



## AGENDA ITEM NO.

### CITY OF HAWTHORNE CITY COUNCIL AGENDA BILL

For the meeting of July 27, 2021  
Originating Department: Housing

Interim City Manager: Vontray Norris Director of Housing: K  
Vontray Norris Kimberly Mack

---

**SUBJECT:**

Housing Department Report

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:**

Staff recommends the City Council receive and file information.

**DISCUSSION:****Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAG)**

The Emergency Rental Assistance Grant Program continues to provide rental assistance to Hawthorne residents and is in no way tied to the State or County's Eviction Moratorium. The program is open until all funds are exhausted or the City Council repurposes them. As of July 16, 2021, the City has received 405 applications, assisted 91 individuals and families and paid \$288,918.37 in assistance directly to owners. There is close to \$1.4 million available for use from CDBG-CV funds in the amount of \$298,081.63 and \$1.1 million from HOME funds. The program offers up to \$1,000 in monthly rental assistance for a maximum of six (6) consecutive months. The table below offers a detailed view of application status:

**ERAG Status**

Completed (Paid):	91
Denied (Sent):	110
Denials Pending:	4
Pending Payment:	23

Pending Docs:	164
Withdrawals:	6
New (to be reviewed):	7
<b>Total files received</b>	<b>405</b>

### **Current Challenges:**

The program challenges continue to be data collection, staffing and competition from similar programs that offer more financial assistance. Additionally, the stress and frustration that tenants and owners feel with the ever-changing expiration dates of the Eviction Moratorium increases phone calls for status checks.

### **Future Partnerships**

The ERAG program is a great resource for some, however, with the amount of debt accrued for others and the limited max payments the City can offer, it is beneficial to Hawthorne residents also apply for the state's Housing is Key Rental Assistance Program. The goal is to make tenants and residents whole while reducing the time it will take both to recover from the pandemic. The Housing Department will collaborate with the Fair Housing Foundation Rent Relief Team to bring a workshop to the City where both programs will be highlight and applications accepted on a date to be determined in August.

### **Emergency Business Program (EBA)**

The Emergency Business Assistance Program assisting small business and Microenterprises was approved by the City Council on April 27, 2021. Microenterprises may be eligible to receive a grant of up to \$10,000. Qualified small businesses may receive a grant of up to \$25,000. The program funding availability is \$380,000 and applications will be accepted on a first come first served basis.

Request for staffing for this project was made in March, 2021 and has yet to be provided. The program will launch when there is staff in place to administer it.

### **Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV)**

On May 25, 2021, staff introduced the Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV's) to the City Council through award notification from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, at which time the City Council approved and accepted 66 vouchers. On June 22, 2021, the City Council acknowledged and approved a final award of 67 vouchers and receipt of HUD funding to administer the program.

As a reminder, these vouchers are very restrictive and were created to assist individuals and families who are (1) homeless, (2) at risk of homelessness, (3) fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, or (4) recently homeless.

The first major requirement and deadline is the execution of the Memorandum of Understanding with the locally approved Continuum of Care provider. That MOU comes before you tonight as a separate agenda item and due by July 31, 2021.

### **Commercial Façade Implementation**

On March 27, 2021, the City Council approved the 2021-2022 Action Plan for its federally funded Community Development Block Grant and HOME programs. Including a Commercial Façade Improvement Program, which may be the catalyst to spark revitalization and economic recovery in the City.

The proposed commercial rehabilitation program will identify and target local businesses fronting major thoroughfares in economically disadvantaged portions of the City that are in disrepair, have ongoing code violations, or simply do not have the resources and expertise to perform façade improvements. Essential outcomes of the Program is to facilitate commercial revitalization; stimulate private investment; preserve and beautify the City's commercial corridors; and generate shopping, dining and a pleasant walking environment.

### **Budget**

The city has approved \$1,291,093 to administer and issue grants to eligible participating businesses for 2021-2022 fiscal year. Staff will be partnering with LDM and associates, Inc to bring this project to life.

### **Quality Design**

A major component of the program will be the focus on high quality design. Eligible program participants will utilize the services of contracted architects or design consultants paid for through the programs allocated funding. Policy contained in the program will mandate design review and approval through the Planning Commission and community input will be a priority through public notices and public hearings.

### **Anticipated Outcome**

As previously stated, the successful implementation of the commercial façade improvement program will lead to:

- An increase in sales immediately after the improvements are made,
- Sales improvements that are sustained for several years,
- Increases in local tax revenue,
- Improvements to other businesses or storefronts,
- Attraction of new businesses and shoppers to Hawthorne Blvd, and

- Program participants being motivated to make additional improvements (such as to interior spaces or product lines).
- Economic recovery from the devastation caused by COVID-19

Hawthorne will be distinguished from other cities through architectural excellence, interesting and inviting storefronts and our “good neighbors.” Whether one enters the City of Hawthorne from the north, south, east or west to conduct business, grab a bite to eat, shop or gather with friends; Hawthorne will be an attractive, active and engaging experience in the heart of the South Bay!

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

None

**NOTICING PROCEDURES:**

72 hours posted notice pursuant to the Ralph M. Brown Act.

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

1. Executive Summary of Commercial Façade Improvement Program
2. Targeted Economically Distressed Areas Map