



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Housing and Community Development
Liz Breadon, Chair

One City Hall Square 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02201 ♦ Phone: (617) 635-3040 ♦ city.council@boston.gov

REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

November 15, 2024

Dear Councilors,

The Committee on Housing and Community Development was referred the following dockets for consideration:

Docket #1542, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Million Three Hundred Forty-Nine Thousand Five Hundred Thirty-One Dollars and Twenty-Four Cents (\$1,349,531.24) in the form of a grant, for the FFY24 Shelter & Service Program Competitive (SSP-C) grant, awarded by the United States Department of Homeland Security, passed through Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), to be administered by the Mayor's Office of Housing. The grant will fund the increase of capacity to shelter non-citizen migrants recently released from DHS custody, including renovations and modifications to existing facilities.

Docket #1544, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Nine Hundred Ninety-Nine Thousand Eight Hundred Ninety-Six Dollars (\$999,896.00) in the form of a grant, for the FFY24 Shelter & Services Program Allocated (SSP-A) grant, awarded by the United States Department of Homeland Security, passed through the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), to be administered by the Mayor's Office of Housing. The grant will fund the increase of capacity to shelter non-citizen migrants recently released from DHS custody, including renovations and modifications to existing facilities.

These matters were sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu and referred to the Committee on October 23, 2024.

Summary of Legislation

Dockets #1542 and #1544 are orders authorizing the acceptance and expenditure of two federal grants awarded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), passed through the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and to be administered by the Mayor's Office of Housing (MOH) of the City of Boston.

The grants are for the federal fiscal year 2024 (FFY24) DHS Shelter and Service Program (SSP) in a combined amount of \$2,349,427.24. Docket #1542 represents the grant amount awarded through a competitive process (SSP-C), while Docket #1544 is an allocation to recipients determined by formula (SSP-A). The grants support additional capacity for sheltering non-citizen migrants recently released from DHS custody. This may include funds for renovations and modifications to existing facilities.



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Information Received

Due to scheduling limitations on the City Council calendar, the Committee could not hold a hearing on these dockets before the end of the 2024 municipal year. In lieu of a public hearing, the Chair requested written communication from the department expending the grant funds. The Chair received a memorandum dated October 30, 2024, from Sheila Dillon, Chief of Housing and Director of the Mayor's Office of Housing (MOH). Under the grant program rules, according to the memorandum, the SSP funds can be used for eligible costs incurred between October 1, 2023 and September 30, 2026.

Chief Dillon reported that MOH coordinated with the state EOHLC in applying for SSP-A and SSP-C funding in April and July of 2024, respectively, with EOHLC as the primary applicant and MOH as a subgrantee. EOHLC was notified by DHS of the SSP-A award in July 2024 and of the SSP-C award in August 2024, and subsequently issued grant award letters addressed to the Mayor, dated September 4, 2024, from the Chief Financial Officer for the Executive Office for Administration and Finance (A&F) of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Congress, through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, directed that the Shelter and Services Program (SSP) be administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in partnership with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). SSP supports non-federal entities to provide sheltering and related activities to noncitizen migrants following their release from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The intent is to support CBP in the safe, orderly, and humane release of non-citizen migrants from short-term holding facilities.

According to Chief Dillon, the SSP funds totaling \$2,349,427.24 will be used in two main areas:

- \$335,183.60 (nearly 15%) for two full-time equivalent (FTE) Emergency Shelter Migrant Liaison/Assistant Coordinators at the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC); and
- \$2,014,243.64 (over 85%) to support up to 80 emergency shelter beds for recent arrivals at the Boston Rescue Mission (BRM) in Downtown Boston.

The two BPHC positions provide intake, assessment, and service planning around income maximization and housing, to rapidly match individuals with opportunities while navigating the immigration system. The BPHC staff may also provide peripheral support such as referrals to health care, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, job training, community integration, legal services, money management, and other activities as needed.

BRM funding will support shelter direct care staff, food, operations, maintenance, and utilities, onward/final destination travel for inhabitants, and bathroom renovations to make it safe and sanitary. Since October 2023, BRM has provided shelter and basic needs to recent arrivals, as well as housing search and employment assistance. Since the start of the program, several individuals have successfully transitioned into permanent housing and secured employment.



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Chief Dillon's memorandum further informed the Chair that, once approved by the City Council, MOH and EOHLC will enter into agreements governing the use and disbursement of SSP-A and SSP-C grant funds. MOH will then enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with BPHC regarding the funding for BPHC activities and will amend an existing agreement with the Boston Rescue Mission to incorporate SSP funding.

Committee Chair Recommended Action

As Chair of the Committee on Housing and Community Development, I recommend moving the listed dockets from the Committee to the full Council for discussion and formal action. At that time, my recommendation to the full Council will be that the matters **OUGHT TO PASS**.

Liz Breadon, Chair
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