

SARASOTA COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Homeless Services

TO: Thomas H. Harmer, County Administrator
THROUGH: Lee Ann Lowery, Assistant County Administrator
FROM: Wayne R. Applebee, Director of Homeless Services
DATE: July 2, 2014
SUBJECT: **Homeless Initiative - Board Report for July 8, 2014 Regular Meeting**

A. South County Families and Children Update

The approved Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Action Plan for FY2011-2015 allocates \$800,000 in FY2015 for the development of "South County Homeless Families Facilities". The action plan was originally authored in 2010 and included numerous representatives from the south county area who recognized the plight of homeless families. After completion of the Marbut report and the engagement of the Gulf Coast Community Foundation in the issue, the specific details for implementation are beginning to emerge.

In partnership discussions with staff from the cities of North Port and Venice, the initial pieces of the South County Homeless Families plan include the following components. As part of implementing this plan, agreements will need to be prepared and approved by a number of the agencies involved.

1. The North Port Family Service Center will serve as an intake portal for the North Port area.
 - a. The 24/7 portal will be remodeled to serve as an emergency shelter for up to two families for up to seven days.
 - b. The cost of remodeling is estimated at \$120,000 and is proposed to be paid equally by Gulf Coast Community Foundation and Sarasota County. County staff proposes to use a portion of the community housing fund (escheated lots fund) for this purpose.
 - c. Master case management for families will begin here and be provided by Catholic Charities.
2. An agency, not yet identified, will purchase, own and remodel up to five homes within walking distance of the North Port Family Service Center for use as supportive housing beyond the stay at the intake portal.
 - a. In supportive housing, families will receive a wide variety of treatment and wrap-around services, as established by the assessment administered by the master case managers. Some families may be able to enter supportive housing immediately if space is available and their case management assessment indicates they are ready.
 - b. Families would be expected to stay for two to six weeks.
 - c. The cost to purchase and remodel these homes is estimated at approximately \$100,000 each, and County staff proposes to utilize a portion of the CDBG funding of \$800,000 for this purpose.
3. Family Promise of South Sarasota County will purchase, own and remodel a building in the Venice/South Venice Area to serve as their day resource center, consistent with the national model requirements.
 - a. Family Promise of South Sarasota County has formed a Board of Directors and is being established as an affiliate of the national organization, Family Promise. The national model is

based on the commitment of local churches to host up to four families at the same time for a 13-week period, with the families moving between the churches during the program.

- i. During this time, the families live in and rotate among the host churches while receiving services that are individualized to meet the needs of the family and provided through the coordination of professional staff.
 - ii. In order to meet the needs of the family, each affiliate must identify a family day resource center. The day resource center provides professional office space; classrooms for education/job training/financial management, computer access for job searching, childcare, shower facilities, washer and dryer, and serves as the location for school bus pick up/drop off location for school-age children in the program.
 - iii. Due to utilizing existing church infrastructure for overnight accommodations, a limited number of families can participate at one time. They will serve 25 to 30 families annually, specifically in south Sarasota County.
 - iv. Currently, Family Promise of Sarasota operates in North County and is also a local non-profit which utilizes the same national model. Family Promise of Sarasota assists 25 to 30 families per year in north County, and has an 80% success rate after completion of their 13 week program.
4. Family Promise of South Sarasota County is currently located at 600 Sawgrass Bridge Road in Venice and is currently awaiting approval of its 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service. Gulf Coast Community Foundation is providing facilitated leadership and acting on their behalf as a fiscal agent until the application is approved.
 5. Following stays at the intake portal and associated housing, families would move to long-term supportive or stable rental housing where they would still have access to wraparound services for up to 12 to 18 months.
 6. Hotel vouchers will be available when emergency shelter is not available or supportive housing is full. Assistance with rent and utility deposits will also be available to move stable families to rental housing.
 7. Catholic Charities has made application to the County to fund program staff for the Family Intake Portal in North Port in the amount of \$56,896. The application is currently being considered by the Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC). The Family Promise model will not require new staff to be supported by Sarasota County, as their funding model is through churches and private donations.
 8. County staff along with the Office of Community Housing and Development and the Gulf Coast Community Foundation will be presenting the proposed plan to the City Commissions in Venice and North Port on July 22 and July 23, respectively. At the North Port meeting, Jon Thaxton and I will be supporting a lease agreement between the city and Catholic Charities for space at the North Port Family Service Center to provide the family intake portal.
 9. Based on feedback from the city commissions, the CDBG plan in FY2015 for south county will be revised and presented to the Board for approval on October 7, 2014.

B. North County Families and Children Update

In north Sarasota County, Harvest House has been identified as the lead agency to operate the family intake portal for homeless children and families. The selection of Harvest House allows the community to establish the North County family intake portal with no new infrastructure investment.

Harvest House has identified four single-family homes they own to be remodeled and dedicated to the family intake portal for emergency shelter and supportive housing. These homes are located at 2447

Mango Avenue in North Sarasota. One additional home is being converted to case management and staff offices to support the program.

Like the North Port portal, the stays for emergency shelter will be up to seven days with a capacity of up to six families after remodeling the 1,700 square foot home. The remaining three homes will provide supportive housing for up to five families, depending on the size. Wrap-around services, will be individualized based on each family's assessment. In addition, Harvest House continues to explore the purchase of additional homes on Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard. to provide additional supportive housing for families, all of these homes are within close proximity of their current services.

Harvest House has made application to the County to fund program staff for the Harvest House Family Village, the supportive housing component, in the amount of \$98,330. The application is currently being considered by HSAC. The operating costs for the family intake portal will be provided through private donations.

C. Site Selection Process Update – Come As You Are Shelter for Adults

At a joint meeting with the City of Sarasota on June 23, 2014, the Board directed the County Administrator to work with the City of Sarasota staff to search for shelter sites located in or out of the City of Sarasota leaving Dr. Robert Marbut's site criteria and recommendations in place and to schedule a joint meeting with the City of Sarasota Commission in September to consider a status report.

Cc: Marlon Brown, Assistant City Manager
Don Hadsell, Community Housing & Development
Lin Kurant, Real Estate Services
Jamie Carson, Sarasota County Communications
Members, Council of Governments