
Homeless Services Advisory Committee

Community Capacity Building Subcommittee

Date: January 18, 2023

Item: Beacon for Him Mayor's Fund Application

Staff Analysis:

Homeless Services Bureau staff have reviewed the Mayor's Fund proposal submitted by Beacon for Him, on November 16, 2022, by Malissa Christoffersen, Secretary of the Board of Directors.

Beacon for Him is a non-profit organization, founded in 2013, and starting in the City of Long Beach in 2014. They are located at 439 Anaheim Blvd. and are currently part of the Monday Matters Coalition that provides outreach at MacArthur Park- Anaheim Orange Corridor from 10 am until noon. They partner with other organizations, including the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, to provide hygiene and sanitation services, and meals (i.e., mobile showers and lunch).

What makes them different than other non-profits in the area is their focus on families and the family-like support structure they build with clients to create long-term changes. Most safe places for large families without housing are full or often separate families due to age or gender. Mothers are not allowed to stay with teenage boys, and fathers often cannot remain with their wives and kids. Beacon for Him will often step in and provide short-term hotel funds to these families to help find a better long-term solution. They focus on what people need emotionally through mentorship and by providing a safe place to eat, play games, and do art together. This environment gives people hope, dignity, and a new family. They also provide food, clothing, monetary assistance for items like prescription glasses, new tires, housing deposits, groceries, gas, and laundry.

Their initial proposal for funding included support costs for Monday Matters. However, after a discussion between the sub-committee and staff, staff sent an email requesting to expand the scope of reach outside the concentration of resources in the MacArthur Park area. Beacon for Him responded, and a revised proposal was provided.

The revised line-item budget of \$10,000 will cover a family in need each week in a temporary shelter via hotel stays (\$5,000) and (\$5,000) in family expenses that can cover the cost of food, clothing, and other needed items mentioned in the previous paragraph. They have requested advance payment, \$5,000 of which can be advanced.

Although Beacon for Him's proposal fits the intent of the Mayor's Fund to End Homelessness as it provides shelter services for homeless individuals, staff does have concerns with the state of connection services to housing.

The City of Long Beach is aware of the current need for immediate temporary shelter for families that this organization would provide. However, without case-management, it cannot ensure that people and families served are connected to the overall system for housing resources, as disconnected resources are likely not going to lead to successful permanent housing outcomes

As of January 31, 2023, the Mayor's Fund has a balance of \$119,845.86, with \$77,846.00 available after outstanding funding awards.

City staff requested additional clarification from Beacon for Him, which is included below.

Clarifying Questions via E-mail on January 13th:**Funding for MacArthur Park to be excluded?**

Yes, I understand the concern about more funding going to the Monday Matters in MacArthur Park. We can avoid any funding given to us by the Mayor's fund to be used for supplies for the park outreach. Currently, our funding is primarily spent on helping families with hotel stays and other supplies they need.

Please explain the program services provided. (ex. What does the mentoring consist of?)

We build relationships with the people we meet and work with. As a group, we connect with them throughout the week through text messages or phone calls. We have many volunteers with various backgrounds that meet people who are struggling and offer to mentor them similarly to an AA sponsorship with someone who has gone through similar struggles. Each person we meet has different needs and sometimes this is a long-term relational connection and other times it is for a short time until they get to a stable place to help them with what they need.

What are the connection services given?

The services we provide concerning funding are listed in my first application. None of our volunteers or board members are paid for anything. We use our funds to help individuals and families with essential items. We pay for hotel stays while people are transitioning to other shelters and housing. This is our largest expense. We are a small non-profit with mainly support from individuals and churches in the Long Beach area. We get hygiene supplies, clothes, food, and other items donated to us that we distribute throughout the Long Beach area. We connect people to shelters and other rehab locations and will transport them there. We help with transporting people to different appointments like DMV or doctor appointments.

What is your current budget for move-in costs, what have you purchased in the past?

When families move into a new place after experiencing homelessness, they often have nothing to move in with. We step in and get all the essential items to live in a house. We take them to a furniture store like Bob's Discount Furniture and we pick items out together. We then take them to a place like Walmart to provide them with normal household items. The furniture we buy consists of beds, mattresses, refrigerators, couches, dressers, and tables. For household items, we get bedding, kitchen supplies like pots, utensils, dishes, cleaning supplies, and bathroom supplies like towels, bathmats, and shower curtains. We take them shopping and have them help pick out what they want. We believe they deserve dignity and want them to have the items they will feel most at home with. We have three board members

who discuss each case to determine the budget and what type of items we are willing to provide. We take each case under consideration and evaluate our current funds. The size of the family is a huge factor in the amount we spend. We try to provide all essential items in a house for around three thousand dollars for a four-person family. We do not put a maximum amount per family since we vote on what is needed with the board members.

How do the families get selected for hotel stays?

Many people are referred to us through different nonprofits, the Multi-Service Center, and meeting people during outreach. We evaluate and attempt all other housing options available in the area if shelter beds are available or other programs. If all other options are unavailable or in a waiting period, we approve a hotel stay. The board members approved the stay by stating the need and what the situation is. We have a group text chat to confirm the approval of a hotel stay. We focus mainly on families who are unable to stay somewhere safe. We believe kids should not be in cars or in tents outside.

How do families get selected for expenses?

All expenses over \$200 are decided by our board members. We discuss the need and situation. We do everything we can for each case we are given. Rarely have we said no to families who need help. As long as we have the funds to help, we help them. We also work with other nonprofits and individuals to collaborate if we are unable to provide all that is needed. I hope this clarifies all your questions. Thank you for considering supporting Beacon For Him.

An additional call and email were placed to the organization to provide a revised line-item budget. Below was the response

Thank you for reminding me of the money allocation split. I believe it would be best if I do \$5,000 on family expenses and the other \$5,000 on hotel expenses.

Website: <https://www.beaconforhim.org/>