

Establishing A Policy To Prioritize Meals For Ulster County Residents Living In Emergency Housing

Referred to: The Health, Human Services and Housing Committee (Chairman Uchitelle and Legislators Corcoran, Erner, Lopez, Nolan, Petit, and Stewart), and The Ways and Means Committee (Chairman Gavaris and Legislators Cahill, Criswell, Roberts, and Ronk)

Chairman of the Health, Human Services and Housing Committee, Abe Uchitelle, and Legislator Erner offer the following:

WHEREAS, all residents of Ulster County deserve access to food; and

WHEREAS, Ulster County’s Housing Action Plan for 2021 showed that there is an insufficient supply, or inventory, of homes at an affordable price point which contributes to many Ulster County families finding themselves in need of Emergency Housing; and

WHEREAS, at any point in time there may be more than 300 Ulster County residents living in Emergency Housing; and

WHEREAS, Ulster County residents in need of Emergency Housing may be placed in hotels and motels which do not have facilities in which to formally prepare meals; and

WHEREAS, unlike shelters, hotels and motels do not provide meals for residents placed in Emergency Housing; and

WHEREAS, one in every seven Ulster County residents lives in poverty (14%), with the highest rate among children under age 18 (16%) and “Ulster County Community Health Assessment by the Department of Health reports that, in comparison with neighboring counties, Ulster County has historically had one of the highest rates of food insecurity and scored lowest amongst surrounding counties; and

WHEREAS, child hunger is associated with increased risk of anemia, lower nutrient intake, deficiencies in cognitive development, aggression, anxiety, hospitalization and poorer general health, asthma, behavioral problems, depression, suicidal ideation, and poor oral health; and

WHEREAS, the reduction of food insecurity and hunger is cost-effective, supports social and economic equity, and provides a serious investment in the health and wellness of children who will grow up to be the workforce, parents, and leaders of the future; and

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WHEREAS, Ulster County's Housing Action Plan for 2021 revealed that 28% of renter households and 14% of owner households in Ulster County spend more than half their income on housing costs, confirming that housing represents a cost burden that is untenable for most of Ulster County's residents; and

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature wishes to expand services to ensure some of its most vulnerable residents are delivered fundamental needs by providing both shelter and food; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to § C-74 B. (4) of the Ulster County Charter, the Ulster County Purchasing Director shall perform such other and related duties as shall be required and delegated by the County Executive or County Legislature; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, it is hereby the policy of Ulster County to prioritize feeding Ulster County residents placed in Emergency Housing, with a goal of ensuring meals for all residents placed in Emergency Housing hotels and motels throughout Ulster County are consistently provided; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Director of Purchasing, in coordination with the Commissioner of Social Services, shall within ninety (90) days of adoption of this Resolution, issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) on behalf of Ulster County to seek a vendor who shall assess need and prepare and deliver meals daily to all residents placed in Emergency Housing hotels and motels within Ulster County; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that prior to the RFP document being public, the Chair of the Legislature, or designee, shall have opportunity to provide input on the document; and, be it further

RESOLVED, the Chair of the Legislature, or designee shall serve as a member of the RFP evaluation committee; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that no section of this resolution shall be interpreted as augmenting the existing legislative process for expenditures; and, be it further

RESOLVED, upon conclusion of the RFP process, a contract for execution shall be presented to the Ulster County Legislature within 60 days for consideration pursuant to § A2-5 (15) of the Ulster County Charter,

and move its adoption.

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ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:

NOES:

Passed Committee: Health, Human Services and Housing as amended on April 3, 2023

Postponed in Committee: Ways and Means for one week on April 11, 2023

Referred back to Health, Human Services and Housing Committee by Ways and Means Committee on April 18, 2023

Postponed in Committee: Health, Human Services and Housing on May 3, 2023 with consent

No Action Taken in Committee: Health, Human Services and Housing on May 31, 2023 with consent

Passed Committee: Health, Human Services and Housing on _____.

Passed Committee: Ways and Means on _____.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

TBD