

Agenda Item: ID#18-1482 (10:05 A.M.#2)

Date: 12/6/18

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FRESNO CITY COUNCIL



Supplemental Information Packet

Agenda Related Item(s) – ID#18-1482 (10:05 A.M.#2)

Contents of Supplement: Letter from Marjaree Mason Center

Item(s)

RESOLUTION – Declaring shelter crisis pursuant to Senate Bill 850 and authorizing application for \$3,105,519 in Homeless Emergency Aid Program grant funds – Mayor's Office

Supplemental Information:

Any agenda related public documents received and distributed to a majority of the City Council after the Agenda Packet is printed are included in Supplemental Packets. Supplemental Packets are produced as needed. The Supplemental Packet is available for public inspection in the City Clerk's Office, 2600 Fresno Street, during normal business hours (main location pursuant to the Brown Act, G.C. 54957.5(2)). In addition, Supplemental Packets are available for public review at the City Council meeting in the City Council Chambers, 2600 Fresno Street. Supplemental Packets are also available on-line on the City Clerk's website.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

The meeting room is accessible to the physically disabled, and the services of a translator can be made available. Requests for additional accommodations for the disabled, sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, or translators should be made one week prior to the meeting. Please call City Clerk's Office at 621-7650. Please keep the doorways, aisles and wheelchair seating areas open and accessible. If you need assistance with seating because of a disability, please see Security.

Dear Mayor Brand and Fresno City Councilmembers,

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It has come to our attention that you will be asked to vote on December 6 for funds related to supporting the shelter needs of our local homeless population. Fresno Unified and Marjaree Mason Center work with many homeless families in our community who don't often make your radar or into data sets that are often presented to you.

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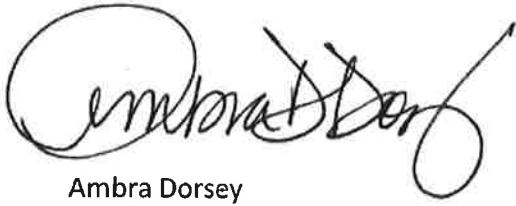
However, on an average day, through the homeless assistance program (some generously funded by the City of Fresno through ESG), the Marjaree Mason Center is housing about 350 mostly women and children. Last year, we provided over 127,000 individual nights of safe housing to families in our community. MMC is no stranger to City Hall as we have continued to advocate for additional support due to the loss of emergency housing funding and transitional programming combined with the ever increasing demand for services. Even though we have 155 combined beds between Fresno (129) and Clovis (26), last year, more than \$51,000 was spent on motel vouchers because we remained over capacity. This doesn't even account for all of the homeless families who called our 24/7 hotline or came to our door NOT fleeing domestic violence but just needing a place to stay. The families seeking shelter at Marjaree Mason Center have been terrorized in their own homes and would likely continue to stay and endure continued abuse if there was not a suitable place to stay. The Marjaree Mason Center is maxed out! In addition, there is a high probability based on experience that we could lose some of our longer term housing programs next year. At this point, there are no identified options for places to refer those families. In addition, there are few to little options for homeless families with children in our community.

On average, Fresno Unified serves 600 students each year who are categorized as homeless. 41 families have been able to be temporarily housed in local shelters, however; still 12 of our families are sleeping in their cars or on the streets tonight. If a child does not have consistent, healthy patterns of nutrition and adequate sleep, there is little chance they will do their best in school. Part of improving our economy and the future of our city is improving our student learning and graduation rates. To do so, we must support the whole child, which is exceptionally challenging when we have families unsure of where they will eat or sleep each night.

The Marjaree Mason Center and Fresno Unified have been working in partnership for over the past year to ensure that families intersecting with the Marjaree Mason Center shelter and service programs are connected to a Project Access social worker who helps get them assessed for any and all available services to help them be successful in school. We are both committed to helping children thrive, regardless of where they come from or what they have experienced.

Although children do not vote, pay taxes or have much of a voice in our political system, they ARE our future. Ignoring an investment in their safety, health and well-being as a priority is punting problems down the road at best. We are asking you to consider making families with children a priority for programs funded through the CESH funding being presented to you on December 6.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ambra Dorsey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Ambra Dorsey
Executive Director
Department of Prevention and Intervention
Fresno Unified School District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicole Linder". The signature is cursive and elegant, with a large initial "N" and a long, flowing underline.

Nicole Linder
Executive Director
Marjaree Mason Center
