



County of Santa Cruz⁰²⁷⁷

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

701 OCEAN STREET, ROOM 510, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4000

(631) 454-2280 FAX: (831) 454-3420 TDD: (831) 454-2123

TOM BURNS, AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR

November 21, 2000

Agenda: December 5, 2000

Board of Directors
County of Santa Cruz Redevelopment Agency
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

APPROVAL OF TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FOR EMANCIPATED FOSTER YOUTH ON REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY PROPERTY

Dear Members of the Board:

The 1999-2000 Santa Cruz Grand Jury Report recommended addressing the needs of the County's foster children who "age out" of child welfare and foster care services at age 18. The Santa Cruz County Human Resources Agency (HRA), the Community Counseling Center (SCCCC) and the Redevelopment Agency (RDA) together have developed a proposal for a pilot transitional housing program for young adults aged 18-21 within a house currently owned by the Agency. The purpose of this letter is to request approval from your Board to provide support for such a program.

Background

State funding currently ends when a foster child reaches the age of 18. Children who have enjoyed some parental supervision and assistance are suddenly without any economic support. In Santa Cruz County, approximately 20 young people per year leave foster care and struggle to maintain educational or employment goals. Services applied during the period directly after foster care may determine whether these young people become an asset or liability to society. Studies indicate that almost 80% are not capable of being self-supporting, two thirds of the women have been pregnant, half do not complete high school, half are unemployed, and one-fourth become homeless. Clearly, skilled intervention at this early stage of life could prevent substantially higher social costs later.

Description of Housing Resource

RDA, HRA, and staff from the SCCC have met in recent months to craft an interim initial program to address this need using HRA program funding, Redevelopment Agency housing assistance, and SCCC program administration capabilities. The suggested plan is to utilize a four bedroom house and small one-bedroom apartment owned by the Agency

(on Chanticleer Avenue) as a transitional housing opportunity for 18-21 year olds aging out of foster care. The large house would be used for the clients and the on-site counselor would be housed in the apartment. The units are now empty and ready to accept program residents. SCCCC, which has successfully partnered with the Agency on numerous other projects, would provide support and property management services.

The proposed program recommends that the Agency subsidize the housing by foregoing market rent on both housing units and accept instead half the previous rent revenue. The total annual subsidy by the Agency will be about \$13,500, which would be provided out of the Agency's Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund. If it proves successful, this program would continue until the Agency proceeds with constructing a park on the site, at which time alternative program facilities will have been developed. At this time it is estimated that the site would be available for approximately five years.

Additional funding will be required to operate the program. In another item on this agenda, your Board, as the Board of Supervisors, is considering a report from HRA on the operational components of the transitional housing program and related financing.

In addition to this proposed interim program, HRA and SCCCC and RDA staff will continue to explore additional opportunities for expanding this program in the future. At that time, staff will bring further recommendations to your Board for consideration.

Conclusion

The proposed interim program for emancipated foster youth addresses an important need in the community. The Agency's Chanticleer property provides a unique opportunity to explore a pilot program with minimal public subsidy.

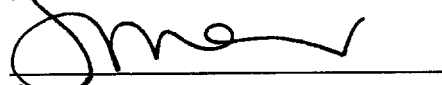
It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board approve the use of housing at the RDA's Chanticleer site for use as transitional housing for emancipated foster youth with the rent subsidy described in this letter and authorize the RDA Administrator to take necessary actions to implement that program.

Very truly yours,



Tom Burns
Redevelopment Agency Administrator

RECOMMENDED:



Susan A. Mauriello
Redevelopment Agency Director

cc. RDA, HRA