



# Pinellas County

## Staff Report

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File #: 22-0280A, Version: 1

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### **Subject:**

Resolution expanding and modifying the Pinellas County Emergency Rental Assistance Program to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic.

### **Recommended Action:**

Adopt a Resolution expanding and modifying the County Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic.

- The City of St. Petersburg (City) has requested the County expand the County ERAP to include income-eligible households located within St. Petersburg's geographical boundaries that are at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The County received \$21,421,218.80 and the City received \$8,012,455.90 of emergency rental assistance funds (ERA1) under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021.
- The County received \$24,395,835.40 and the City received \$6,339,881.40 of additional emergency rental assistance funds (ERA2) from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.
- The ERA1 and ERA2 funds may be used to assist households that are unable to pay rent and utilities to help prevent homelessness due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The County and the City closely coordinated and jointly implemented ERAP's on March 31, 2021, with both entering into separate agreements with Tetra Tech Inc. to provide emergency rental assistance program administration.
- While the City has expended all ERA1 funds and will expend all ERA2 funds on or before March 31, 2022, the County has expended all ERA1 funds and has a remaining balance of ERA2 funds available for ERAP.
- The approval of the Resolution will enable the County and the City to execute a MOU that specifies the roles and responsibilities of the two entities in to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic via the ERAP. The City has agreed to provide city staff for the review of all applications submitted by residents of the city at no cost to the County.
- Households that reside in hotels and motels are not currently eligible for the County ERA program.
- The U.S. Treasury Department Guidelines permit ERA2 funds to be used for other expenses related to housing including hotel and motel expenses.
- Approval of the Resolution authorizes changes to the ERAP to assist eligible individuals and families residing in hotels and motels.

### **Strategic Plan:**

Ensure Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

2.1 Provide planning, coordination, prevention, and protective services to ensure a safe and secure community.

## Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality

### 4.2 Invest in communities that need the most

## Deliver First Class Services to the Public and Our Customers

### 5.1 Maximize partner relationships and public outreach

#### **Summary:**

The County received \$21,421,218.80 and the City received \$8,012,455.90 of ERA1 funds under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021.

The County received \$24,395,835.40 and the City received \$6,339,881.40 of additional ERA2 funds from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

The ERA1 and ERA2 funds may be used to assist households that are unable to pay rent and utilities to help prevent homelessness due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The County and the City closely coordinated and implemented their ERAPs on March 31, 2021, with both entering into separate agreements with Tetra Tech Inc. to provide emergency rental assistance program administration.

While the City has expended all ERA1 funds and will expend all ERA2 funds on or before March 31, 2022, the County has expended all ERA1 funds and has a remaining balance of ERA2 funds available for ERAP.

The City has requested the County expand the County ERAP to include income-eligible households located within the City of St. Petersburg's geographical boundaries of Pinellas County that are at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The approval of the Resolution will enable the County and the City to execute a MOU that specifies the roles and responsibilities of the two entities in to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic via the ERAP. The City has agreed to provide city staff for the review of all applications submitted by residents of the city at no cost to the County.

Households that reside in hotels and motels are not currently eligible for the County ERA program. The U.S. Treasury Department Guidelines permit ERA2 funds to be used for other expenses related to housing including hotel and motel expenses.

#### **Background Information:**

On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization announced COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic. The Board of County Commissioners (Board) unanimously approved a local state of emergency on March 13, 2020.

On December 27, 2020, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, was enacted to, among other things, provide ERA to households impacted by COVID-19. The ERAP made available \$25.0B to assist households that were unable to pay rent and utilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds were provided directly to States, U.S. Territories, local governments, and Indian tribes. Local

governments with more than 200,000 residents were eligible to receive direct payments.

On January 26, 2021, the Board adopted Resolution No. 21-8 to approve the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 program framework.

On June 8, 2021 the County ratified acceptance of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal stimulus funds for ERA and authorization for County Administrator to accept the Fiscal Recovery Funds and other ARPA funds that may be available at a later date.

The County and the City received ERA1 funds under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 and additional ERA2 funds from the ARPA of 2021 to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic.

**Fiscal Impact:**

This resolution will cause no additional costs to the County. The City has agreed to provide city staff for the review of all applications submitted by residents of the city at no cost to the County.

**Staff Member Responsible:**

Carol Stricklin, Director, Housing and Community Development

**Partners:**

The City of St. Petersburg

**Attachments:**

Resolution

Request from the City of St. Petersburg

Memorandum of Understanding between Pinellas County and the City of St. Petersburg

Emergency Rental Assistance Program Policies and Procedures