



MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Board of Finance
FROM: Bridget Fox, Chief of Staff to Mayor Simmons
DATE: September 9, 2024
RE: \$600K Warming Shelters Request from ARPA funds

Background

In FY2024, the Board of Finance approved the allocation of \$225,000 at the September 14, 2023, meeting to support warming shelters for homeless individuals primarily sleeping at the Stamford Transportation Center. The FY24 allocation came from ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the homeless population in Stamford, and specifically at the Stamford Transportation Center, increased. On an average winter night in 2022 and 2023, 40 people were sleeping at the train station (please see data from CT Department of Transportation (CT DOT) below).

Throughout the winters of 2022 and 2023, residents and downtown employers contacted the Mayor's Office regularly to report concerns about the homeless population at the train station and inquired about plans to reduce the population and ensure a safe environment for commuters.

In 2023, the Mayor's Office convened key partners including the CT Department of Transportation, Pacific House, Inspirica, New Covenant Center, and The Salvation Army to develop a plan to address this situation. Pacific House and Inspirica, the city's men's and women's homeless shelters, were at full capacity and could not take care of additional individuals.

It was determined that additional space was needed to accommodate the increasing homeless population – both men and women – across the city. We determined that utilizing ARPA funding to create an additional warming center aligned with ARPA guidelines and addressed an immediate need the city faced. Pacific House was granted a sub-award and worked with nonprofit partners to implement the plan, which included the Salvation Army opening its doors at 198 Selleck Street as a warming shelter operated by Pacific House that provided 15 additional beds. Inspirica was able to accommodate more women and New Covenant Center provided breakfast and additional meals onsite. Thanks to the support from the Board of Finance and Board of Representatives, the city was able to open the additional space to accommodate homeless individuals beginning on December 15th, 2023. The following chart provides an overview of the program's participants:



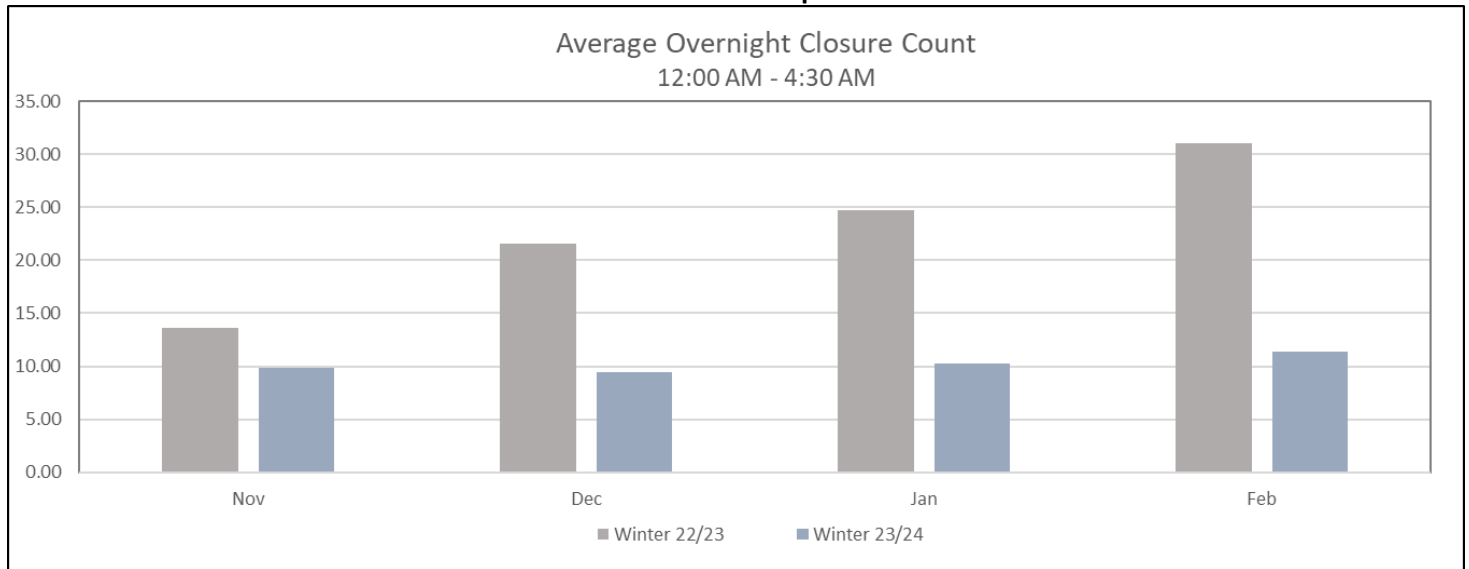
2023-2024 City of Stamford Warming Shelter Program - Service Period: December 15, 2023-March 31, 2024

Organization	Number of Clients	Notes
Warming Shelter Program (Salvation Army/ Pacific House)*	119	53% of men served came from the train station (63 out of 119) 41% of men from train station were transitioned from a cot to a regular shelter bed (26 out of 63 men)
Inspirica	39	100% women participants
TOTAL	158	

Last winter, the warming shelter program operated daily from 7:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.

As demonstrated in the data presented below the CT Department of Transportation, last year’s plan substantially reduced the number of homeless individuals using the train station as a primary location to sleep overnight.

CT DOT DATA – Stamford Transportation Center*



Month	Winter 22/23	Winter 23/24	% Change	Overnight Shelter 23/24
Nov	13.57	9.86	-27.37%	15.57
Dec	21.57	9.43	-56.29%	9.43
Jan	24.71	10.29	-58.38%	5.71
Feb	31.00	11.43	-63.13%	4.29

*data was collected and provided by CT DOT to track the number of homeless individuals



Funding Request - \$600k to be spent over two years

The city is requesting \$600,000 in funding to support two years of operations for the additional warming center that last year successfully addressed the homeless population at the train station and alleviated homelessness across the city. We are requesting that the funding come from the recent \$2 million ARPA grant awarded from the State to the City in June 2024. This funding cannot be used for capital expenses and must be committed by December 2024 and spent by December 2026.

Please see the attached proposed budget from Pacific House that reflects the use of the funds.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>FY25 Amount</u>	<u>FY26 Amount</u>	<u>Total</u>
Pacific House location	Henry Street	\$165,000	\$165,000	\$330,000
Inspirica location	Franklin Street	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$40,000
Salvation Army location	Selleck Street	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$50,000
Wellness	Wrap around services (access to mobile showers, hygiene kit, etc.)	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$150,000
Breakfast services	New Covenant Center	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$30,000
TOTAL		\$300,000	\$300,000	\$600,000

- \$300,000 = annual budget
- Estimated Capacity = 40
- Nights available = 7
- # of weeks = 18

\$59.52 program cost per night/ participant

Relevant data points National Institute of Health and HUD

- \$3,000/ night ER hospital stay
- \$50/ night cost of a night of incarceration
- \$75 - \$100 estimated Stamford motel night stay
- \$2,000 - \$3,000/night inpatient behavior health services

Why ARPA Funds? Why not use CDBG funding?

The increase in homelessness in Stamford, across the state, and around the country is not subsiding. The rise in homelessness is a direct result of the pandemic, which is why we are requesting the utilization of ARPA funding to address this issue. ARPA funding aligns with the need to address recovery and relief for pandemic-related issues.

Stamford’s CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) annual funding allocation is approximately \$1 million. Of the \$956K that the city can allocate after accounting for administrative costs, only \$145K can be allocated for public service use per the grant’s guidelines. For context, this year the city already has \$675K in requests for the \$145K available in



funding. Due to the competitive nature of this grant and its limited uses, CDBG is not a viable funding option to support the warming shelters.

Conclusion

The need for increased capacity for warming shelters is ongoing and amplified by the continued shortage of affordable housing. Therefore, the administration believes it is appropriate for the city to provide funds to partner agencies to support the operation of expanded warming shelters. We hope that members of the Board of Finance agree. Should the Board determine that it is more appropriate to utilize surplus or operating funds, the administration will submit the request that way. Given the timing of this request and cold weather months approaching, we ask that the Board provide guidance on how best to address this need. The administration can again request an increase in outside agency funding in the FY2025 budget to support Pacific House, but we will need to address this winter's capacity in the meantime.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions. I look forward to seeing you at the Thursday, September 12 Board of Finance meeting.