



Office of the Mayor

CONSENT CALENDAR
July 12, 2022

To: Honorable Members of the City Council

From: Mayor Jesse Arreguín (Author), Councilmember Rigel Robinson (Co-Sponsor), and Councilmember Sophie Hahn (Co-Sponsor)

Subject: Joining the House America Initiative

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution joining House America, an initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness to form partnerships with state, tribal and local governments to rehouse people experiencing homelessness.

BACKGROUND

Homelessness continues to be a major crisis across the United States, with an estimated 580,000 people experiencing homelessness on a single night in 2020. This crisis is especially acute on the West Coast, with California being home around 160,000 unhoused individuals. In the 2022 Point in Time Count, Berkeley's homeless population was 1,057, a decrease of 5% compared to the 2019 count. While this downward trend is a positive sign of the City's investment in lifting people out of homelessness and preventing displacement, significant work remains in addressing chronic homelessness. Countywide, homelessness continues to be on the rise, albeit at a slower rate compared to previous years.

In September 2021, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) launched House America. This initiative calls on state, tribal, and local leaders to partner with HUD and USICH to use resources from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), in addition to other resources, to re-house 100,000 households experiencing homelessness through a Housing First approach and to add to the development pipeline 20,000 units of affordable housing by December 31, 2022. Governor Gavin Newsom has signed up California to join this initiative, in addition to Mayors of multiple California cities including Oakland, San Francisco, and San Jose.

ARPA continues to provide significant support to local communities as they recover from the economic fallout caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the \$66.6 million the City of Berkeley directly received in ARPA funds, nationally it provides 70,000 emergency housing vouchers, \$5 billion in HOME grants. In addition to providing financial stability to local governments, ARPA is also designed to address homelessness and housing instability, promoting a Housing First approach. ARPA, in

combination with local and regional support received through the passage of Measures O, P, and A1, can make inroads in developing deeply affordable housing and providing the resources needed to lift people out of homelessness.

Joining House America will give Berkeley access to support from HUD and USICH through technical assistance, tools, regular communication, data support, and peer-to-peer learning. This will enable Berkeley to maximize the efficiency of its robust homeless programs and accelerate our ability to rehouse and provide vital services to those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no costs associated with joining the House America initiative. Joining House America could expand opportunities to provide further financial assistance from the federal government to assist in housing and homeless programs.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no identifiable environmental effects or opportunities associated with the subject of this report.

CONTACT PERSON

Mayor Jesse Arreguín 510-981-7100

Attachments:

1: Resolution

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

JOINING HOUSE AMERICA

WHEREAS, homelessness is a national crisis, with an estimated 580,000 people throughout the country experiencing homelessness on any given night in 2020; and

WHEREAS, as of February 2022, 1,057 people experience homelessness in Berkeley, a decrease of 5% from three years ago, but a sign that the successful efforts to rehouse and prevent homelessness need to expand to escalate these trends; and

WHEREAS, addressing homelessness and creating affordable housing has consistently been listed as a top priority by Berkeley residents for the City to address; and

WHEREAS, in January 2016, the City Council passed a Resolution declaring a homeless shelter crisis, which authorized a wide variety of options and tools to address the crisis; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley has taken a Housing First approach to homelessness, which prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the American Rescue Plan Act provides 70,000 emergency housing vouchers, \$5 billion in HOME grants nationwide, and has provided Berkeley with \$66.6 million in direct funds; and

WHEREAS, in September 2021, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the US Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) launched House America, with the goal of re-housing 100,000 Americans and adding 20,000 units of affordable housing in the development pipeline by the end of 2022; and

WHEREAS, House America partners local, regional, and state governments with HUD and USICH to provide technical assistance, tools, regular communication, data support, and peer-to-peer learning in addressing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, partnering with HUD and USICH on the House America initiative will put Berkeley in a position to more effectively address the homeless crisis.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that it hereby joins the House America Initiative and pledges to respond with urgency to contribute towards the goals of this initiative by rehousing homeless individuals and expanding our stock of affordable housing.

