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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Oklahoma City Invests \$1 Million in Sisu Youth Services to Address Youth Homelessness**

**Oklahoma City** - Today the Oklahoma City Council unanimously voted to award Sisu Youth Services \$1 million of Community Development Block Grant funds to renovate and open a new facility for drop-in and emergency shelter services to youth experiencing homelessness.

Rachel Bradley, Executive Director of Sisu Youth Services, addressed the Oklahoma City Council meeting to express Sisu's gratitude and emphasize the importance and timeliness of this investment in solving the youth homelessness crisis in Oklahoma City.

"According to the most recent Point in Time Count in Oklahoma City the number of unaccompanied youth jumped nearly 35 percent from the previous count," she said. "Your actions today, alongside our other funding partners, will help us reverse this trend and intervene in the cycle of homelessness for some of our city's most vulnerable young residents."

According to the 2022 Point in Time Count, an annual one-day homelessness census in Oklahoma City, unaccompanied youth jumped approximately 34.4% from the last count in 2020. The Point in Time report defines unaccompanied youth as people under age 25 who aren't presenting or sleeping in the same place as their parent or legal guardian, including single people, couples, and groups.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides annual grants on a formula basis to states, cities, and counties to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons. The money is given from HUD to the City of Oklahoma City and then awarded through an application process with the Citizens Committee for Community Development.

The CDBG funding finishes out the first phase of Sisu Youth Services' capital campaign and allows the organization to begin the renovation of a new drop-in center and emergency shelter. This phase will expand the capacity of Sisu's emergency shelter for youth ages 15 to 22 years old to a total of 20 beds.

Phase One would not have been possible without the generous support of other community organizations including Arnall Family Foundation, Sarkeys Foundation, Inasmuch Foundation, and the Cresap Family Foundation.

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*Sisu Youth Services is a low-barrier, identity-affirming space in our community where unhoused transition-age youth find the shelter and support they need to pursue the life they want. We offer overnight emergency shelter, a drop-in center, case management services, and transitional housing programs for unhoused or at-risk youth between the ages of 15-24.*