



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR

April 15, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager

Submitted by: Peter Radu, Assistant to the City Manager

Subject: Contract: University of California, San Francisco for Encampment Resolution
Funding Research EvaluationRECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contract and any necessary amendments with The Regents of the University of California, on behalf of its San Francisco campus, to evaluate the success of its Encampment Resolution Funding Round 3 (ERF-3), for a term of two years (January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2026) and in an amount not to exceed \$200,000.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Adopting this resolution will result in an expenditure contract with The Regents of the University of California, on behalf of its San Francisco campus, for a total amount not to exceed \$200,000. Funding for this contract will be paid using the City's existing ERF-3 grant from the State of California, and will be appropriated as part of the Second Annual Appropriations Ordinance for Fiscal Year 2025.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

On November 19, 2024, the City Council approved the Homeless Response Team's plans to master lease the Howard Johnson motel on University Avenue ("Capri motel") for use as a low-barrier, noncongregate shelter, and to target those 26 rooms to people living in the 2nd/Cedar Street encampments, which staff were directed by Council on September 10, 2024 to prioritize for closure. The funding source for this project is \$5.4M in ERF-3 funding from a grant from the State of California, the receipt of which was also approved by Council at the November 19, 2024 meeting. Staff in Neighborhood Services and HHCS partnered closely with Dorothy Day House to quickly open this shelter on January 15, 2025. At the time of submission of this report (March 13, 2025), 42 people had been moved indoors from the 2nd St/Cedar St encampments (including 35 into the Capri motel), essentially vacating the entire encampment; staff are slowly working to clean the unwanted belongings and debris left behind. A huge part of the success of this encampment resolution has been the use of \$150,000 in ERF-3 funding to pilot an RV Buy Back program, coupling a cash offer for RVs being used as shelter in exchange for the RV occupant moving into interim housing. So far, of the 21 vehicles offered this

opportunity, the occupants of all but one of them agreed to the funding and have moved into interim housing.

Prior to submission of the ERF-3 grant application to the State, staff secured a partnership with UCSF Benioff Homeless and Housing Initiative to perform a scientifically-rigorous research evaluation of the Homeless Response Team's use of the grant to resolve these encampments. Specifically, the evaluation seeks to address the following questions:

1. Do those offered non-congregate shelter accept the intervention? What are the characteristics of those who accept? What reasons do they provide for accepting the intervention? What strategies enhance acceptance? What are the characteristics of those who do not accept the intervention? What are the reasons they provide for why they turned down the intervention?
2. For oversized vehicle residents, what are the characteristics of those who accept the RV buy-back program? What reasons do they provide for accepting the buy-back? What strategies enhance acceptance? What are the characteristics of those who do not accept the buy-back? What are the reasons they provide for why they turned down the intervention?
3. For those who accepted non-congregate shelter, what are their opinions regarding their housing situation? What impact has the intervention had on other aspects of their lives? For those who did not accept non-congregate shelter, where have they stayed since leaving the encampment? How has leaving the encampment affected other aspects of their lives?

Given the short expenditure timelines for the grant imposed by the State, the City opened the Capri Motel (aka Howard Johnson) shelter program and began resolving the 2nd St encampment in January 2025. However, UCSF researchers agreed to begin working on the evaluation in early January 2025 when the funds were first put into use by the City, before a contract could be negotiated. Therefore, staff are requesting that the contract start date be back-dated out of necessity, to reimburse UCSF for time already committed to the project.

Since UCSF is the only organization of its kind performing this type of research, and given the Council Budget and Finance Policy Committee's vote in support of the plan to partner with them at their January 25, 2024 meeting, staff will be waiving competitive solicitation for the award of this contract.

Resolving encampments through the use of evidence-based interim housing and other services aligns with the City of Berkeley's strategic plan priorities.

BACKGROUND

On November 27, 2023, the State of California's Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) released a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Encampment Resolution Funding Program, Round 3, Rolling Application (ERF-3-R), a \$400M statewide competitive grant opportunity to fund local demonstration projects that assist people living in encampments to safe, low-barrier, and stable housing pathways. The ERF program is intended to fund actionable, person-centered local proposals that resolve the experience of unsheltered homelessness for people residing in encampments, necessarily also addressing the safety and wellness of people within encampments, resolving critical encampment concerns, and transitioning individuals into interim shelter with clear pathways to permanent housing or directly into permanent housing, using data-informed, non-punitive, low-barrier, person-centered, Housing First, and coordinated approaches.

On January 25, 2024, City staff presented a plan, including the proposed priority encampment and a request for local Measure P match funding, to the Budget and Finance Policy Committee of the Council. This plan included a commitment to work with UCSF to research and evaluate the success of the City's use of ERF-3 dollars. The Committee voted to approve staff's application. Staff successfully completed and submitted the application on January 31, 2024. The City's application was initially declined by the State on April 22, 2024 but staff addressed the State's feedback, resubmitted the grant, and were awarded the full amount on September 27, 2024. Council approved the receipt of the grant on November 19, 2024.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

Helping unhoused people currently living in West Berkeley transition into interim and permanent housing placement will minimize the detrimental environmental impacts associated with encampment homelessness over the long run, including vector and fire hazards, accumulation of trash and waste, and impacts on sensitive waterways. It will also reduce the impact of these environmental elements on the health and safety of people with no shelter.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

With their vote of support at their January 25, 2024, meeting, the Budget and Finance Policy Committee approved the partnership with UCSF for this evaluation. The Homeless Response Team is committed to following evidence-based best practices in the provision of interim and permanent housing to resolve encampments, yet encampment resolution—as a local government activity increasingly becoming necessary across the United States—remains an essentially un-studied intervention from a research perspective. With the research findings emerging from this partnership, Berkeley will once again be on the leading edge of disseminating best practices for humanely resolving encampments.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

CONTACT PERSON

Josh Jacobs, Homeless Services Coordinator, 510 225-8035

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT WITH THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, ON BEHALF OF ITS SAN FRANCISCO CAMPUS, TO PERFORM ENCAMPMENT RESOLUTION EVALUATION RESEARCH FOR A TOTAL CONTRACT AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$200,000 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2025 TO DECEMBER 31, 2026.

WHEREAS, on November 27, 2023, the State of California released a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Encampment Resolution Funding Round 3 (ERF-3-R) Program, a Statewide, competitive \$400M funding opportunity to further the State's understanding of best practices to compassionately resolve encampments by assisting their residents into safe and stable pathways to housing; and

WHEREAS, on January 25, 2024, the Budget and Finance Policy Committee of the City Council unanimously voted to approve city staff's grant application including a proposed research partnership with UCSF for the purposes of evaluating this encampment resolution effort; and

WHEREAS, on November 19, 2024, the City Council approved the acceptance of \$5.4M in ERF-3-R funding from the State as well as a contract with Dorothy Day House to operate the Howard Johnson motel as noncongregate interim housing; and

WHEREAS, the City Council directed staff to prioritize the closure of the encampments on 2nd and Cedar Streets in Northwest Berkeley at their September 10, 2024 regular meeting; and

WHEREAS, on January 15, 2025, the City and Dorothy Day House opened the Howard Johnson motel as noncongregate interim housing for individuals currently residing in the 2nd/Cedar encampments, to effectuate Council's direction to resolve those encampments; and

WHEREAS, the University of California, San Francisco's Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative will partner with the City to perform evaluative research on this program, to better advance knowledge and best practices on effectively and compassionately ending encampment homelessness.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley authorizes the City Manager to enter into a contract and all necessary amendments for the period January 1, 2025 TO December 31, 2026, with The Regents of the University of California, on behalf of its San Francisco campus, to perform encampment resolution evaluation research; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the contract amount will not exceed \$200,000 with funding to be paid from the Encampment Resolution Fund Round 3 (ERF-3) grant already received by the City. A recorded signature copy of said contract and any amendments will be on file in the City Clerk Department.