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2022 RES-198

**ACCEPTING FEDERAL FUNDS AND AWARDING AND AMENDING CONTRACTS
FOR EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE
DCDHS – HAA DIVISION**

This project is funded with the County’s allocation of emergency rental assistance funds (ERA 2) authorized in the 2021 American Rescue Plan. Therefore, this resolution follows the format outlined in 2021 RES-013.

Justification

Authorizing Law: In March of 2021, the federal government authorized the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan (ARP) stimulus bill authorizing additional funding to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic across multiple areas of need.

The act included \$21.5 billion in funding for Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA 2). Dane County received and, in partnership with Urban Triage, Inc., distributed \$12.5 million of that amount to support local efforts to prevent evictions and provide housing stability.

Dane County has been approved for a reallocation of an additional \$27 million in ERA 2 from the United States Treasury. The funds were reallocated from the State of Wisconsin’s ERA 2 allocation, and granted to Dane County with the support of the State of Wisconsin.

Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Many renters have fallen behind on their rent, or are in need of assistance to pay future rent, due to continued hardship related to the COVID-19 pandemic’s effect on our economy. The CDC eviction moratorium expired on July 31st of 2021. The emergency rental assistance authorized in the American Rescue Plan can be used in a number of ways to help households in Dane County achieve housing stability and avoid eviction.

The Dane County Department of Human Services’ (DCDHS) Housing Access and Affordability Division (HAA) seeks approval to receive the additional \$27 million ERA 2 allocation, and to amend and award contracts with partners to administer these funds.

HAA requests approval for a contract amendment for Urban Triage, Inc. to continue to administer a portion of Dane County’s ERA 2 funding. The contract amendment totals \$15,297,960 and would extend the existing provider contract through December 31, 2023.

HAA also requests approval to award a contract to Tenant Resource Center Inc. to continue funding for direct assistance at court for tenants involved in eviction proceedings through the Eviction Diversion and Defense Partnership (EDDP). The contract award totals \$8,076,250. The contract term is November 1, 2022 – December 31, 2024.

\$2.7 million from the County’s total allocation will be set aside for housing stability services as allowed by the US Treasury’s regulations for the funding. Per the US Treasury, up to 10% of a grantee’s total ERA 2 allocation may be used for housing

52 stability staffing costs. Any legislative actions required related to allocation of housing
53 stability funds will be routed through the Dane County Board at a later date.

54
55 Up to \$170,000 of the County's allocation will be set aside for Neighborly platform use
56 fees to be paid to the City of Madison to allow Dane County and its program partners to
57 continue to utilize the platform for administration of the emergency rental assistance
58 program. Neighborly users are charged a .6% fee for every allocation of ERA funds
59 administered through the platform.

60
61 Duplication of Funding/Existing Partnerships and Programs: The funding is not
62 duplicative with other efforts, as duplication of effort is not allowed per federal
63 regulations.

64
65 Urban Triage has been administering ERA funds as a partner with Dane County since
66 August of 2021. The funds awarded in this resolution will continue that program.

67
68 The Tenant Resource Center has been providing payments at court for households
69 involved in eviction proceedings as a partner with Dane County since July of 2022. The
70 funds awarded in this resolution will help continue that program.

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72 Both agencies were selected to administer their programs via a competitive RFP
73 process.

74
75 Guidelines: The federal government has passed detailed guidelines for the emergency
76 rental assistance funds authorized in the American Rescue Plan. For eligibility purposes,
77 grantees must only consider household income for 2020 or confirmation of the monthly
78 income that the household is receiving at the time of application, as determined by the
79 Treasury Secretary.

80
81 Up to 18 months of rental assistance can be provided per eligible household.
82 Households are eligible for assistance if one or more individual has qualified for
83 unemployment benefits, has experienced a reduction in household income, has incurred
84 significant costs, and/or has experienced other financial hardship due directly or
85 indirectly to the COVID-19 pandemic, and where one or more individual can
86 demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability (a past due utility
87 or rent notice or an eviction notice, unsafe or unhealthy living conditions; or any other
88 evidence of such risk as determined by the grantee.)

89
90 Per federal guidelines, households that make 50% area median income (AMI) and below
91 and in which one or more member is unemployed and has been unemployed for longer
92 than 90 days must be prioritized among applicants.

93
94 The grantee must ensure recipients of emergency rental assistance funding do not
95 receive duplicate assistance from other federally funded rental assistance programs.

96
97 Per federal guidelines, landlords or owners may apply on behalf of tenants meeting the
98 eligibility requirements if the tenant cosigns the application, the landlord provides the
99 necessary documentation to the tenant, and the payments are used to pay the tenant's
100 rental obligation to the owner.

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102 **Expected Outcomes and Data Collection**

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Per the federal guidelines, information that must be collected by the grantee includes the number of eligible households that received assistance, the acceptance rate of applicants for assistance, the type of assistance provided to each eligible household, the average amount of funding provided per eligible household, the household income level based on 0-30, 31-50, 51-80% AMI, the average number of monthly rental payments that were received, and demographics of the primary recipient (race, gender, ethnicity per HUD definition).

Per the federal government, the information collected by the grantee must be reported to the US Treasury on a quarterly basis to maintain ERA 2 compliance. This information will be shared quarterly with the Dane County Board of Supervisors per 2021 RES-013.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the County Board approves a contract amendment in the amount of \$15,297,960 with Urban Triage, Inc. and authorizes the County Executive and County Clerk to execute the contract documents, and authorizes the Controller to issue checks for payment of contract invoices.

<u>Vendor</u>	<u>Contract Amount</u>
Urban Triage, Inc.	\$15,297,960

BE FURTHER RESOVLED, that the County Board approves a contract in the amount of \$8,076,250with Tenant Resource Center Inc. and authorizes the County Executive and County Clerk to execute the contract documents, and authorizes the Controller to issue checks for payment of contract invoices.

<u>Vendor</u>	<u>Contract Amount</u>
Tenant Resource Center Inc.	\$8,076,250

BE FURTHER RESOVLED, that account 80000 80137 COVID RENTAL ASSIT II REVENUE be increased by an appropriation of \$27,000,000 and that account 80000 30264 COVID RENTAL ASST II EXPENSE be increased with an appropriation of \$27,000,000.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that unspent funds for the programs from 2022 be carried forward for expenditure in 2023.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the County Board requests quarterly reports be shared with the members of the County Board, and that the Health and Human Needs Committee review the reports on a quarterly basis and discuss how the information presented addresses anticipated program outcomes.