



# City of Culver City

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## Staff Report

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**CC - ACTION ITEM:** Approval of Amendment to Existing Professional Services Agreement with Urban Alchemy in an Amount Not-To Exceed \$4,432,636 for the Time of Performance from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 for: (1) Continuation as the Lead Operator and Service Provider for Wellness Village (Safe Sleep); (2) Expanded Evening and Weekend Homeless Outreach Services Through the Community, Engagement and Outreach Team; and (3) Provision of 24-Hour/7-Day a Week Supportive Service and Care as a Part of the Motel Master Leasing and Nutrition Program, Including a Pilot Safe Parking Program.

**Meeting Date:** June 24, 2024

**Contact Person/Dept.:** Tevis Barnes/Housing and Human Services  
Christina Stoffers/Housing and Human Services

**Phone Number:** (310) 253-5780

**Fiscal Impact:** Yes  No       **General Fund:** Yes  No

**Attachments:** Yes  No

**Public Notification:** Advisory Committee on Housing and Homelessness (06/18/2024); Landlord Tenant Mediation Board (06/18/2024); Saint Joseph Center (06/13/2024); Urban Alchemy (05/18/2024); Exodus Recovery Inc. (06/13/2024); Healthcare in Action; (06/13/2024 and (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (06/19/2024).

**Department Approval Name, Title Date:** Tevis Barnes, Housing and Human Services Director (06/03/2024)

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the City Council approve an amendment to the existing professional services agreement with Urban Alchemy (UA) in an amount not-to-exceed \$4,432,636 for the time of performance from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 for (1) the continuation as the lead operator and service provider for Wellness Village (Safe Sleep); (2) expanded evening and weekend homeless outreach services through the Community, Engagement and Outreach (CEO) Team; and (3) the provision of 24-hour/7-day a week supportive service and care as a part of the Motel Master Leasing and Nutrition Program, including a Pilot Safe Parking Program (collectively, Motel Program).

## **BACKGROUND:**

Witnessing the exponential growth of homelessness in the Los Angeles County region and its direct impact locally, the Council decided to adopt a resolution ratifying the Proclamation of Local Emergency on Homelessness on January 9, 2023.

To address homelessness in an impactful way, Culver City strives to provide a localized Continuum of Care (CoC) approach that leads with supportive service and care for our unhoused neighbors. The local CoC consists of the following efforts enacted by the City Council:

- Homeless Outreach/Crisis Intervention-Mobile Crisis Team
- Project Homekey Interim Housing
- Project Homekey Permanent Supportive Housing
- Wellness Village/Safe Sleep Programming
- Motel Master Leasing and Nutrition Program
- Mobile Street Healthcare

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **Continuation of Wellness Village (Safe Sleep)**

Culver City opened its first safe sleep programming called Wellness Village at the City owned Virginia parking lot (10401 Virginia Ave.) in August 2023. Wellness Village programming is focused on helping the City's most vulnerable unhoused neighbors, who are not yet ready to go indoors, by reducing loss of life, eliminating encampments, and providing greater access to supportive services and housing. The Wellness Village is the first of its kind for Culver City. Wellness Village features 20 transitional tents, referred to as suites, with around-the-clock staffing and supportive services, including three meals a day, onsite restrooms and showers, garbage and recycling collection, access to laundry services, weekly healthcare and mental health clinics, and additional support and activities such as yoga, art therapy, and Alcohol and Narcotics Anonymous. The Wellness Village can support up to 40 guests (residents) at the site to allow couples as well as owners and their pets to remain together.

On March 27, 2023, the City Council approved the recommendation to enter into an agreement with UA as lead supportive service provider and operator of Wellness Village. Urban Alchemy is a nonprofit organization with the mission of healing communities challenged by the intersection of extreme poverty, homelessness, mental illness, and addiction through the act of respect, compassion, and love. The name *Urban Alchemy* references the process of spiritual and social transformation that UA staff engages in - both internally and in practice with all members of the public. Founded in 2018, UA has grown into a thriving social enterprise with over 1,100 employees. UA provides a multitude of services for people experiencing homelessness, including community outreach and engagement, temporary housing, mobile bathrooms and showers, and street cleaning services. Urban Alchemy currently operates in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles County, Portland, Oregon and Austin, Texas. Over 95% of UA employees (including those in executive leadership roles) have experienced incarceration and/or homelessness.

Since opening in August 2023, Wellness Village has served 57 people experiencing homelessness, with 24 Wellness Village guests transitioning to Project Homekey (PHK) Interim or Permanent Supportive Housing and six Wellness Village guests transitioning to other housing resources including Veteran's housing and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment facilities. As of May 29, 2024, there are currently 19 guests enrolled at Wellness Village including one couple and one emotional support animal.

### **Community, Engagement and Outreach Team - Expansion and Enhancement of Homeless Outreach Services**

Effective homeless outreach develops relationships and trust with people experiencing homelessness in order to connect them with housing, medical care, and other support services. Since homeless outreach is essential to the foundation of the City's CoC, staff proposes an enhancement and expansion of homeless outreach services provided to the community.

Presently, if an outreach request is received after regular business hours or during the weekends, these requests are held for the Mobile Crisis Team (MCT) dispatch for the following business day or the following Monday.

Since July 1, 2023, the Housing and Human Services (HHS) Department has received and responded to 555 homeless outreach requests via email, the homeless hotline, City staff and Council requests and the City Citizen Relation Management (CRM) system. In addition to homeless outreach services from third party sources, the Culver City Mobile Crisis Team (MCT) also engages in proactive homeless outreach during hours of 10am though 6pm Monday through Friday by roving the City and connecting with unhoused neighbors encountered during daily interactions. The MCT has built rapport and trust with the City's unhoused neighbors by providing them with housing and supportive services literature, socks, hygiene packs, snacks, and water. Through this approach, the MCT has engaged 182 unhoused persons since its full deployment in April 2024 and has assisted 24 unhoused neighbors to accept interim housing at PHK, the Motel Master Leasing and Nutrition Program (Motel Program) and Wellness Village. The MCT enhances the provision of outreach services in Culver City by having clinical and trauma informed staff daily interface with the City's unhoused community.

It is recommended that City Council consider the expansion and enhancement of homeless outreach services through a proposed amendment to the current agreement with Urban Alchemy to include the Community, Engagement and Outreach (CEO) Team. The proposed CEO Team will work in conjunction with the MCT to provide the provision of homeless outreach services during the hours of 3pm to 11:30pm seven days a week Sunday through Saturday. This four-person homeless outreach team will dispatch out of Wellness Village and frequent places throughout the City where the unhoused are concentrated. As UA oversees Wellness Village and has a presence at the local motels leased by the City, UA will also be able to assess, transport, and directly enroll unhoused persons who agree to interim (temporary) housing services through the Culver City Motel Program or Wellness Village.

The MCT will continue to provide homeless outreach 10am to 6pm Monday through Friday along with crisis intervention services to the general community. Urban Alchemy will provide homeless outreach 3pm to 11:30pm Sunday through Saturday. At 3pm Monday through Friday, the MCT will

debrief the UA CEO Team of their daily activities, and then homeless outreach will transition to the CEO Team. After 3pm, the MCT will back up the CEO Team as necessary until 6pm.

### **The Motel Program 24/7 Care and Service**

On August 28, 2023, the City Council approved the implementation of the Motel Program as part of the City's ongoing effort to create a CoC to address homelessness. Through the innovative Motel Program, Culver City partners with two local motels, which provides 64 units of interim housing for the City's unhoused community. The local motels offer temporary interim housing as unhoused neighbors transition to PHK, Wellness Village, or other interim or permanent housing options including treatment programs.

The Motel Program also provides 24/7 security as well as three daily meals. Motel Program participants have individual rooms that can house up to two persons to accommodate couples with private restrooms/showers and means to store and prepare food. Weekly maid service and fresh towels and linens are also provided through the Motel Program. Since January 2023, 69 of the City's unhoused neighbors have participated in the Motel Program. There are currently 38 participants enrolled (including four couples and one father/son family unit) and 29 participants have transitioned to PHK. Over 26,000 daily meals have been provided through an agreement with EveryTable since January 1, 2024. In addition, Healthcare In Action (HIA) provides a weekly mobile health clinic at each motel.

At the August 28, 2023 Council Meeting where the Motel Program was approved, it was stated in the staff report that staff would return to Council to propose the installation of 24-hour/7-day a week onsite supportive service provider with experience in case management, crisis intervention and de-escalation. Staff has identified UA as the agency to provide this level of supportive service and care to Motel Program participants.

Since November 2023, UA has had a presence at one of the two leased motels that make up the Culver City Motel Program. UA works in collaboration with the installed 24/7 security firm, HIA, Everytable, and the MCT to support the need of the Motel Program participants. UA has also participated in homeless outreach with the MCT, the weekly Tuesday Care and Service days to offer people experiencing homelessness services and hygiene kits, as well as enumerators at the 2024 Culver City Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count.

Staff recommends the continuation of the City's relationship with UA to provide supportive service and care to the Motel Program participants and Culver City unhoused community.

### **Pilot Safe Parking Program**

To address the needs of unhoused persons residing in their cars, it is proposed that the Motel Program incorporate a pilot Safe Parking program where up to five people experiencing homelessness residing in their cars can access a safe space to park during the hours of 8pm to 8am. The pilot Safe Parking program will provide access to monitored and daily sanitary restrooms and showers. Two of the rooms at one of the locally leased motels will be vacated with the specific purpose of providing private access to restrooms and showers for Safe Parking participants. As part of the pilot program, participants will be provided an evening meal and takeaway breakfast and lunch

for the following day. Lastly, participants will have access to case management and supportive services which will include assistance with minor car repairs, vehicle registration, car insurance, as well as outstanding car ticket violations.

**FISCAL ANALYSIS**

On January 9, 2023, the City Council adopted a resolution ratifying the Proclamation of Local Emergency on Homelessness by the Director of Emergency Services of the City of Culver City, California, issued by the City Manager on January 3, 2023. Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) Sections 3.07.060.B and 3.09.040 enable the City to purchase equipment, goods, supplies, and services made in connection with emergency activities in the event of a locally declared emergency without following the bidding procedures otherwise required by the CCMC. The City is exercising its authority under the Homeless Emergency declared on January 3, 2023, to waive formal procurement procedures to secure the services to implement the homeless programming including the proposed amendment to the existing PSA with UA to continue as lead service provider and operator of Wellness Village and include the enhancement and expansion of homeless services through the UA CEO Team and to implement the supportive service and care component of the Motel Master Leasing and Nutrition Program.

Staff recommends amending the Urban Alchemy agreement in the amount of \$4,432,636 which will include the following components:

1. Continuation of Wellness Village
2. Enhancement and expansion of homeless outreach services through the UA CEO Team
3. 24/7 Supportive service and care as part of the Motel Program

The breakdown of each component of the of the proposed budget is as follows:

Continuation of Wellness Village	\$3,033,187
Enhanced and Expanded Homeless Outreach	\$ 799,173
Motel Program - 24/7 Supportive Service and Care	\$ 600,276

**TOTAL: \$4,432,636**

The Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 contains sufficient funding to cover the amount of \$3,033,187 for the continuation of Urban Alchemy’s service at Wellness Village in Account No. 10135700.619830 (HHS Wellness Village - Other Contractual Services Unhoused). This amount represents a reduction of \$65,890 from the current fiscal year due to the absence of one-time startup expenses. The Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 includes sufficient funding to cover the amount of \$600,276 requested for homeless outreach in Account No. 47635880.619830 (HHS Homeless Program - Other Contractual Services Unhoused). The amount is a reduction of \$105,289 from the agreement with a different service provider in Fiscal Year 2023-2024. Though the cost of homeless outreach will reduce, the weekly hours provided to conduct homeless outreach coverage will increase from 45 weekly hours to 59.5 hours weekly. This is an increase of 14 hours per week, not including the homeless outreach and crisis intervention hours provided by the MCT. Finally, the Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 contains sufficient funding to cover the amount of

\$799,173 for the supportive service and care component of the Motel Leasing Program in Account No. 10135100.619830 (HHS Housing Administration - Other Contractual Services Unhoused).

## **ATTACHMENT**

None

## **MOTIONS**

That the Culver City Council:

1. Approve an amendment to the existing Professional Service Agreement with Urban Alchemy in an amount not-to-exceed \$4,432,636 for the time of performance from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 for:
  - a. The continuation as the lead operator and service provider for Wellness Village (Safe Sleep); and
  - b. Expanded evening and weekend homeless outreach services through the Community, Engagement and Outreach Team; and
  - c. To provide 24/ -Hour/7- day a week supportive service and care as a provision of the Motel Master Leasing and Nutrition Program, including a Pilot Safe Parking Program
2. Authorize the City Attorney to prepare/review the necessary documents; and
3. Authorize the City Manager to execute such documents on behalf of the City.