Housing Authorities that have an existing Annual Contribution Contract (ACC) with HUD for Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) are eligible to apply for funding under this announcement. Eligible PHAs must have demonstrated a commitment to administer FYI, which shall be verified by an executed MOU between the PHA and the DCFS, and in accordance with the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) – NOTICE PIH 2019-20 (HA).

In 2019, Los Angeles Housing Services Authority (LAHSA) found the number of homeless TAY rose 43% in Service Planning Area 3 – San Gabriel Valley (SPA 3) and represented 67% of the homeless youth population in SPA 3. Forty-two percent of youth experiencing homelessness were Black/African American and 34% were Hispanic/Latino in SPA 3. The 2019 count revealed that youth are more likely to experience domestic violence. Twenty-three percent of youth in SPA 3 experienced domestic violence and intimate partner violence.

According to LAHSA, 92% of homeless youth in Los Angeles County had a fragile social network and more than half (57%) of youth in the Coordinated Entry System (CES) reported to have had some type of contact with the foster care system. Due to these facts, specialized programs have rapidly grown for the TAY population along with partnerships with the community college and university system, Probation Department, and the DCFS to address the situations TAY often face. The DCFS has demonstrated a commitment to helping TAY by seeking out partnerships with housing authorities, one being with the City of Pomona.

In the City of Pomona, administering the FYI program will help TAY experiencing homelessness access housing resources and assistance. Programs such as FYI can act as a preventative measure for TAY at-risk of homelessness and essentially act as a step to end the cycle of longer, or future episodes of homelessness. Additionally, FYI Program can reduce the likelihood of TAY engaging in substance abuse, alcohol use, and entering into the criminal justice system. TAY with prior child welfare involvement can benefit from a rental assistance program coupled with DCFS supportive services because TAY who have gone through the foster care system and/or experience homelessness typically have endured trauma or violence. A program such as FYI gives an opportunity for TAY to regain housing stability, restore a TAY's autonomy during the housing process, help them recover from trauma through the DCFS case management supports, establish an employment, financial, and educational plan with DCFS and Pomona's FSS Coordinator, and lastly, have TAY achieve self-sufficiency when the program reaches the 36 month mark.

If the application for funding is approved, the PHA will administer the FYI program for a 36 month duration. When assistance expires after 36 months, the vouchers will sunset when the youth leaves the program. The PHA will request 5 vouchers from HUD. Administrative fees are paid based on the number of units under a lease/contract.

As part of the application process, the PHA must submit a MOU executed by the Executive Director. The MOU will be considered by HUD and the signatories (the PHA and the DCFS) as a complete statement of the responsibilities of the parties and evidence a commitment of resources to the FYI.

It is recommended that the City Council, sitting as the Governing Board for the PHA, authorize staff to submit a grant application to HUD for FYI.

**COUNCIL PRIORITIES & GOALS:** This item supports City Council Priority 3: Invest in public safety, community programming, and maintenance of properties and infrastructure to ensure residents, businesses, visitors, and employees feel safe, neighborhoods reflect the beauty of Pomona, and the community feels a sense of pride and ownership of the City. - Goal K: – To reduce the unsheltered homeless population by 10% annually and take actions to mitigate the impacts of homelessness on the community.

Prepared by:

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Samantha Piedra  
Graduate Fellow

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

Attachment No. 1 – Resolution No. 2020-11