

**I.M. SULZBACHER CENTER FOR THE HOMELESS, INC. – HOMELESS DIVERSION PROGRAM**

**FY 2023-2024 City Grant Proposal Term Sheet**

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**Grant Recipient:** I.M. Sulzbacher Center for the Homeless, Inc. (“Sulzbacher” or “Recipient”)

**Program Name:** Homeless Diversion Program (the “Program”)

**City Funding Requests:** \$200,000

**Contract/Grant Term:** January 1, 2024 – September 30, 2024

**Any substantial change to this FY 2023-2024 City Grant Proposal Term Sheet (the “Term Sheet”) or a budget change not within 10% of the attached Program budget line-items will require City Council approval.**

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW:**

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness; “Diversion is an intervention designed to immediately address the needs of someone who has just lost their housing and become homeless. Diversion is a client-driven approach; its goal is to help the person or household find safe alternative housing immediately, rather than entering shelter or experiencing unsheltered homelessness. It is intended to ensure that the homelessness experience is as brief as possible, to prevent unsheltered homelessness, and to avert stays in shelter.” Homeless Diversion is a national best practice and a very impactful intervention to stop the flow of individuals into the shelter/homeless system when they are literally at its’ front door. The National Alliance to End Homelessness differentiates *Diversion* from *Homeless Prevention* and *Eviction Prevention* in the following way:

**DIVERSION**-Serves people who have lost housing and are facing **IMMINENT** entry into shelter or sleeping outside • Reduces number of entries to a system • Lowers demand for shelter beds • Shortens wait lists

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION**-Serves extremely vulnerable people who are about to lose their housing • Only effective when targeted to those most at risk of becoming homeless

**EVICTION PREVENTION**-• Serves low-income people who have received an eviction notice • Most recipients **DO NOT** face imminent risk of homelessness

Of these three interventions, Diversion has the greatest impact in stemming the flow of people into the homeless system. It is also the most cost effective. Based on numbers reported by [StrategiestoEndHomelessness.org](http://StrategiestoEndHomelessness.org), the average cost to house someone post-homelessness is **\$4,000**. But, by preventing a person from becoming homeless, the cost is reduced to about **\$1,600**. Shelter Diversion is the most cost-effective intervention available toward the goal of ending homelessness.

Jacksonville homeless continuum has wanted to establish a true Diversion program for some time. Unfortunately, Shelter Diversion is largely ineligible for federal funding. Therefore, local or private funding sources are required to run this critical program. Shelter beds for homeless women and families are always full in Jacksonville and there is usually a waiting list. Affordable housing is at a crisis level as well. The flexible funding provided with a true Diversion program creates far more creative opportunities to keep people out of the shelters and the system at large.

Sulzbacher has been doing a small pilot for the last year with private funding. The newly established COJ Homelessness Initiatives Special Revenue Fund grant will allow us to expand the program that we have been piloting. We plan to operate it on our main campus where the Urban Rest Stop is located. The Urban Rest Stop is a logical home for the Diversion Pilot as it is already the largest and most utilized center of services for the homeless population in the city. People are coming to receive a myriad of services, from health care, to job

training, to meals to all day resources such as showers, laundry, mail etc. It is staffed 7 days per week and is easily accessible through public transportation. There are also staff on site 5 days per week doing coordinated entry and connecting people to housing and benefits navigators. It is basically a one stop shop.

### **PROGRAM SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES:**

The Homelessness Initiatives Special Revenue Fund Diversion program will be accomplished through using a strength-based intensive intervention. This will include an interactive problem-solving conversation with the client and the staff which seeks to: understand what caused a person's housing crisis; explore what immediate solutions to the crisis may be possible; and help them pursue a solution(s). The idea is to immediately get the client into a safe housing alternative, which may be short- or longer-term. Some of these options may include: a negotiated return to their previous housing; short-term, non-shelter accommodation; apartments or homes, (including shared housing) or returns to family.

The Urban Rest Stop will be the single point of entry for the clients in the Diversion Program. Sulzbacher will accept referrals from other partner agencies, but those referrals must meet the eligibility criteria. That eligibility criteria is that the person or family must reside in Duval County and must have already lost their permanent housing and is currently staying with family or friends or about to lose the place where they stayed last night and is seeking entry into the shelter system. The clients will be entered into and tracked separately through the CoC Client Track Information System but will not be given a VISPDAT assessment or otherwise be entered into 'coordinated entry' otherwise known as the 'homeless system'. The purpose of a true Diversion program is to keep the client out of the 'homeless system'. This enables us to track them but not enter them into 'the system'. In order to operate the program Sulzbacher will:

- Target 100+ clients per year at a Diversion maximum cost of up to \$1,500 each household.
- Provide intensive and creative client centered problem-solving Case Management.
- Have one dedicated staff member who is the lead for this Program - all clients will go through him/her
- Adhere to very consistent and tight criteria to enter this Program in keeping with the criteria established in Section 111.270 of the City of Jacksonville Ordinance Code. This is not a homeless prevention or eviction prevention program.
- Measure outcomes and report back to the City Council Neighborhoods, Community Services, Public Health and Safety Committee quarterly (as Sulzbacher did with the MHOP pilot)
- Raise other public and private funding along with the City of Jacksonville for deposit in the City of Jacksonville Homelessness Special Revenue Fund.
- Identify and hire an experienced trainer to provide diversion training programs for any interested community agency.

### **PROGRAM COSTS/PAYMENT TERMS:**

- \$20,000 of the \$200,000 in City funding may be allocated towards a Diversion Case Manager to assist with housing placement, needed resources and housing stability (.5 FTE if capacity requires) only upon submittal of the appropriate budget change request documentation as required by the City and receipt of written approval of the allocation by the City. Sulzbacher will use an existing case manager as long as case load does not become too large. If City funds are not used for the Diversion Case Manager position, they shall be used for direct client services as outlined herein.
- \$180,000 for diversion assistance (hotel assistance, vehicle repairs, moving assistance, child-care assistance, security deposit, and utility deposit)

## **PROGRAM IMPACT & REPORTING:**

Program goals are to provide clients/families with diversion services to keep them from entering the Shelter/Homeless system. This will be accomplished through using a strength-based intensive intervention. This will include an interactive problem-solving conversation with the client, staff which seek to: understand what caused a person's housing crisis; explore what immediate solutions to the crisis may be possible; and help them pursue a solution(s). The idea is to immediately get the client into a safe housing alternative, which may be short- or longer-term. Some of these options may include: a negotiated return to their previous housing; short-term, non-shelter accommodation; apartments or homes, (including shared housing) or returns to family.

Reporting should include a summary of clients/families assisted identifying at a minimum the following:

- Demographics of clients/families
- Summary of each issue
- Summary of how each issue was addressed
- Did the client/family remained out of the Shelter/Homeless system
- Did the client/family remained stably housed
- Was the client/family connected to medical care
- Did the client/family increase their income

**Additional Grant Requirements and Restrictions:** Recipient's expenditure of City funds for the Program and the provision of services shall be subject to Chapter 118, Parts 1 through 5 of the *Jacksonville Ordinance Code*, and the terms and conditions of any contract entered into between the City and Recipient. Recipient shall use the City funds for the Program in accordance with the City Council approved Term Sheet and Program budget. The City's Grant Administrator may amend this Term Sheet and the approved Program budget consistent with the Program's needs, provided that any substantial change to this Term Sheet or a budget change not within 10% of the attached Program budget line-items will require City Council approval.