


COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

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|  | Number: | 21-020 | Meeting: | January 11, 2021 |
| | Agenda Item: | 24 | Roll Call: | 21-26 |
| | Submitted by: | Chris Johansen, Neighborhood Services Department Director | | |

AGENDA HEADING:

Approve application to the U.S. Department of Treasury for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program.

SYNOPSIS:

The U.S. Department of Treasury has been authorized to implement an Emergency Rental Assistance Program, which makes available \$25 billion to assist households that are unable to pay rent and utilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The City of Des Moines is one (1) of three (3) eligible local governments in the State of Iowa for this funding, and this Council action authorizes submission of the City's Emergency Rental Assistance Program application.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: To be determined.

Funding Source: U.S. Department of Treasury

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Eligible grantees in the State of Iowa include Linn County, Polk County, and the City of Des Moines.
- The application and signed acceptance of award terms is due by the end of the day on January 12, 2021.
- Of awarded funds, 90% must be used for direct financial assistance, including rent, rental arrears, utilities and home energy costs, utilities and home energy costs arrears, and other expenses related to housing. Remaining funds are available for housing stability services, including case management and other services intended to keep households stably housed, and administrative costs.
- An "eligible household" is defined as a renter household in which at least one (1) or more individuals meets the following criteria:
 1. Qualifies for unemployment or has experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or experienced a financial hardship due to COVID-19.

2. Demonstrates a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability.
3. Has a household income at or below 80% of the area median.

- Eligible households may receive up to 12 months of assistance, plus an additional three (3) months if the City determines the extra months are needed to ensure housing stability.
- Rent arrears, households with an individual who has been unemployed for the 90 days prior to application for assistance, and households with income at or below 50% of the area median are to be prioritized for assistance.
- An application for rental assistance may be submitted by either an eligible household or by a landlord on behalf of that eligible household.
- Households will be directed to apply through IMPACT Community Action Agency, which already has policies, procedures, and a duplication of benefits system established regarding emergency housing assistance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S): NONE

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

Once the funding amount is known, there will be a future Council action to approve a subgrantee(s) to administer the rental assistance on behalf of the City.

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