



HOUSING

AUTHORITY OF THE
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April 7, 2010

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 CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
 PLANNING DIVISION

Mr. Brian Bosse, Housing & Redevelopment Manager
 Community Development Department
 City of Santa Barbara
 630 Garden St.
 Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: REQUEST FOR CITY HOME GRANT FOR THE OPERATION OF A TENANT
 BASED RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Dear Brian:

The Housing Authority continues to experience extremely high demand for its Housing Choice Voucher program (aka Section 8) from low income renters in Santa Barbara. As you know, the cost of housing relative to wages earned or income received by low income seniors, disabled and working families in Santa Barbara is very high. Adding to this demand factor for rental assistance is the community's effort to end homelessness—and ending homelessness requires housing at affordable rents.

Section 8 is the federal government's deep subsidy program for housing the poorest of the poor. We are proud of our success in administering a Section 8 program of 1,980 vouchers for the community. It alone brings over \$22 million in needed federal housing subsidies to the city each year. Unfortunately, demand for the program outstrips the available dollars...and with the community's desire for us to help end homelessness, we have been looking at other program models that get homeless persons and families off the street and into housing.

Our current waiting list for Section 8 has in excess of 2,800 households. It includes many senior and disabled households that are struggling to pay their rent (many pay rents in excess of 50% of their income) and are waiting patiently for a Section 8 Voucher. To the extent possible, we have been establishing and implementing certain preferences for eligible homeless persons and families to receive Section 8 assistance; but we must be careful not to do so to the exclusion of other needy households. This reality, coupled with being 100% leased-up in our current universe of 1,980 Section 8 Vouchers and a low turnover rate of only 10 Vouchers per month, has led us to the following conclusion/request:

We would like to establish and manage a HOME funded Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program targeted to eligible homeless individuals and families participating in or agreeing to a supportive services plan.

To this end, this letter requests a City grant of federal HOME dollars in the amount of \$200,000 for a two year period to run a TBRA program. This program, while targeting

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the chronic homeless, will, for all practical purposes, mirror the Housing Authority's Section 8 Voucher program. Under the program, we will qualify applicants, determine tenant share of rent, issue the HOME funded Vouchers to eligible applicants, inspect the units to be rented for housing quality, make monthly payments of the TBRA subsidy to participating landlords, and review income and continued eligibility of the participants on an annual basis. In doing so, we agree to absorb 100% of the administrative cost.

This program has the potential of housing approximately 18 chronically homeless persons per year—and if successful—can be easily expanded. We also hope to move certain participants from the HOME funded TBRA program to Section 8 or one of our other housing programs, or off of housing assistance all together should circumstances like employment, increased income result through self-sufficiency efforts. This will allow us to increase the number of folks who access the program.

Attached to this letter is a summary page of the proposed TBRA program that we have developed in conjunction with your staff. It provides an excellent outline of the program's parameters. It is a proven approach for using federal HOME dollars to address homelessness. It is been highly successful in other California communities, Sonoma County being one.

We hope that City staff and the Council agree that the proposed program is a worthy use of HOME dollars for it does help address what is perhaps the community's most perplexing and difficult social issue—homelessness. We look forward to your support of this request as well as the City Council's favorable consideration. Please let me know if you require any additional information from us to move this funding request forward.

Sincerely,

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE
CITY OF SANTA BARBARA



ROBERT G. PEARSON
Executive Director/CEO

cc: S. Szymanski, Deputy Executive Director
R. Fredericks, Deputy Executive Director
R. Lawrence, Finance Director
V. Loza, Housing Management Director