



City Council

Approval of a Coordinated Entry Program Funding Request

Agenda Date: 2/26/2019
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Title

Approval of a Coordinated Entry Program Funding Request

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a Committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve an allocation of \$10,000 from City Council goal money for coordinated entry (CE) dollars for single adults to be contracted with the county and allocated through the Family Support Center (FSC).

Report

Issue:

Whether to fund the request for additional funds.

Staff Contact:

Steve Hall, City Manager, 360.753.8370

Keith Stahley, Director of Community Planning and Development 360.753.8227

Presenter(s):

Consent Item - None

Background and Analysis:

As a condition of receiving State and federal funds for homeless services, Thurston County is required to put in place a system of coordinated entry for homeless individuals and families to access available housing and shelter facilities.

The County achieves this through a contract with the Family Support Center (FSC) who coordinates entry for families. In addition, FSC subcontracts with CYS for young adults and Sidewalk for the placement of single adults. Any expansion to this service should be realized through an expansion of Thurston County's contract with Family Support Center.

It has been suggested for some time that the overall coordinated entry system is underfunded so that

each of these agencies must rely on other funding to meet coordinated entry needs of the homeless population. Coordinated Entry is a key component in the homeless service delivery system and data from this system should support funding and operational decisions.

Recently, Sidewalk sent a letter to local governments and others with a dire request for immediate funding to continue the coordinated entry for single adults due to a realization of depleted reserves. This request did not come from the Sidewalk Board and the other CE providers were not consulted in the decision to go to local governments for stopgap funding.

Since that time, the County and the three cities have been scrambling to determine what happened to the Sidewalk funding, what is needed to keep the system operating, and how to avoid future crises in the operations of Sidewalk. Sidewalk's request illustrates that our funding system for social services is not well coordinated and that Sidewalk did not have the financial capacity to meet their contract obligation to provide Coordinated Entry.

- **County**

The Board of County Commissioners agreed to support the Sidewalk request with \$20,000 to meet the immediate need of their \$40,000 request. No additional funding support has been identified. The \$20,000 will be made available through FSC, as they have a contract with the County for Coordinated Entry Services.

- **Tumwater**

Tumwater has proposed \$12,500 to support Sidewalk's request that would be contracted through the FSC. Tumwater was scheduled for action on at the February 5th City Council meeting. Tumwater requested an audit but Sidewalk cannot get one done until February, so Tumwater was considering moving ahead with the possible action in advance of the audit.

- **Lacey**

Lacey has agreed to pay \$56,000, on a monthly basis, to support coordinated entry at the Lacey Veteran's Hub.

- **Olympia**

On February 5, the Council heard from Trish Gregory (FSC), Phil Owen (Sidewalk) and Schelli Slaughter (Thurston County Public Health about the CE system and funding issues.

In general, the Council was quite concerned that the Sidewalk request came without a warning in a crisis mode. Some members also expressed frustration that the request was not coordinated with the other CE providers and there was no long-term plan to avoid future lapses in service. Members were also displeased about the being put in a difficult position by Sidewalk and questioned the organizations administrative capacity to deliver the service in a reliable fashion.

After deliberations, Olympia City Council, deferred action on the Coordinated Entry (CE) funding request from Sidewalk. The item has been added to February 12 City Council agenda with a proposed investment of \$10,000 as a stopgap measure. If approved, the proposal is that the funds will go to Family Support Center (FSC) through the County as the primary CE

contractor.

The Council discussed four conditions for the funding:

1. They would like to see the results of the County's contract monitoring for all the CE providers
2. They indicated that in the future that they would only respond to needs brought forward by the entire CE triad through the county and not a single partner asking for funds
3. They would like to better understand the overall funding picture for CE with all the providers and have a regional plan about how to adequately fund the system on an ongoing basis. (This topic will be discussed at the upcoming Community Investment Partnership (CIP) meetings supported by Thurston County. Part of the mission of the CIP is to make recommendations to the County Commissioners about recommended levels of funding for CE in Thurston County.)
4. The \$10,000 from Olympia would go to FSC through the County and not to Sidewalk directly.

Some Councilmembers were open to considering additional funds later, but consensus was not clear.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known)

Continuation of the coordinated entry work is critical to the efficient use of scarce housing and homeless facility resources available in Thurston County.

Options:

1. Fund \$10,000 for CE with conditions listed above
2. Fund the request with no conditions
3. Fund a different amount at Council discretion
4. Provide no funding

Financial Impact:

City Council goal money for 2019. Current balance \$142,499.

Attachments:

Letter from Sidewalk
Sidewalk Financial Documents