

CITY OF OAKLAND
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

TO: Office of the City Manager
ATTN: Robert C. Bobb
FROM: Community and Economic Development Agency
DATE: April 24, 2001

RE: **RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT WITH DEBBIE GREIFF CONSULTING IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$65,000 TO FACILITATE THE CITY'S HOMELESS AND VERY LOW INCOME HOUSING TASK FORCE THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2001, AND APPROPRIATING \$40,000 FROM FY1999-00 MID-CYCLE GENERAL PURPOSE FUND SURPLUS AND REDIRECTING \$25,000 IN UNEXPENDED FY1999-00 HOMELESS PROGRAM FUNDS TO SUPPORT STAFFING COSTS OF THE TASK FORCE**

SUMMARY

A resolution has been prepared authorizing the execution of a professional services contract with Debbie Greiff Consulting to facilitate a task force dealing with issues facing the poor and homeless within the city of Oakland.

On July 25, 2000, the Oakland City Council approved a motion that Councilmembers Nadel and Reid work together to establish a Homeless and Very Low Income Housing Task Force (the Task Force) to address these issues. A motion was also made at that City Council meeting to allocate \$40,000 in General Fund dollars to support the staffing of the Task Force. These funds are being appropriated in this resolution.

There are also funds available in unexpended homeless program dollars in the amount of \$25,000 that are being redirected by this resolution to support the cost associated with adequate staffing of the Task Force.

FISCAL IMPACT

The City proposes enter into a professional services contract with Debbie Greiff Consulting in an amount not to exceed \$65,000 to provide facilitation and management of the task force effort. Forty thousand dollars is to be allocated from the FY1999-00 mid-cycle surplus, which was previously approved by motion from the City Council on July 25, 2000, for costs associated with the work of the task force. An additional \$25,000 is available from unexpended dollars from the FY1999/2000 Community Promotions Program for Service Organizations, Fund 1010, Project P80310, in the amount of \$18,612 and an additional \$6,388 available from unexpended dollars from the FY1999/2000 Emergency Shelter Grant, Fund 2999, Project G44460.

BACKGROUND

On June 29, 2000, Councilmembers Nadel and Reid chaired a meeting to discuss the creation of a Homeless and Very Low Income Housing Task Force. The focus of the Task Force would be to analyze and develop strategies for issues emerging from welfare reform, rising housing costs,

homelessness and the barriers that exist for homeless persons as they navigate their way back to independent living.

Despite significant federal funding, the problem of homelessness continues to persist. Over the past several years there has been an unprecedented surge in economic prosperity nationwide, and the Bay Area, with its concentration of high technology companies, has been in the forefront of this economic growth. However, those at the bottom of the economic ladder have not shared in this prosperity. Increases in the cost of living, especially the high cost of housing and, more recently in utilities, have not been matched by increases in income for a large segment of our population.

In the past few years, several new trends have arisen. These days, more and more working families, faced with low paying jobs and the high cost of living, have come to be at risk of homelessness. In addition, the passage of welfare reform legislation in 1996 brought a whole new population into the workforce, and factors such as time limits on benefits and the imposition of sanctions for non-compliance with work requirements have increased the incidence of homelessness. For these reasons, it becomes necessary to expand our concept of the Homeless Continuum of Care to recognize and include these new populations in our efforts to address the problem of homelessness.

In a recent agenda report on the impact of welfare reform on homelessness, it was recommended that the City of Oakland work closely with Alameda County to identify surplus welfare funds, and to apply these funds to the emerging problem of homelessness within the CalWORKS population. As a result, Councilmember Nancy Nadel and Larry Reid worked together to lay the groundwork for the formation of a Homeless and Very Low Income Housing Task Force.

The July 25, 2000, report to the City Council on the formation of this Task Force provided a detailed discussion on the formation, structure, intention and focus of the Task Force. As a reminder, the Task Force will discuss and develop strategies concerning the following objectives:

- To impact public awareness and perceptions about the poor and homeless so that a more complete profile replaces the narrower definitions and stereotypes that are currently pervasive.
- To create different strategies to fund housing, programs and projects that address the challenges faced by the citizens of Oakland who are economically and socially marginalized.
- To look more closely at the ways the City and the County interface so that coordination is a primary focus and function in how programs and assistance are delivered to the poor and homeless in Oakland.
- To create an agenda for Oakland as an activist city on issues faced by the economically and socially marginalized so that Oakland becomes a regional leader in modeling a city that is effective both in economic revitalization and in taking care of its poorest citizens.

KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS

The work of the Task Force will require a high level of support on both a routine administrative level and on various levels of professional expertise. CEDA is able to provide all routine administrative support needed with the current level of staffing. There are also highly qualified professional staff in CEDA, several of whom are recognized as experts in the area of very low income and homeless issues.

However, several factors argue for the necessity of including the consulting team proposed by Debbie Greiff Consulting (DGC). First, existing workload for staff is extremely heavy. Even so, staff is committed to bringing all of its expertise to foster the success of this Task Force and is excited about the possibilities inherent in its success. Staff worked closely with Councilmember Nadel to develop a scope of work for the Task Force effort. There are areas of expertise needed by the Task Force and not held by staff. Several consultants were interviewed, and DGC brings a unique combination of skills and experience to fill this gap.

Debbie Greiff, the principal, is a nationally known expert in the areas of the effective integration of affordable housing with services to promote housing stability; and of economic self-sufficiency and independence, while reducing social isolation. She has successfully lobbied for legislative changes on the state and national level, particularly in association with Corporation for Supportive Housing. She has a wide range of experience in facilitation involving community and system change efforts in the areas of housing, community and economic development, child care and youth development; program design, development and implementation for organizations, collaboratives and foundations; community and organizational strategic planning; qualitative program and organizational assessment and evaluation; fund development and financial management; and policy development and analysis.

DGC offers, in addition to Ms. Greiff's many strengths, a team of two other nationally known consultants, both of whom are also excellent facilitators and presenters.

Katharine Gale, formerly with the County of Alameda, worked in the collaborative effort with the City of Oakland and other Alameda County entities to formulate and implement the County-wide Homeless Continuum of Care Plan. Ms. Gale wrote that plan, which won a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Best Practices Award, recognizing it as the best in the country. She participated as a member of the steering committee for the development of the City of Oakland's Homeless Continuum of Care Plan, as well as participating as a member of the steering committee of the Oakland Homeless Plan. She brings an intimate and overall working knowledge of the interrelationships between Alameda County and the municipalities in the County, specifically Oakland, as well as a deep knowledge of the nonprofit community. She facilitated the planning process for HUD's SuperNOFA process for several years; that process resulted in significantly increased awards to the County as a whole and to Oakland in particular.

Alvan Quaminah is a nationally known lobbyist and activist. He has worked collaboratively to develop several national advertising campaigns focused on HIV/AIDS. He has first-hand knowledge of housing programs for the homeless, as the former executive director of a local nonprofit that provides transitional housing and support services, as well as services for persons with HIV/AIDS.

Because of the range of issues the Task Force will address, it is vital that appropriate expertise and experience be available to the Task Force. DGC brings precisely the mix that is needed. DGC is the sole source from which this particular blend of proficiency can be obtained. The consulting team will be responsible for facilitation of the full Task Force, as well as facilitation of the smaller working groups. They will also be responsible for research as needed by the Task

Force, organization and presentation of materials to the Task Force and a written report to summarize the work of the Task Force.

ENVIRONMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES

No environmental opportunities or impacts have been identified.

DISABILITY AND SENIOR ACCESS

The Homeless and Very Low Income Task Force will conduct public meetings in facilities that are accessible to seniors and persons with disabilities. In addition, the task force will solicit input from both the Commission on Persons with Disabilities and the Commission on Aging on matters affecting homeless and very low income populations.

RECOMMENDATION(S) AND RATIONALE

Staff recommends that the City Council support the work of the Homeless and Very Low Income Task Force by authorizing the proposed contract for DGC to facilitate and manage that process, as well as the appropriation and redirection of funding as discussed above.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

That the City Council approve the above noted resolution.

Respectfully submitted,

William E. Claggett
Agency Director

Prepared by:
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APPROVED AND FORWARDED
TO THE OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

Office of the City Manager