

MOTION

According to the annual Point-in-Time Count for 2023, on any given night in the City there are 46,260 people experiencing homelessness. To address the homelessness crisis, the City has invested various resources over the last few years into programs and services to assist people experiencing homelessness and to reduce homelessness in the City. During the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom launched the Project Roomkey program after the State declared a state of emergency to provide non-congregate shelter to unsheltered people experiencing homelessness in hotels and motels in order to minimize their exposure to COVID-19.

Cities and counties in the State leased hotel rooms for people experiencing homelessness and paid for them out of their budget with the expectation that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) would reimburse these costs. Statewide, Project Roomkey served approximately 62,000 individuals over the course of the pandemic.

When the program was first launched, there were no rules for how long a person experiencing homelessness could stay in a hotel room or how much of their stay FEMA would cover. However, in a letter from October 2023, FEMA officials have stated that they will not be reimbursing for the hotel and motel costs for stays longer than 20 days between June 11, 2021 and May 11, 2023. FEMA officials are insisting that this is not a new rule, but was in fact part of the original policy of reimbursement. The 20-day cap could cost local governments in California more than \$300 million in total. The State has sent FEMA a letter asking that the agency to reconsider the 20-day cap. The City must evaluate any potential budget requests that may result from FEMA's determination as this may have significant impacts on the City's budget.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Council instruct the City Administrative (CAO) to report on the total amount of investments the City made on homeless programs and services related to Project Roomkey during COVID-19, including Reserve Fund loans, that the City anticipated would be reimbursed by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and include the amount that has already been reimbursed by FEMA and the reimbursement amount we are awaiting and any shortfalls between the two; and

I FURTHER MOVE that the Council instruct the CAO to report on how the lack of reimbursement could affect the future City budget if the City does not receive the full anticipated reimbursement amount.

PRESENTED BY:


MONICA RODRIGUEZ
Councilwoman, 7th District

SECONDED BY:


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