

# Funding Agreement with Sedgwick County for Housing First Program



Housing & Community  
Services Department

April 5, 2022



# Background



- In 2006, the City Council and the Sedgwick County Commission authorized the Task Force on Ending Chronic Homelessness.
- The Task Force held meetings and conducted research over an 18-month period, and presented its recommendation to both elected bodies in March of 2008.
- One of the Task Force recommendations was creation of the Housing First program, which was endorsed by the City Council and the Sedgwick County Commission.



# Housing First Program



- The rationale behind the Housing First program is to assist the chronically homeless to secure permanent housing first, and then provide case management services for them.
- The program is designed to provide permanent housing opportunities across the community, through rent and utilities subsidies.
- Program participants must meet with a case manager on a weekly basis, and comply with lease agreements.



# Housing First Program



- Rent and utilities subsidies are provided until such time as the participant can live independent of the assistance, or until some other housing arrangement is deemed to be more appropriate.
- Historically, Housing First program costs have been split between the City of Wichita and Sedgwick County, with the City administering the program pursuant to a funding agreement.



# Housing First Program



- Since the program began in March 2009, a total of 467 chronically homeless individuals have been placed in housing.
- As of December 31, 2021, 50 program participants were housed with assistance provided under the program. 15 of these program participants have remained in housing for over one year.
- A total of 239 program participants are considered to have successfully exited the program.



# Analysis



- Over the past several years, the number of chronically homeless individuals identified as having a physical disability has increased.
- Agencies referring clients to the Housing First Program do not provide case management services to persons with physical disabilities, preventing this population from being served.



# Analysis



- Last year, the City Council and the County Commission approved a change in the program funding structure to include a case manager. After several failed recruitments, COMCARE hired the case manager, who began work on March 28, 2022.
- The Housing First case manager will provide services to those clients who do not receive services from current partner agencies.
- Program clients will receive assistance with life skills, as well as referrals for other needed services.



# Analysis



- The Housing First case manager will also serve as a liaison between property management staff and program staff, proactively addressing problematic situations in order to minimize lease terminations.
- The proposed change will decrease the monthly reimbursements requested from Sedgwick County for rent assistance. However, it is anticipated that many Housing First participants will transition to the City's Housing Choice Voucher program, in order to receive continued rent subsidies.



# Financial Considerations



- There is no impact to the General Fund.
- The 2022 Adopted Budget includes rent and utilities assistance in the amount of \$382,736, with \$191,368 to be contributed from the General Fund and \$191,368 to be contributed by Sedgwick County.
- Of the \$191,368 to be contributed by Sedgwick County, up to \$59,404 will be used to fund the dedicated Housing First case manager, to be employed by COMCARE.



# Legal Considerations



- The Law Department has reviewed and approved the funding agreement as to form.



# Recommendation



- It is recommended that the City Council approve the funding agreement and authorize the necessary signatures.



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