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**2021 RES-078**

**AWARDING A CONTRACT TO URBAN TRIAGE, INC. FOR AN  
EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
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), with Dane County to receive more than \$12.5 million of that amount to support local efforts to prevent evictions and provide housing stability.

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 will expire on July 31<sup>st</sup>. The additional 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 to award a contract to Urban Triage to administer the county’s ERA 2 funding. Urban Triage was selected to administer the second round of ERA 2 via a competitive RFP process.

Urban Triage will receive up to \$1,682,293 to help fund administration costs for the program. Per the federal government, up to 15% of the total ERA 2 allocation may be spent on various administration costs necessary to stand up and maintain an ERA program. The remaining \$10,700,656 will be spent on direct assistance to eligible applicants (tenants or landlords).

Duplication of Funding/Existing Partnerships and Programs: The funding is not duplicative with other efforts, as duplication of effort is not allowed per federal regulations. Dane County’s emergency rental assistance allocation (ERA 1) authorized in the December 2020 federal COVID-19 stimulus bill is currently being administered by the Tenant Resource Center. County ERA 1 funds are anticipated to be spent down by the end of August.

The County’s intent is to contract with Urban Triage to administer the ERA 2 program and work with both ERA vendors on a transition between the programs to avoid duplication of benefit and confusion among people seeking assistance.

Funds for this program will be spent in Dane County communities outside of the City of Madison as the City of Madison is receiving its own ERA 2 allocation and has access to

52 additional ERA dollars through the State of Wisconsin. Drawing a geographic distinction  
53 between the funding sources will further reduce the chance for duplication of benefit.

54  
55 Guidelines: The federal government has passed detailed guidelines for the emergency  
56 rental assistance funds authorized in the American Rescue Plan. For eligibility purposes,  
57 grantees must only consider household income for 2020 or confirmation of the monthly  
58 income that the household is receiving at the time of application, as determined by the  
59 Treasury Secretary.

60  
61 Up to 18 months of rental assistance can be provided per household. Eligible costs  
62 include rental and utility arrears, future rent, other expenses related to housing including  
63 relocation expenses (such as rental security deposits), and rental fees (including  
64 application or screening fees).

65  
66 Households are eligible for assistance if one or more individual has qualified for  
67 unemployment benefits, has experienced a reduction in household income, has incurred  
68 significant costs, and/or has experienced other financial hardship due directly or  
69 indirectly to the COVID-19 pandemic, and where one or more individual can  
70 demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability (a past due utility  
71 or rent notice or an eviction notice, unsafe or unhealthy living conditions; or any other  
72 evidence of such risk as determined by the grantee.)

73  
74 Per federal guidelines, households that make 50% area median income (AMI) and below  
75 and in which one or more member is unemployed and has been unemployed for longer  
76 than 90 days must be prioritized among applicants.

77  
78 The grantee must ensure recipients of emergency rental assistance funding do not  
79 receive duplicate assistance from other federally funded rental assistance programs.

80  
81 Per federal guidelines, landlords or owners may apply on behalf of tenants meeting the  
82 eligibility requirements if the tenant cosigns the application, the landlord provides the  
83 necessary documentation to the tenant, and the payments are used to pay the tenant's  
84 rental obligation to the owner.

### 85 86 **Expected Outcomes and Data Collection**

87  
88 Per the federal guidelines, information that must be collected by the grantee includes the  
89 number of eligible households that received assistance, the acceptance rate of  
90 applicants for assistance, the type of assistance provided to each eligible household, the  
91 average amount of funding provided per eligible household, the household income level  
92 based on 0-30, 31-50, 51-80% AMI, the average number of monthly rental payments  
93 that were received, and demographics of the primary recipient (race, gender, ethnicity  
94 per HUD definition).

95  
96 Additional program outcomes that will be tracked include percentage of participants  
97 stably housed at one (1) month, of the percentage of participants who have not  
98 experienced any housing related court action (eviction filing) after six (6) months, and  
99 the percentage of grant applications and subsequent agreements with landlords that are  
100 completed within 30 days.

101

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

105

106 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the County Board approves a contract in  
107 the amount of \$12,382,949 with Urban Triage, Inc. (Up to \$1,682,293 for administration  
108 and \$10,700,656 in direct assistance to eligible individuals) and authorizes the County  
109 Executive and County Clerk to execute the contract documents, and authorizes the  
110 Controller to issue checks for payment of contract invoices.

111

112 **BE FURTHER RESOLVED** that account 80000 80137 COVID RENTAL ASSIT II  
113 REVENUE be created with an appropriation of \$12,589,006.50 and that account 80000  
114 30264 COVID RENTAL ASST II EXPENSE be created with an appropriation of  
115 \$12,589,006.50.

116

117 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that unspent funds from 2021 be carried forward for  
118 expenditure in 2022.