



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
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TO: Barbara Levin Bergman, Chair
Ways & Means Committee

FROM: Robert E. Guenzel
County Administrator

DATE: May 21, 2008

SUBJECT: FY 2008 Funding for Supportive Housing Services

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

It is requested that the Board of Commissioners approve an appropriation of \$250,000 to the Washtenaw Housing Alliance from funding earmarked for supportive housing services in the fiscal year 2008 budget.

BACKGROUND:

The goal of ending homelessness in Washtenaw County by 2014 has been established as a major policy objective by public, private, and non-profit sector leadership across our community. In 2004, a 10-year strategic plan to achieve this goal, entitled "*A Home for Everyone: A Blueprint for Ending Homelessness in Washtenaw County*", was developed with contributions from several hundred key stakeholders. The Board of Commissioners charged the Washtenaw Housing Alliance with the responsibility of implementing the plan.

The Washtenaw Housing Alliance has identified the importance of providing homelessness prevention and supportive housing services in conjunction with permanent supportive housing. Local and national research demonstrate that substantial cost savings and human gains accrue from investing in supportive housing for both families and individuals who are experiencing homelessness. The *Blueprint to End Homelessness* identified a goal of establishing and sustaining at least 500 units of permanent supportive housing targeted to individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness by 2014. A "Committee for 500" has been working diligently to create this number of affordable housing units. However, the group's work has generated a growing recognition that it would be irresponsible to create additional housing units without the supportive services that ensure the individuals and families are able to stay housed in those units. Therefore, a long-term and dependable revenue source is needed to sustain those supportive services.

DISCUSSION:

In December 2007, the Board of Commissioners created a Task Force on Sustainable Revenues for Supportive Housing to recommend long term, sustainable funding strategies. The Task Force plans to publish its recommendations later this summer. Full *implementation* of the recommended funding strategies may take several years. Recognizing that the need for supportive services exists today – and continues to grow as more affordable housing units are developed – the Board of Commissioners set aside \$250,000 in reserves for supportive services as part of the adopted 2008/2009 Budget. It is requested that the Board of Commissioners release the earmarked funding at this time, in order to serve as a short-term bridge to sustain the momentum of the Blueprint to End Homelessness until the longer-term, sustainable funding strategies can be realized.

Washtenaw County’s investment is anticipated to leverage commitments of between \$730,000 and \$1.2 million already made by a wide array of private and public donors for the next two years. Committed funders include the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, Washtenaw United Way, Washtenaw Community Health Organization, and a number of private donors. The City of Ann Arbor has also made a tentative commitment of an additional \$250,000/year for two years, subject to current Council budget deliberations. The Washtenaw Housing Alliance estimates that, in total, this funding will enable the provision of enhanced supportive housing services for as many as 170 households over a two-year period.

IMPACT ON HUMAN RESOURCES:

None.

IMPACT ON BUDGET:

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

IMPACT ON INDIRECT COSTS:

None.

IMPACT ON OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OR OUTSIDE AGENCIES:

None.

CONFORMITY TO COUNTY POLICIES:

The requested Board action conforms with County policies.

ATTACHMENTS/APPENDICES:

Resolution

A RESOLUTION APPORIVING THE APPOPRIATION OF \$250,000 TO THE
WASHTENAW HOUSING ALLIANCE FROM THE FUNDING EARMARKED FOR
SUPPORTIVE HOUSING IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2008 BUDGET

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

June 4, 2008

WHEREAS, the goal of ending homelessness in Washtenaw County by 2014 has been established as a major policy objective by public, private, and non-profit sector leadership across our community; and

WHEREAS, several hundred key stakeholders have contributed to the formation of "*A Home for Everyone: A Blueprint for Ending Homelessness in Washtenaw County*" as our community's comprehensive 10-Year Strategic Plan to End Homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners has charged the Washtenaw Housing Alliance with responsibility for implementing the *Blueprint to End Homelessness*; and

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw Housing Alliance has documented the cost-effectiveness of providing permanent supportive housing and related homeless prevention and supportive housing services in eliminating homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the *Blueprint to End Homelessness in Washtenaw County* has identified a goal of establishing and sustaining at least 500 units of permanent supportive housing targeted to individuals and families experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness by 2014; and

WHEREAS, in December 2007, the Board of Commissioners created a Task Force on Sustainable Revenues for Supportive Housing to develop recommendations for longer-term, sustainable funding strategies based on a collaborative, community-wide integrated funding approach; and

WHEREAS, the funding approved in this resolution will help bridge to the adoption of longer-term, sustainable funding strategies under consideration by the Task Force and provide much needed services to residents of Washtenaw County while these strategies are being developed and implemented; and

WHEREAS, the requested funding is anticipated to leverage commitments of between \$730,000 and \$1.2 million by a wide array of private and public donors for the next two years, including the City of Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, Washtenaw United Way, Washtenaw Community Health Organization, and a number of private donors; and

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw Housing Alliance estimates this funding will enable the provision of enhanced supportive housing services for as many as 170 households over a two-year trial period;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners hereby approves the release of \$250,000 to the Washtenaw Housing Alliance from funding budgeted in reserves and earmarked for supportive housing services in the fiscal year 2008 budget.