

SONJA K. BERNDT
Pasadena, CA 91107

RECEIVED
2026 JUN 15 AM 8:00
CITY CLERK
CITY OF PASADENA

June 14, 2026

Mayor Victor Gordo
Members of the Pasadena City Council
By Email
correspondence@cityofpasadena.net

Re: City Council Meeting 6/15/2026 Agenda #9: Approval of the Annual Action Plan (2026) and Related Funding Applications for the Community Development Block Grant, Home Investment Partnership Act, And Emergency Solutions Federal Grant Programs

Dear Members of the City Council:

This agenda item came before the Housing, Homelessness, and Planning Committee on June 3, 2026, and engendered extended discussion amongst committee members. Attached to this letter as Attachment 1 is the letter and exhibits I submitted to the HHP Committee for that agenda item. It expresses the many concerns I have with the proposed Annual Action Plan. As discussed therein, the chronic underfunding of homelessness programs with federal grants is well documented. Instead, year after year, the City has used the bulk of those grants for infrastructure and community projects unrelated to our homelessness crisis. This is due in large part because staff has failed to recommend more than trivial federal grant funds for our unhoused residents, and particularly our unsheltered residents.

Committee members were frustrated that staff recommended no funding for a year-round shelter, even though this was one of the Council's expressed priorities for funding in FY2027. Committee members were also frustrated that the recommended Action Plan was brought to them at "the eleventh hour" such that changing staff's recommendations to provide federal grant funds for a year-round shelter would be difficult if not impossible due to looming deadlines.

The motion made and approved by three of the four HHP Committee members was as follows:

"Move the staff recommendation forward to the full Council with the caveat that in this process we also need the road map [on] how we're going to place and fund the year-round shelter."

(Timestamp 1hr., 33 minutes.) The Committee members also indicated they wanted a “real timeline that comes back to us during the budget process.” (Timestamp 1hr., 36 minutes.)

Subsequently, at the City Council meeting on June 8, 2026, Interim City Manager Hawkesworth had a PowerPoint presentation that identified \$2 million in FY2027 funding designated for a year-round shelter. (Slide 14.) Slide 15 set forth a Year-Round Shelter Workplan for FY2027. I am thankful that staff has recommended this initial funding for the year-round shelter and has publicly disclosed its FY2027 Workplan for the shelter. I submit this correspondence as well as the Attachment to place my concerns on the record. Hopefully, staff will approach this critical project with all due diligence and will present future grant funding recommendations that demonstrate that our City is serious in ending its homelessness crisis on an urgent basis.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,

/s/

Sonja K. Berndt
Pasadena

Cc: James Wong
Housing Director

w/Attachment

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CITY CLERK
CITY OF PASADENA

SONJA K. BERNDT
Pasadena, CA 91107

June 2, 2026

Mayor Victor Gordo, Chairperson of the Housing, Homelessness,
and Planning Committee (HHPC)

Members of the HHPC

By Email

commentshhpc@cityofpasadena.net

Re: HHPC Meeting 6/3/2026 Agenda #1: Approval of the Annual Action Plan (2026) and Related Funding Applications for the Community Development Block Grant, Home Investment Partnership Act, And Emergency Solutions Federal Grant Programs

Dear Members of the HHPC:

A. Introduction

I am a longtime Pasadena resident and advocate for our unhoused residents, especially those who are unsheltered and languish on our streets every day. The Housing Department's ("Department's") Program Year 2026-2027 Annual Action Plan ("Action Plan"), which is Attachment B to the agenda report, states that it "outlines the City of Pasadena's strategy for utilizing federal entitlement funds to address priority housing and community development needs." (Action Plan, p. 5.) "Overall, past performance has guided the prioritization of resources in PY[Program Year] 2026, with a continued focus on high-impact programs and activities that address the most critical community needs." (Action Plan, p. 4.)

But the Action Plan for PY 2026-2027 as well as the ones for PY2024 and 2025 (which I discussed in a lengthy letter with exhibits and submitted to you three months ago) show that our unhoused residents have been at the bottom of our City's priorities in allocating federal grant funding. These documents, which I discuss in this letter, show that only a very small portion of that funding has been expended on housing our unhoused residents even though our unsheltered residents experience trauma living on our unsafe streets every day. (Action Plan, Tables 6 & 7, pp. 19-20.)

The Action Plan needs to be rejected. Staff should be instructed to revise the document to recommend sufficient funding for a year-round shelter and transitional housing for our unsheltered residents. These projects were in the City Council's top five budget priorities

for FY2027, but they have been left out of the proposed FY2027 operating budget. There can be no meaningful progress in ending our homelessness crisis unless the City treats it like a crisis, provides the funding necessary to end it, and ensures transparency and accountability throughout the process.

B. The Three Federal Funding Programs at Issue

Pasadena receives Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Partnership Act (HOME) and Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). According to the Action Plan, the goals of the HUD federally funded entitlements programs are to provide decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities for Low/Moderate Income (LMI) residents. (Action Plan, p. 1.)

The CDBG Program offers local governments the opportunity to fund certain projects, programs and/or public services provided that they meet one of the following required national objectives:¹

- Benefit low/moderate-income (LMI) persons, OR
- Prevent or eliminate slums and blight, OR
- Meet an urgent need.

C. Pasadena's Chronic Underfunding of Homelessness Programs with Federal Grants

1. The Department's 2024-2025 Funding Recommendations

Exhibit 1 to this letter is a copy of Attachment A to the Housing Department's agenda report for the City Council meeting held on May 20, 2024. It is the Department's 2024-2025 funding recommendations for the CDBG, HOME and ESG entitlement programs which were approved by the City Council. Of the \$2.54 million in anticipated CDBG funds, the Department recommended no funds for supportive or interim housing for the City's unhoused residents, which numbered 556 in January 2024. Staff's plan was to use CDBG funds to rehabilitate homes, pay for sidewalk improvements, park security enhancements, repay a construction loan for a park, and fund services unrelated to our unhoused residents.

While the Department anticipated receiving \$811,905 in HOME funding, it did not recommend any of that funding for housing or services for those who lack basic shelter. As for ESG funding, the Department recommended a meager \$189,807 (total) for emergency shelter, homeless prevention and administration. Per the 2024-2025 Action

¹ <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Basically-CDBG-Chapter-3-Nat-Obj.pdf> (p. 3-1).

Plan (page 27), no funding was recommended for interim housing for our unsheltered residents to provide shelter for the long waits to permanent housing.

2. The Department's 2025-2026 Funding Recommendations

Attached as Exhibit 2 to this letter is a copy of Attachment A to the Department's agenda report for the City Council's May 19, 2025 meeting. It is the Department's 2025 CDBG, HOME and ESG Funding Recommendations, which were approved by the City Council. Of \$2.299 million in CDBG funding, no funding was recommended for housing or services to address our homelessness crisis.

The Department recommended \$2.24 million in HOME funding for the 100-unit Ramona Senior Housing Project. The Disposition and Development Agreement for this project was approved by the City Council *five years ago* and it remains a weed lot after all these years. The project, with a reported estimated cost of \$831,000 per unit, will have only 48 units set aside for seniors experiencing homelessness, possibly in 2028.²

For ESG funding, the recommendations totaled \$906,635. The Project Summary in the 2025-2026 Action Plan noted a goal of only 75 persons assisted by an emergency overnight shelter (\$283,619) and a goal of only 25 persons assisted through rapid rehousing (\$356,250). (2025-2026 Action Plan, p. 138.)

3. The Department's 2026-2027 Funding Recommendations

Attachment A to the Department's agenda report for this meeting of the IHPC is the Department's 2026 CDBG, HOME and ESG Funding Recommendations. Of \$3.077 million in CDBG funding, no funding is recommended for housing or services to address our homelessness crisis. Almost \$2 million is recommended for infrastructure improvements such as sidewalk improvements and street resurfacing.³ This is a substantial increase of \$749,000 in CDBG funding for infrastructure improvements as compared to PY2025-2026. (*cf.* CDBG funding in Exh. 2 with Staff's Attachment A.)

As for the \$662,156 in HOME funding, staff recommends a meager \$212,156 for "affordable housing," some of which will be used to renovate and expand the Door of

² Last September, the City Council approved an additional \$5 million in State Local Housing Trust Fund dollars for the project, including \$4.75 million for predevelopment and construction costs and \$250,000 for administrative support. This project needs to be reviewed in depth to determine how the exorbitant price tag and the lengthy delays can be avoided in the future such as with modular homes and other more cost-efficient housing models.

³ There is a discrepancy in the Department's Attachment A versus page 24 of the Action Plan. Attachment A notes \$1,125,000 of infrastructure improvements to be used for "street resurfacing & ADA improvements." But the Action Plan itself, at page 24, notes that this same amount for infrastructure improvements is to be used for "Villa Parke Soccer Field Improvement (\$1,125,000)."

Hope property by 11 units to serve persons experiencing homelessness. (Action Plan, p. 29.) We have 342 unsheltered persons in our City!

For ESG funding, the recommendations total \$949,240. The Project Summary in the 2026-2027 Action Plan notes a goal of only 19 households assisted by an emergency overnight shelter (\$203,562), a goal of assisting only 35 persons with street outreach (\$197,495), and a goal of only 14 households assisted through rapid rehousing (\$378,770). (Action Plan, p. 25.). Significantly, while the funding for the overnight shelter was decreased by over \$80,000, the funding for “Homeless Management Information System” more than tripled (to \$125,235) as compared to the funding recommendation for HMIS for 2025. (Exh. 2; Action Plan, p. 25.)

At page 33 of the Action Plan, there is a section entitled “Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons.” This section mentions the City has a site-based shelter, a shelter for homeless families and transitional housing, but includes no information on how many beds per site, or how many of those beds are ever available for our unsheltered residents. We had 581 total unhoused persons counted in the 2025 Point-in-Time Homeless count, 342 of which were unsheltered. Persons sheltered in the aforementioned shelters/transitional housing were counted as unhoused, but sheltered. The critical question is how many of these beds, if any, were available to our 342 unsheltered residents?

The section of the Action Plan also mentions the Bad Weather Shelter, which operates only in winter months and only if certain criteria are met. As for the Department’s claim that the City also funds motel-based shelter (i.e., motel vouchers) for unhoused residents, those vouchers are for very minimum stays, are expensive and inefficient, and are grossly insufficient to meet the needs of all our unsheltered residents.

At page 33 of the Action Plan is a section on “Helping homeless persons . . . make the transition to permanent housing and independent living, including shortening the period of time that individuals and families experience homelessness, facilitating access for homeless individuals and families to affordable housing units. . . .” The Department completely fails to discuss any efforts to facilitate access to affordable housing for persons experiencing homelessness and/or shortening the time a person experiences homelessness . . . because it can’t. Our City IS LOSING 142 units of valuable permanent supportive housing for persons experiencing homelessness as Centennial Place is being remodeled and repurposed for senior housing. Our City is going “backwards” on providing units of permanent supportive housing for our unhoused residents and it is evident from the Action Plans of 2024, 2025 and 2026 that the Department is not recommending providing any meaningful federal funding for transitional housing.

D. The Need for City-Generated Funding for a Year-Round Shelter and More Transitional Housing

As mentioned, the Council listed a year-round shelter and transitional housing in the top five priorities for funding in FY2027. The proposed operating budget has no funding for either of these projects. If the City does not allocate substantially more federal grant funding for these projects, it will have to find that funding elsewhere such as with the General Fund and/or City reserves.

Critical services for our unhoused and especially our unsheltered residents are vastly underfunded with City-generated resources because the Police Department (PPD), with its escalating salaries, pension and liability costs, continues to swallow up our General Fund, leaving insufficient crumbs for departments that serve our most vulnerable residents. While the Housing Department is severely underfunded from City-generated sources, PPD's General Fund appropriations have increased by over \$10 million over last year's adopted budget with a nearly \$10 million increase in personnel costs.

Significantly, cost savings could be achieved by decreasing the number of PPD officers while maintaining public safety in our City. In FY 2021, there were 5,766 PPD calls for service listed as "transient-related." In just the first six months of FY 2025, documents produced to me by PPD show over 4,100 calls for service listed as "TRST," i.e., "transient" related! In the "Cleared By" (i.e., disposition) column of a very lengthy spreadsheet, over 4,000 of those calls for service were listed as "no further action needed/resolved" (the vast majority), "gone on arrival," canceled," and "unable to locate." Instead of incurring the huge expense of responses to calls for service related to unhoused individuals, PROVIDE HOUSING FOR THEM in the first place! This would decrease PPD salary and pension costs and at the same time alleviate suffering and promote health and wellbeing. Moreover, these calls for service may not need responses by uniformed police officers. Deploying trained civilians would be cheaper in both salary and pension costs.

PPD salaries and pension benefits are not the only drivers of skyrocketing PPD expenses. PPD received huge appropriations for equipment thus far in FY 2026. This is on top of years of appropriations for multi-year contracts related to license plate readers, helicopter equipment, etc. which have added significant expense to PPD's budget. The City Council approved every piece of equipment that PPD requested in FY 2026, most of which is to be paid from "existing & future General Fund appropriations" at the expense of critical community programs and people suffering on the street. City appropriations for PPD equipment must be reined in to allow the City to provide basic shelter for our most vulnerable residents.

E. Conclusion

The City has failed to provide nearly enough safe and decent housing for our unhoused residents, especially our unsheltered residents. For these reasons, I respectfully request that this Committee and ultimately the City Council do the following:

- Reject the proposed 2026-2027 Annual Action Plan;
- Instruct the Department to increase the City's federal grant funding request for homelessness programs to be allocated toward creating and operating a year-round shelter and providing 100 additional units of transitional housing;
- Explore on an urgent basis funding for a year-round shelter and transitional housing to include funding from the General Fund and from both operating and emergency reserves; and
- Explore, on an urgent basis, a dedicated funding stream for interim housing and permanent supportive housing.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,

/s/

Sonja K. Berndt
Pasadena

Cc: James Wong
Housing Director

w/Exhs.

EXHIBIT 1

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program
2024-2025 Funding Recommendations**

#	PROPOSER/PROPOSED PROJECT	FUNDING AMOUNT
ADMINISTRATION		
1	Housing Department, City of Pasadena <i>CDBG Program Administration</i>	\$431,922
Subtotal		\$431,922
PUBLIC SERVICES		
2	Pasadena Unified School District <i>Primary Health Clinic Expansion</i>	\$60,062
3	Young & Healthy <i>Support for Better Health</i>	\$43,984
4	Armenian Relief Society <i>Community Social Services Program</i>	\$39,390
5	The Flintridge Center <i>Youth of Promise</i>	\$75,000
6	Housing Rights Center <i>Fair Housing Services</i>	\$75,000
7	College Access <i>College Champions</i>	\$28,800
Subtotal		\$322,236
(CITY SET-ASIDE)		
8	Housing Department, City of Pasadena <i>MASH Residential Rehabilitation Project</i>	\$250,000
9	Public Works Department, City of Pasadena <i>NW Sidewalk Improvements (Phase V)</i>	\$400,000
10	Public Works Department, City of Pasadena <i>JRCC – Lighting & Community Room Improvements</i>	\$224,000
11	Department of Information Technology, City of Pasadena <i>Washington Park Security Enhancements</i>	\$163,000
12	Pasadena Water & Power <i>Solar Panel Installation Program</i>	\$210,000
13	Pasadena Water & Power <i>EV-Charger Installation Program</i>	\$100,000
Subtotal		\$1,347,000
Loan Repayment (Robinson Park Recreation Center)		
10	Section 108 Repayment	\$440,000
TOTAL FUNDING RECOMMENDATION		\$2,541,158

**HOME Partnership Investment Act (HOME)
2024-2025 Funding Recommendations**

#	PROPOSED PROJECT/ACTIVITY	FUNDING AMOUNT
AFFORDABLE HOUSING		
1	Housing Department, City of Pasadena <i>HOME Administration</i>	\$150,000
2	Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO)	\$102,823
3	Affordable Housing Rehabilitation	\$259,082
4	Housing Department, City of Pasadena <i>Home Enhancement Loan Program (HELP)</i>	\$300,000
TOTAL FUNDING RECOMMENDATION		\$811,905

**Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program
2024-2025 Funding Recommendations**

#	PROPOSER/PROPOSED PROJECT	FUNDING AMOUNT
HOMELESSNESS		
1	Housing Department, City of Pasadena <i>ESG Administration</i>	\$14,235
2	<i>Homeless Prevention</i>	\$70,229
3	<i>Emergency Shelter</i>	\$105,343
TOTAL FUNDING RECOMMENDATION		\$189,807

GRAND TOTAL OF FUNDS PROGRAMMED FOR 2024-2025

FUNDING SOURCE	FUNDING AMOUNT
Community Development Block Grant	\$2,541,158
HOME Investment Partnership Grant	\$811,905
Emergency Solutions Grant	\$189,807
GRAND TOTAL FUNDING RECOMMENDATION	\$3,542,870

EXHIBIT 2

City of Pasadena

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program
2025 Funding Recommendations**

#	PROPOSER/PROPOSED PROJECT	FUNDING AMOUNT
PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION		
1	Housing & Career Services Department, City of Pasadena <i>CDBG Program Administration</i>	\$460,000
2	Finance Department <i>Section 108 Repayment (Robinson Recreation Center)</i>	\$440,000
	Subtotal	\$900,000
PUBLIC SERVICES		
3	College Access Plan <i>College Champions</i>	\$48,400
4	Flintridge Center <i>Youth of Promise</i>	\$75,000
5	Foothill Unity Center, Inc. <i>Food Distribution Program</i>	\$75,000
6	Reading Partners <i>Individualized Literacy Support</i>	\$75,000
	Subtotal	\$273,400
INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS		
7	Public Works Department, City of Pasadena <i>Pasadena Sidewalk Improvements</i>	\$500,000
8	Public Works Department, City of Pasadena <i>ADA Pushbutton Upgrade</i>	\$300,000
9	Economic Development Division, City of Pasadena <i>Commercial Façade Improvement Program</i>	\$200,500
10	Economic Development Division, City of Pasadena <i>Disaster Relief Funds for Micro-Enterprises</i>	\$125,500
	Sub-Total	\$1,126,000
TOTAL FUNDING RECOMMENDATION		\$2,299,400

**HOME Partnership Investment Act (HOME)
2025 Funding Recommendations**

#	PROPOSED PROJECT/ACTIVITY	FUNDING AMOUNT
AFFORDABLE HOUSING		
1	Housing, City of Pasadena <i>HOME Administration</i>	\$150,000
3	Housing, City of Pasadena <i>Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program</i>	\$300,000
4	National Core <i>Ramona Senior Housing Project</i>	\$2,243,927
TOTAL FUNDING RECOMMENDATION		\$2,693,927

**Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program
2025 Funding Recommendations**

#	PROPOSER/PROPOSED PROJECT	FUNDING AMOUNT
HOMELESSNESS		
1	<i>ESG Administration</i>	\$51,735
2	<i>HMIS Management</i>	\$40,000
3	<i>Homeless Prevention</i>	\$175,000
4	<i>Emergency Shelter</i>	\$283,619
5	<i>Rapid Rehousing</i>	\$356,250
TOTAL FUNDING RECOMMENDATION		\$906,635

GRAND TOTAL OF FUNDS PROGRAMMED FOR 2025

FUNDING SOURCE	FUNDING AMOUNT
Community Development Block Grant	\$2,299,400
HOME Investment Partnership Grant	\$2,693,927
Emergency Solutions Grant	\$906,635
GRAND TOTAL FUNDING RECOMMENDATION	\$5,899,962