



October 20, 2020

Economic Stabilization Task Force
City and Bureau of Juneau (CBJ)
155 S. Seward Street
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Updated CARES Act funding request

Dear Task Force,

Tlingit Haida Regional Housing Authority (THRHA) is requesting COVID-19 funding from the CBJ for renovations to the property located at 9290 Hurlock in order for it to be used to house homeless youth unable to find safe shelter during this pandemic. As you know, THRHA is working with the CBJ and Alaska Legacy Partners to transfer ownership of this property back to the CBJ to be operated by THRHA under a long term lease to provide housing for youth in need of transitional housing. However, given the current increasing COVID numbers and the cold weather, this shelter needs to open as soon as possible and before year end. Our conditional use permit was approved at the October 13th CBJ Planning Commission meeting and we have included their required provisions in our proposal.

Juneau has been without an emergency youth shelter for the past year. In and of itself this presents many safety issues for youth; however, these issues have been exacerbated by the global pandemic we find ourselves living in. Access to safe emergency shelter for youth is now more critical than ever. Many homeless youths hopping from place to place, staying with friends and strangers who may put them in unsafe situations, and bartering with their lives for a place to stay. The pandemic has made this type of “couch surfing” considerably less safe and many previously safe places to stay are no longer willing to let a youth crash on their couch due to social distancing needs. Because of this, we are already seeing an increase in teens using adult shelter spaces that are simply not safe or appropriate for them. We anticipate this need increasing as the social and economic impacts of the pandemic continue to hit our community. According to reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, youth experiencing homelessness have a higher risk of being in a gang, using heroin, feeling depressed, attempting suicide, or experiencing trauma and violence than their housed counterparts.

There is no official census that has been conducted to determine the total number of runaway and homeless youth (RHY) in Juneau. The Juneau School District has consistently reported between 100-150 identified homeless students for the past several school years. A recent change in the McKinney Vento definitions lowered this number in the 2019-2020 school year to 85. This number is a known dramatic undercount of the RHY population in school. The school numbers also do not take into account youth who have dropped out or been expelled. We know the ratio of RHY in this population to be significantly higher than for those attending school, due to the social and economic hardships associated with high-school dropouts. Zach Gordon Youth Center (ZGYC) provides outreach and navigation support to homeless teens and averages 40-60 teens annually, many of whom are not in school, again, we expect this number to rise in light of the economic impacts of the pandemic. During the period of June 1 – October 1, 2020 the outreach staff at ZGYC has seen six times the number of youth over last year, with 25 youth under the age of 20 who were homeless or at immediate risk of homelessness. By contrast, in 2019 for the same period, staff were working with four youth who fit this category. This pandemic is having an immediate and real impact on Juneau’s youth.

Our target population for the shelter includes RHY ages 10 to 18. Currently, RHY spend time at ZGYC for meals and support, but most couch surf. The primary goal of the shelter is to provide RHY with immediate access to shelter and comprehensive services to maximize their safety, well-being, self-sufficiency, and adult permanent connections. Our shelter services will include emergency shelter, food, clothing for up to 21 days, counseling and support services, referrals, and aftercare—all within a Culturally Responsive, Trauma Informed, and Positive Youth Development framework.

Each youth will receive an initial health and safety screening and assessment, an individualized plan of care, counseling, and support services. We will actively engage parents and legal guardians, and provide family mediation to facilitate re-unification. Youth will receive educational and employment supports, skill development in areas such as basic living skills, anger management/positive communications, and substance abuse education. Youth will also receive referrals for behavioral health treatment as needed. The ZGYC drop-in center, which is already a popular place for RHY youth to spend time, will provide critical support pre and post discharge as well as serve as a place of intake.

In order to provide the above services in a safe environment during this pandemic, updates to the building will include remodeling bedrooms to be single occupancy spaces in order to meet social distancing needs. Staff offices and youth congregate areas will be designed for social distancing needs as well. The building needs some repair work before it can be occupied. There is rot that needs to be repaired, and the roof ultimately needs to be replaced. The cost of replacing the roof and trusses on only the main building is \$500,000. There are plumbing and electrical repairs needed, and the bathroom and kitchen need to be converted to ADA accessible. The budget for the renovation is \$910,580.

We have already applied for and received a HUD CARES Act grant for part of the renovations that must be expended by 6/30/21. We have applied to the Alaska Community Foundation (ACF) for funding and are awaiting their decision. The ACF funds cannot be used for the roof replacement. The operations will be funded by the HUD Youth Homeless Demonstration Program grant. We plan to be operating and housing youth by the end of the year.

Project Funding Summary:

Reimburse Alaska Legacy Partners	\$165,000
Renovations	\$910,580
HUD CARES Act grant received	\$150,000
Funds remaining to be secured	\$925,580

THRHA is committed to the housing needs of Juneau and the outlying communities in Southeast and believes this proposal is a step in the right direction not only for the Hurlock property but for CBJ to address the needs of our homeless youth during this pandemic. Please feel free to reach out directly to me at jpata@thrha.org or 202-277-9146 with questions or concerns. We look forward to the CBJ's response.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Pata
President/CEO
Tlingit Haida Regional Housing Authority