

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LOCAL HOUSING COLLABORATIVE SECURES MAJOR SUPPORT FROM FORT BEND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

RICHMOND, TX, June 13 -On June 13th, Fort Bend County Commissioners Court approved the reallocation of **\$4.5 million in federal funds to an affordable housing program**. The multi-phased program will help older youth and young adults, families and individuals access safe and stable housing. **Shannan Stavinoha, Executive Director of Parks Youth Ranch**, emphasized ***"This is not just an affordable housing apartment complex; the proposed project includes wraparound support services like case management, workforce development and educational assistance. We need to ensure that the root causes of housing insecurity are being met."*** Fort Bend County has long been a migration point for families due to great schools, access to employment, and overall livability. The challenge is the limited supply of affordable housing in our communities. This new effort focuses on multiple types of supportive services including a centralized housing and family service center, supportive housing units, income-based and market-rate apartments, multi-family complexes, and single-family homes.

The first phase of the master plan will result in a housing resource center, co-location space for community-based services and safe housing units to address the complex needs of vulnerable populations including youth aging out of foster care, single parents/grandparents with children, the working poor, and young adults pursuing workforce certifications and higher education. In Fort Bend ISD and Lamar CISD alone, the two largest public school districts serving Fort Bend County, over 1,800 students were classified as homeless or unaccompanied during the 2021-2022 school year. Local schools will be able to refer their youth and families into this new system of care. ***"This project is essential to Fort Bend County and the future of its youth. By building and restoring safe, clean and healthy housing for low-income families, this project works to eliminate youth experiences of substandard housing, thereby supporting their growth and development,"*** notes **Vera Johnson, Executive Director of Fort Bend Family Promise**. As the housing collaborative partners started to form this plan in late 2022, they found the housing needs to be huge and varying in size. This master plan addresses many types of needs along the continuum from emergency to transitional and long-term housing, as well as supervised independent living, and independent affordable housing, including homeownership.

Members of the collaborative include **Abigail's Place, Attack Poverty, Fort Bend Family Promise, HomeAID Houston, Hope Impacts, Parks Youth Ranch and TSTC Fort Bend**. The \$4.5 million award will come from the federal Emergency Rental Assistance program and the American Rescue Plan Act budget. A future request for \$3.3 million Home American Rescue Plan funds is pending HUD approval. The housing collaborative aims to leverage additional public, private and corporate support to fully build out its master plan for housing over several years, and welcomes Fort Bend Co. businesses, houses of worship and civic groups to engage with these efforts. **Brandon Baca, CEO of Attack Poverty** shares, ***"Safe and secure housing is a critical step for individuals and families to thrive. We are excited that this opportunity allows us to bolster a highly collaborative process for individuals and families to access housing, along with the support services, community connections, and additional resources to be empowered and to flourish."***

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