

May 13, 2021

Item No. 9.1.

Unlimited Potential Facility Support

Sponsor: Debbie Eller, Director of Community Services

Reviewed By CBC: City Council

Agenda Caption: Presentation, discussion, and possible action regarding a request for financial support from Unlimited Potential to purchase and rehabilitate the property at 1115 Anderson to be utilized as a facility that would provide supportive services to young adults who have aged out of the foster care system, to include mentoring, life skills development, and transitional housing.

Relationship to Strategic Goals:

Core Services & Infrastructure

Recommendation(s): Staff recommends that Council receive a presentation regarding a request for funding from Unlimited Potential and provide direction on moving forward with a loan application.

Summary: The mission of Unlimited Potential is to support former foster youth to become independent, successful adults through position relationships, individualized support and education, and connection with community resources. The vision is a future in which foster youth are empowered to reach their full potential.

Unlimited Potential (UP) began in 2014 under the Court Appointed Special Advocate program, serving both current and former foster youth ages 16 - 24. UP received its non-profit status in May of 2018 and narrowed its focus to serve only former foster youth ages 18 - 25. Originally envisioned strictly as a mentoring program has quickly grown in to much more. Services provided to young adults include, but not limited to, case management, life skills education, direct response, counseling, transportation, and access to housing.

Each year 1,500 Texas youth leave the foster care system after they turn 18. Often without any support from family or friends, former foster youth are on their own to navigate independence and adulthood. Statistics show that after reaching the age of 18:

- 20% of the youth will become homeless
- Only 1 out of 2 will have some form of gainful employment by the age of 24
- 7 out of 10 girls will become pregnant by the age of 21
- 30% of all Texas foster youth leave foster care with a diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Less than a 3% chance these young adults will earn a college degree
- Within 2 years of aging out of the system, 25% will become involved with the criminal justice system

No other local program is dedicated to former foster youth facing these daunting numbers. By helping with housing, offering important life skills, education, and providing a stable, positive, adult mentor, UP can mitigate the problems that plague foster youth.

This facility would bring all of these efforts under one roof. UP staff would be on-site to provide daily

support. Space is available for training and meeting rooms so that youth can attend not only one-on-one mentoring and support, but group education programs on subjects such as financial stability, nutrition, GED, and life skills. The former nursing home would be completely renovated, and some of the individual rooms would be transformed in to small apartments. This would provide a transitional housing space while the youth gain the skills needed to become self-sufficient and move on to a more permanent housing situation.

Brazos Valley Council Of Governments - Brazos Valley Community Development Corporation has agreed to provide a bridge loan of approximately \$1.4 million dollars to allow for the acquisition of the property. Unlimited Potential is asking the City of College Station to provide a loan of up to \$2.4 million for property acquisition and renovation expenses through the Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program.

The Section 108 is a loan guarantee provision of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. It provides CDBG grantees with a source of financing for economic development, housing rehabilitation, public facilities, and other large-scale physical development projects.

Council will consider providing direction to staff to work with Unlimited Potential in preparing a full application to be considered for approval by Council and then for submission to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for a Section 108 loan to facilitate this project. Application preparation will include full project information, form of assistance, organization arrangements, financial underwriting, construction estimates and timeline, and documentation of compliance with federal program requirements.

Budget & Financial Summary: N/A

Attachments:

None