



## Program and Evaluation Committee Report

May 1, 2006

ACTION:     X    

DISCUSSION: \_\_\_\_\_

### **TITLE: EMERGENCY HOMELESS FAMILY SHELTERS**

#### **BACKGROUND**

In the summer of 2004, the Community Emergency Homeless Family Shelter Task Force was formed, made up of housing advocates and nonprofit homeless service providers, to raise funds to keep two emergency homeless family shelters open for a two-year period. The co-chairs of the Task Force were the Contra Costa Interfaith Council and Shelter Inc.

The Commission assisted their effort in August 2004 when it approved a challenge grant up to \$335,000, which started October 2004 and ended June 2005. The Commission provided a two-dollar match for every dollar raised by the Task Force and went into contract with Shelter Inc., the agency operating the two shelters. Funding was allocated from the Commission's Special Reserve Fund.

Within ten weeks, Shelter Inc. and the Task Force raised the money needed to keep the shelters open through June 2005 with contributions pouring in from individuals, corporations, and foundations.

In July 2005, the Task Force began its second fundraising campaign to keep the shelters open for another year. The Commission provided another challenge grant up to \$335,000. Because the Commission was funding the shelters for a full fiscal year, the match was changed to a one-to-one match.

In September 2005, the Commission approved allocating its challenge grant up to \$335,000 for the emergency homeless family shelters for another two years through 2008.

To date, the two shelters have served 104 families, providing shelter and meals along with job training, medical care, counseling services, school enrollment, tutoring, and other needed services to help families get on their feet. 72% of the families served have had children five and younger.

During the last year, membership on the Emergency Family Shelter Task Force has waned and Shelter Inc.'s staff has conducted the majority of fundraising. In February 2006, Shelter Inc.'s Board determined that the fundraising effort was draining staff resources and time and

taking away from other services provided. They directed Shelter Inc. development staff to cease fundraising on the shelters at the end of this fiscal year. Since then, Shelter Inc. has closed the family shelter in North Concord, which served six families at a time. The Martinez shelter, which serves seven families at a time, will remain open through June 2006.

Commission staff met in March with the director of the county's homeless services department, the director of the Interfaith Council, a representative from Greater Richmond interfaith Program and a representative from Shelter Inc. to better understand the larger issues surrounding homeless families. All parties agreed that the situation requires a two-pronged approach addressing the short-term need to keep at least one family shelter open as well as the longer term issue of planning and sustainability for homeless services throughout the county.

The Contra Costa Board of Supervisors, at its April 11 meeting, agreed to form a "scoping group to assess the long-term needs of the homeless population, how to sustain programs that serve the population, researching best practices for governance and assessing the impact of homelessness on local resources."

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Given the County's interest in supporting ongoing discussion of sustainability for homeless programs, PEC agreed to recommend supporting Shelter Inc. for another year up to 70% of the total expense for operating the remaining shelter.

PEC recommends that the Commission:

**Authorize staff to negotiate a contract with Shelter Inc. for the 2006-07 fiscal year to support no more than 70% of total expenses for one year of operation of the Martinez shelter, up to a total contract dollar amount of \$231,000.**