



## **Overview**

The Board is requested to approve the Housing for New Hope, Inc. selection as the recipient of the County's ARPA Nonprofit Grant Program Phase 3 – Homeless Services Grant Program award. The grant award will total up to \$2,000,000 with a period of performance ending September 30, 2026. The County Manager's Office will be working with Housing for New Hope during the next phase of the subgrant process to complete a risk assessment, finalize the Scope of Work and Program Budget for the grant award, before bringing a finalized subgrant award agreement for Board approval.

In recognition of the significant health and economic impacts of COVID-19 on the County's population of individuals experiencing homelessness, \$2,000,000 was included as part of the Board's strategic plan for administering the County's ARPA funding to provide a grant to an organization to support the provision of daytime services for individuals experiencing homelessness in Durham County. On May 2, 2024, the County published a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the ARPA Homeless Services Grant Program to solicit applications for grant awards to expand daytime services for individuals experiencing homelessness within Durham County.

At the time of the solicitation's closure on June 3, 2024, the County had received four eligible proposals that were subsequently evaluated and scored by a review panel using an approved evaluation rubric. Based on the panel's review, it was determined that the Housing for New Hope application was the highest-scoring application submitted in response to the RFP. As such, Housing for New Hope is recommended for selection by the Board as a grant recipient for the ARPA Homeless Services Grant program.

## **Background**

The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant negative economic impacts across all sectors of the Durham County community, with the most acute impacts felt by those community members already at the greatest risk. One of the most significant impacts was a decrease in housing security within the County, as supply chain difficulties and population growth during the pandemic period dramatically increased the cost of Fair Market Rent in Durham County to over \$1,300 per month. As a result, the County's population of individuals experiencing homelessness increased significantly from pre-pandemic levels in 2019. According to the Point-in-time (PIT) counts<sup>1</sup> completed from 2019 through 2023, the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Durham County has increased from 361 individuals in 2019 to 375 in 2023. The highest numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness were counted in between these years, with 396 individuals in 2021 and 459 in 2022, before decreasing slightly in 2023. Within the total population of individuals experiencing homelessness, the total number of individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness decreased from 280 individuals in 2019 to 217 individuals in 2023. However, this decrease in individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness is likely attributable to a 35%



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reduction in emergency shelter capacity within Durham County rather than an overall improvement in homelessness within the County. Correspondingly, the number of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness has almost doubled during the pandemic period, increasing from 80 individuals in 2019 to 158 in 2023.

As part of its framework for implementing the County’s ARPA funding, the Durham County Board of Commissioners approved several initiatives aimed at increasing the availability of affordable housing, including a \$13,500,000 partnership with the City of Durham to develop new affordable housing units and a \$1,500,000 investment to increase the use of land trusts for affordable housing in Durham County. To complement these efforts and provide services to those currently facing housing insecurity, the Board of County Commissioners approved the use of \$2,000,000 to fund grant awards to nonprofits to provide services to individuals experiencing homelessness. These efforts will help ensure that those individuals have access to essential support services to help those individuals towards exiting homelessness.

The County requested proposals for grants from organizations that have previous experience providing services to individuals experiencing homelessness in Durham County. Proposals could 1.) Expand Daytime Services for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness, 2.) Establish and Implement an Outreach and Engagement Strategy for Daytime Services for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness in Durham Count, or 3.) Provide *Additional Services or Activities as Appropriate*.

**Recommendation**

The County Manager recommends that the Board approve Housing for New Hope's selection as the recipient of the ARPA Homeless Services Grant Program and authorize the County Manager to develop and execute all documents required to enter into a grant agreement with the selected organization. Staff anticipates presenting a contract for Board review at the October 14, 2024 meeting.



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