

August 4, 2020

Dear Mayor Liccardo and Councilmembers,

The Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB) is pleased to submit the following recommendations for new Emergency Solutions Grants Program (ESG) funding awarded under the CARES Act. This additional ESG funding provides an opportunity not only to respond to a pandemic that is a severe threat to San José's unhoused residents, but to enhance the services available to meet those residents' basic needs. The LEAB generally supports the staff proposal for use of this funding. The specific recommendations below reflect the LEAB's priorities to meet basic needs of people who are unsheltered and to center and value people with lived experience within the homeless system of care workforce.

- **Storage** – The LEAB supports the creation of a storage program to serve people who are unhoused and unsheltered people in the City of San José. Storage should be secure, easily accessible, and located near where people are living.
- **Peer outreach and mentorship** – Lived experience is an essential component of effective outreach strategies. The LEAB recommends that the City expand outreach capacity with a focus on hiring people with lived experience of homelessness. To ensure that this approach becomes standard across the City's outreach, the LEAB recommends building clear expectations and benchmarks into outreach contracts that prioritize hiring people with lived experience.
- **Create pathways to professional advancement** – People with lived experience of homelessness hold expertise that is uniquely valuable within the homeless system of care. As outreach and housing programs expand, the LEAB recommends that the City intentionally build pathways to sustainable, living-wage employment for people with lived experience that offer opportunities for professional advancement in the areas of case management, program management, and system leadership.

The LEAB thanks City of San José Housing Department staff who sought input from people with lived experience as they explored options for CARES Act ESG funds. Along with the above recommendations, the LEAB urges the City of San José to continue, and to expand, the involvement of people who are currently or formerly unhoused in funding decisions, including program selection, planning, and implementation. The LEAB appreciates the opportunity to submit the above recommendations and looks forward to providing input for future funding opportunities.

Sincerely,

The Members of the Lived Experience Advisory Board