



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DES Partners with Maricopa County to Provide Housing Resources for Individuals Served by the Human Services Campus

State Contributes \$1 Million to Further Serve Arizonans Experiencing Homelessness

PHOENIX - (April 7, 2021) Maricopa County and the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) announced today a joint partnership to expand housing resources for people who are experiencing homelessness on and around the Human Services Campus in downtown Phoenix. DES will provide \$1 million in state funding towards this effort, which also includes funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG).

"Our partnership and collaboration with Maricopa County allows us to better assist individuals who are being served by the Human Services Campus," said DES Director Michael Wisehart. "With these funds, Community Bridges, Inc. can increase its impact and further assist the Human Services Campus in helping some of Arizona's most vulnerable individuals."

This partnership will ensure that fewer people are unsheltered in anticipation of the hot summer months and to further prevent the spread of COVID-19. Maricopa County and DES have worked closely over the last year to coordinate federal funding specifically targeted to prevent, prepare for and respond to the spread of COVID-19. This funding will be provided to Community Bridges, Inc. to provide navigation and rapid rehousing services for people experiencing homelessness who are receiving services at the Human Services Campus in downtown Phoenix, and is one step of a multi-faceted initiative to address homelessness in the area. The funding provided by DES is anticipated to house and support 65 households for at least 12 months.

"This housing project aims to ensure that fewer people are homeless and on the streets with the hot summer months approaching and help prevent the spread of COVID-19," said Community Bridges, Inc., Senior Director of Housing and Community Integration, Liz DaCosta. "The financial strain tied to homelessness often causes difficulties in obtaining and paying for housing. Our community members experiencing homelessness are employable and excited to seek gainful employment but find that the day-to-day work associated with surviving on the streets makes it hard to secure a job. This rapid rehousing program will get those living in the worst conditions into housing and employment."

"This is a significant and important investment by DES that builds upon the long standing and effective partnership between the State and Maricopa County Human Services," said Bruce Liggett, Director of Maricopa County Human Services. "As the national emergency unfolded a year ago, we worked with private and public agencies, in particular the City of Phoenix and the State, to quickly implement innovative solutions that gave people experiencing homelessness safe places to live or find weather relief throughout the County. Now we are redoubling our efforts to find permanent housing solutions."

Throughout the pandemic, DES has responded swiftly to the needs of the homeless service community across Arizona by providing more than [\\$22M in support](#) of services to help individuals who are experiencing homelessness. Additionally, on February 23, 2021, [DES launched the Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#) to provide rental and utility assistance in 12 Arizona counties. Renters and landlords impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in these counties may now apply for assistance online at <http://des.az.gov/ERAP>.

Background

On July 14, 2020, Governor Ducey announced a plan to [distribute \\$5,950,572 from the ESG program](#) to organizations that support Arizonans in need, combat homelessness, and help ensure families and individuals keep a roof over their heads.

A total of \$4.35 million of the funding was distributed to shelters, programs and services that help homeless individuals and families throughout Arizona. Services and programs that work to prevent homelessness in Arizona received \$1.6 million.

On July 21, 2020, the Governor announced [\\$975,000 from the AZ Coronavirus Relief Fund for 12 organizations](#) in Arizona that provide shelter for those experiencing homelessness. The funding supports efforts to provide food for those utilizing shelters; locate alternative housing to maintain social distancing among the homeless population; and clean and sanitize shelters to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

On March 30, 2020, the Governor announced an [initial \\$6.7 million in funding to support Arizona food banks](#), nutrition programs and programs that serve the homeless. The dollars come from the Crisis Contingency and Safety Net Fund, established in March 2020 through a bipartisan state budget agreement that added \$50 million for Arizona's COVID-19 response.

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