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*City of Norman, Oklahoma*

*Substantial Amendment Three  
to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)*

*2019 Action Plan*

*For public comment January 13, 2021 through January 20, 2021*

*City of Norman, Planning and Community Development*

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To date, The City of Norman has been allocated a total of \$1,273,256 through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (Community Development Block Grant- Corona Virus (CDBG-CV)) under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief & Economic Security Act (CARES) to assist with efforts to prepare, prevent and respond to the growing effects of this public health and economic crisis. President Trump signed this Public Law 116-136 on March 27, 2020 and immediately requested that grantees begin the process to assist and support the local pandemic response. The City of Norman has utilized community partners, stakeholders, private for-profit, non-profit sectors, local health authorities and citizens to survey needs affiliated with the pandemic. Although not every need can be addressed with these funds, the City of Norman along with our community service providers have developed a plan that prioritizes the unique needs of low-and moderate-income persons, and in addition, homeless individuals, being affected by the crisis.

The first allocation (CDBG-CV1) in the amount of \$535,688 was accepted and programmed by the Norman City Council during a Public Hearing held on May 12, 2021. The City of Norman identified the following needs: rental/utility assistance, delivered meal assistance, and assistance with housing start-up for homeless individuals. These funds have been programmed and are currently being administered. The rent/utility program has been fully expended with 192 households receiving assistance. As required by HUD, all Substantial Amendments of CARES funding is appropriated within the B19 (FYE20) Action Plan.

Policies, procedures, oversight and reporting remains a requirement for these federal funds. Federal regulations including income eligibility with supporting documentation applies to the use of these funds. Stakeholders assisting with the distribution of assistance using these funds must have policies, procedures and tracking systems in place to ensure prevention in the duplication of benefit to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse by ensuring the most vulnerable individuals and families receive services. Data collection and reporting of all beneficiaries is an essential part of the process to prove the need and to ensure compliance. Source documentation includes demographic information, income disclosure and/or documentation supporting circumstantial need. This funding is not an on-going assistance program. Alternative services and assistance is recommended for needs that exist beyond this funding award. An agreement between the City of Norman and the selected entities will ensure compliance.

The City of Norman will submit final substantial plan amendment, SF-424, SF-424D and the certifications at 24 CFR 91.225(a) and (b) or 24 CFR 91.325(a) and (b) to the Department of Housing and Urban Development after a 5-day comment period has expired and the public hearing is held. The comment period begins January 13, 2021 and expires on January 20, 2021. The public hearing will be held during the regularly scheduled city council meeting on January 26, 2021 at 6:30pm.

Funding was made available to address other needs under the CARES Act to assist health care, airlines, corporate and small businesses. Priorities were determined and based on need as well as access to other funding sources. CDBG-CV funds are not recommended to respond to groups that are addressed under other relief fund allocations or those that have access to resources specifically designated for those efforts. The City of Norman will utilize their CDBG-CV3 allocation to address the unserved or underserved needs identified by the community and stakeholders. It should be noted that the CDBG-CV1 and the CDBG-CV3 awards are a direct formula allocation to the City of Norman as a CDBG Entitlement Community. CDBG-CV-2 was awarded to the State of Oklahoma for disbursement. Once available, the

City of Norman will process an application for the CDBG-CV2 funds with the Oklahoma Department of Commerce.

The City of Norman identified the following needs: rental/utility assistance and efforts to address homelessness including street outreach to unsheltered individuals. The City recommends allocating the funds as follows:

## **Funding Recommendations**

### **Administration \$30,000**

The administration of the grant includes overall administration and compliance monitoring for the programs.

### **Rent Assistance \$401,418**

The City of Norman will provide a rent/utility assistance program for Norman households with annual income less than 80% of area median income that have been directly financially affected by the COVID-19 Crisis. Income verification will be documented as well as the household size, race/ethnicity of the household, and head of household. A duplication of benefits policy and procedure will be implemented to insure that appropriate assistance is being administered. Participants of the program will receive assistance no more than three months; current month and up to two months in arrears. This program change was requested by HUD to focus efforts on the prevention of evictions for past due rent.

### **Warming Shelter Rent \$27,000**

Funding included within the Emergency Solutions Grant-CR which was awarded to the City of Norman for the operation of an emergency warming shelter was not sufficient to cover the one-year lease for the structure.

### **Street Outreach Case Manager \$114,575**

Salary and benefits for one full time position to assist with connecting individuals experiencing homelessness to services in Cleveland County. The primary goal is to identify unsheltered individuals through direct street outreach activities and through community referrals from concerned citizens, local businesses, hospitals, law enforcement, and other social service agencies. This person will work to identify highly vulnerable people experiencing homelessness, administer assessment tools, facilitate placement into emergency shelter and make connections to social services and pathways to permanent housing. Funding includes in addition to two years of salary and benefits, required equipment and supplies. This position is fully funded thru FYE23 with the CDBG-CV program and will be advertised as a grant funded position for the period indicated, permanent employment is not guaranteed.

### **Homeless Housing Navigator \$114,575**

Salary and benefits for one full time position to provide service activities, community based case management, community based resource referrals and advocacy efforts for clients who are currently experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The Housing Navigator works closely with prospective property-owners and managers to promote permanent housing opportunities for homeless individuals and families. The Housing Navigator will accompany the Street Outreach Case Manager and other community outreach teams in an effort to help connect clients to emergency housing and/or permanent housing. Funding includes in addition to two years of salary and benefits, required equipment and supplies. This position is fully funded thru FYE23 with the CDBG-CV program and will be advertised as a grant funded position for the period indicated, permanent employment is not guaranteed.

**Encampment Cleanup \$50,000**

These funds will be utilized for the environmental cleanup of homeless encampments only after it has been determined that the location is unoccupied and numerous postings have been made to announce such action.