



April 26, 2012

Simon Kiefer
Project Planner
Housing and Redevelopment
City of Santa Barbara
630 Garden Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: HOME TBRA for Homelessness Prevention

Dear Simon,

This letter is a follow up to our recent conversation regarding the use of HOME funds for tenant based rental assistance (TBRA) for clients who would be served through Transition House's Homelessness Prevention Program.

Transition House has offered homelessness prevention case management services coupled with emergency rental assistance for four years. Our program offerings also include free, onsite evening classes providing education for at-risk families in computer skills, career development, English as a Second Language, and parenting skills.

In 2009, Transition House was awarded funding through both a City of Santa Barbara collaborative and a county collaborative for homelessness prevention services. The three-year grants were part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing (HPRP) initiative. These HUD administered funds provide for case management and cash assistance. The City collaborative has been managed by Sue Gray.

The ARRA funds will end in August of 2012. Transition House believes that our homelessness prevention program has been of great benefit to the Santa Barbara community. We wish to continue providing this service after the ARRA funds have been exhausted. We realize that it is more cost effective, not to mention humane, to keep at-risk households in their homes, rather than have them lose everything and enter the homeless services system.

Transition House has recently received funding to support the salary of our case manager, as well as some administrative costs, through the Emergency Solutions

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Grant (ESG) program, a HUD source which seeks to continue funding homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing services. The funding levels available are significantly less than those provided through ARRA HPRP. Because of this, we request that the City of Santa Barbara consider allocating \$150,000 in HOME funds to Transition House's homelessness prevention program, to be used strictly for cash assistance (TBRA). These funds would be utilized beginning in September 2012. Over the course of the following 24 months, Transition House would seek to serve 135 households with prevention assistance.

Transition House's HPRP program has been governed by strict guidelines provided by HUD. Transition House would follow similar criteria in managing TBRA. Recipient households must make less than 30% AMI (as documented by pay stubs, tax returns, SSI letters of award, etc.); provide a pending eviction notice and a copy of their long-term lease on their apartment; and be paying a "reasonable" rent. Reasonable rent is determined by following HUD Fair Market Rent (FMR) guidelines for the Santa Barbara area, and by research done by the case manager on rents being charged for similar-sized apartments in like neighborhoods.

Clients who are given TBRA security deposit assistance to move into a new apartment will be required to have the apartment inspected. This was also a requirement of ARRA funding. The case manager is trained to conduct these inspections—they are quite similar to inspections that the Housing Authority conducts for section 8 voucher rental units. The case manager will then work with the landlord to correct any issues arising from the inspection before the client takes occupancy of the unit.

The household must be determined to be in imminent danger of becoming homeless if not for TBRA assistance. Transition House not only collects information on the household's financial disposition and whether they have other options or resources to help them pay rent, but also screens for additional factors that are used to determine high risk for homelessness. A listing of those factors is attached—the list contains both HUD suggested determiners, and additional factors we have observed in our 28 years working with homeless families. (The list includes factors for determining eligibility for rapid re-housing to determine "homeless" clients, and factors for at-risk households for homelessness prevention.)

Finally, it must be determined that the household will have the means to pay rent and sustain the housing after the assistance has ended. That means that the household will be able to gain an adequate income source (for example, they may be in the midst of a job search, or waiting for paperwork on an entitlement to be processed), or a lesser rent (they may be on the section 8 waiting list, or a waiting list for another program/housing that would result in a reduced rent).

Recipient households are usually required to participate in a minimum six months of case management. Each family's circumstances are different—case management addresses issues such as management of household finances, career development,

accessing entitlements, and life skills and sound decision making, all with the goal of sustaining housing.

Transition House utilizes a methodology that is required by HUD to determine client eligibility, and to administer the program. Annual audits have been performed both by HUD staff, and by City and County staff, of Transition House's case files including required documentation, compliance with program regulations, case management strategy, and data collection methods. We have consistently received positive feedback on our program. Transition House will continue to follow HUD requirements after ARRA ends.

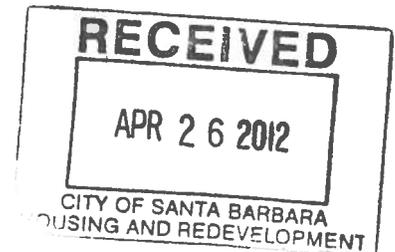
Please let me know any additional information you require at this time. Sue Gray could provide additional input on the quality of Transition House's program. Thank you for considering Transition House's request.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Baushke
Executive Director

enclosure



Criteria to meet HUD's Homeless Definition

- Sleeping in an emergency shelter
- Sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, abandoned building, streets/sidewalks
- Staying in a hospital or other institution for up to 180 days but was sleeping in an emergency shelter or other place not meant for human habitation (cars, parks, streets, etc.) immediately prior to entry into the hospital or institution
- Graduating from, or timing out of a transitional housing program
- Victims of domestic violence.

Additional risk factors for households facing eviction to *become* homeless; or barriers to returning to housing for already homeless households

- Mental health issues, or
- Substance abuse issues, or
- Physical disabilities and other chronic health issues, including HIV/AIDS
- Severe housing cost burden (greater than 50 percent of income for housing costs)
- Homeless in last 12 months
- Young head of household (under 25 with children or pregnant)
- Current or past involvement with child welfare (CWS), including foster care

- Extremely low income (less than 30 percent of Area Median Income)
- Sudden and significant loss of income
- Limited or no work history
- Lack of a high school diploma or skills-based education
- Lack of childcare
- Lack of transportation

- Eviction within 2 weeks from a private dwelling (including housing provided by family or
- Discharge within 2 weeks from an institution in which the person has been a resident for more than 180 days (including prisons, mental health institutions, hospitals)
- Residency in housing that has been condemned by housing officials and is no longer meant for human habitation
- Pending foreclosure of housing (rental or homeownership), or
- High overcrowding
- Sudden and significant increase in utility costs

- Past institutional care (prison, treatment facility, hospital)
- Recent traumatic life event, such as death of a spouse or primary care provider, abandonment of spouse or primary care provider, or recent health crisis that prevented the household from meeting its financial responsibilities
- Credit problems that preclude obtaining of housing
- Significant amount of debt.

- Criminal justice issues including head of household experiencing past arrest, probation, or felony conviction.

- Has not identified an appropriate subsequent housing plan
- Lacks financial resources and support networks to identify immediate housing or remain in existing housing.