

September 12, 2022

re: Funding for housing to reduce homelessness

Dear Commission on Housing Affordability, Governor Cox, Senate President Adams and House Speaker Wilson,

Last week the Utah Office of Homeless Services released recommendations for the use of the \$55 million in American Rescue Act funds that the Utah Legislature set aside for deeply affordable housing. The recommendations are expected to produce 1,078 total affordable units with 679 of those units projected to be deeply affordable and 529 units specifically to be used to move people out of homelessness.

It is our understanding that there were more than \$120 million in proposals submitted for consideration and so there are several worthy projects that would make a big difference that will not be built without additional funding. The Coalition of Religious Communities urges the Commission to explore options for funding these extra projects, including:

1. Determining if nondedicated ARPA funds placed in the transportation fund could be used for this purpose. It is our understanding the about \$1 billion in ARPA funds were placed into the transportation fund at the end of the session without being committed to a specific projects.
2. Determining if non-committed Emergency Rental Assistance funds, that at are at risk of being returned to the feds if unused, can be dedicated to funding some of these projects,
3. Suggesting that projects which cannot be funded with ARPA funds instead be funded with one time budget surplus funding.

As faith community leaders, we urge you to please do what you can to support bold action in this area. With strong leadership from the state Utah can dramatically reduce homelessness in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Fr. Martin Diaz
Cathedral of the Madeleine

Rev. Monica Dobbins
First Unitarian Church

Rev. Vinnetta Golphin-Wilkerson
Granger Community Christian Church

Rev. Christine Higuera-Street
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St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Rev. Charles Hines
St. Francis of Assisi Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)

The Rev Deacon Elizabeth Hunter
Cathedral Church of St. Mark

Rev. Kim James
Ogden First United Methodist Church

Rev. Steve Klemz
Pastor, Evangelical Lutheran Church in
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Rev. Elias Koucos
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Rev. Martha M. Moler
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Rev. Lora Young
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