



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 23-4091, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED ARPA FIXED SITE SHELTER - ACQUISITION PROGRAM

Department: Planning and Development

Other Part(ies): Housing Forward, LLC and Oak Park Development Corporation, Oak Park, Illinois

Request: Respectfully request the Board of Commissioners approval of a \$6,500,000.00, 30-years, 0% permanent loan using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to acquire an existing hotel facility to create a fixed site, 55-person, non-congregant, permanent shelter facility.

Total Development Cost: \$14,264,873.00

Project Loan Amount: \$6,500,000.00

Fiscal Impact: \$6,500,000.00

Account(s): 11286.1013.66737.580170.00000.00000

Summary: Housing Forward, LLC and the Oak Park Development Corporation have requested \$6,500,000.00 in American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds for the acquisition of an existing hotel property in Oak Park, IL. The loan has a thirty-year term, 0% permanent loan rate and is fully forgivable at maturity. The loan will be used to acquire property for individuals experiencing homelessness and individuals in need of recuperative care services and housing. The acquisition and renovation of the Write Inn will provide Housing Forward with a permanent addition of 55 beds (units) to help close the gap and address the unmet need that has consistently been identified in the west Cook County region.

Housing Forward currently occupies this property and has been utilizing it for the subject intended use for more than two years. Housing Forward's strategic plan and corresponding strategic facilities plan both identify the need to add 80-85 new beds (units) in the West Suburban Cook County.

Housing Forward will provide temporary housing and necessary wrap-around services to unsheltered individuals and families as an equitable and dignified crisis response and a solution to resolving their homelessness. Through this location, Housing Forward will provide 24/7 temporary and private residential services and necessary supports to resolve the immediacy of their homelessness, begin the process of helping them to improve their health and mental wellness, and putting them on the path to permanent housing placement. The shelter will have no qualifications or referral requirement for service.

Uniquely, a component of the shelter houses the Cook County Hospitals and Health Systems' Rise Center, a Medical Respite Supportive Services facility, where recuperative services are provided to individuals that are either a patient or

referral of a Cook County Health facility or a patient of a healthcare facility located in suburban Cook or a residents of suburban Cook County referred from any healthcare facility.

Along with the base services of the Shelter, Respite patients will have among services:

- An Individual Service Plan (ISP) detailing goals to be accomplished by the participant and ongoing monthly assessment against goals.
- Housing needs assessment and services for post-discharge housing attainment
- Assistance with self-management of medical conditions
- Medical plan, 24/7 monitoring, Nursing and Medical Assistance
- Coordinated tele-health and in-person medical appointments.

Of note, this development structure represents a directional change in how the homeless are served in Suburban Cook County; the provision of fixed assets (buildings) with intensive service delivery on sight to advance individuals and families to stable housing and health. Prior to the Pandemic in 2020, sheltering was primarily provided in the Overnight Pads Model, which supplied shelter overnight in facilities provided by churches, synagogues and other private facilities. Shelter guests were required to vacate the facility during the day, locate and travel to the rotational shelter available for the next night. Operations relied heavily on volunteers with minimal permanent staffing. While the lack of physical assets to support the shelter operations on a full-time basis was identified prior to 2020, the pandemic proved out the shortcomings of this model as facilities and volunteers were inconsistently available early and non-existent as the pandemic worsened.

Housing Forward and the Oak Park Development Corporation will collaborate to acquire and redevelop the Write Inn, an existing residential hotel located at 211 N. Oak Park Avenue in downtown Oak Park. The property will become a permanent home for Housing Forward fixed site shelter and medical respite program serving persons experiencing homelessness.

Housing Forward has been advancing its mission to transition individuals and families from housing crisis to housing stability. Housing Forward believes housing is a basic human right and that individuals cannot achieve stability until they are housed first. Housing Forward's operations include programs that attempt to combat the various aspects of homelessness by providing housing (interim and permanent); medical respite; street outreach and diversion services; employment; prevention; and all encompassing "wraparound services" that begin with clients being assigned a case manager upon intake and culminating when permanent housing is found. Housing Forward serves nearly 2,700 men, women, and families annually with such individualized services focused on resolving homelessness and housing crises quickly and permanently.

Oak Park Residence, the development partner is a non-profit corporation organized around acquiring and maintaining residential properties in Oak Lawn for the purpose of reducing blight and preventing and eliminating racial and ethnic prejudice and discrimination. Oak Park Residence currently owns and manages 27 multifamily properties with 703 units within Oak Park, including family, elderly and special needs residency. The property management arm of the organization also manages properties for third parties including the Housing Authority of Oak Park. Oak Park is considered for the development and operational management of the property given their experience with comparable properties in Oak Park.