

PORT OF TACOMA COMMISSION
STAFF BRIEFING MEMO



Item No: 10A
Meeting Date: 4/11/2023

DATE: March 30, 2023
TO: Port of Tacoma Commission
FROM: Eric Johnson, Executive Director
Sponsor: Alisa Praskovich, Chief, Special Projects & Commission Relations
Project Manager: Matthew Mauer, Government Affairs Manager
SUBJECT: Potential Alternative to Assist Local Governments in Responding to Homelessness

A. BRIEFING REQUESTED

This memo is intended to brief the Commission on a proposed course of action to address homelessness in response to Resolution 2022-19-PT directing Port staff to develop alternatives to assist local governments in responding to an increasing number of people experiencing homelessness.

B. BACKGROUND

After the passage of Resolution 2022-19-PT, staff began preliminary discussions with local municipalities to gauge what the Port can do to help with the ongoing homelessness crisis. The City of Fife came back with an option that is worthy of consideration and could result in forging an interlocal agreement between the Port and City of Fife to formalize a partnership.

As a part of Fife's ongoing efforts to alleviate persons experiencing homelessness on their streets, they initiated a "street outreach" effort to engage homeless individuals and coordinate a response to their unique needs. This outreach program is based on the framework of similar federal programs, the outline of which is included in this memo for your reference. The City has funded its outreach efforts through grants from the Department of Commerce and Pierce County. The funding from Pierce County ends June 30th, 2023, and they have proposed the Port could assist by paying for an additional year to continue their efforts at current levels, at a cost of \$72,000. An outline of the proposed use of the funds is attached to this memo.

Fife has seen success with their Jobs Program getting people out of their current situations and providing shelter, food, jobs, and training to help people get back on their feet. However, because of the job element, only some seeking assistance are a good fit for the Jobs Program. This is where the street outreach portion of the City of Fife's services comes in. A person in need is first identified in one of three ways through the outreach program:

- **Walk-in:** At the Fife Community Center, they have individuals visit who are looking for community resources. In this case, their Community Navigator or Case Manager will meet with the individual one-on-one (in-person or over the phone).

- **Outreach:** Through the Fife Police Department or the Community Navigator or Case Manager working in the community.
- **Referral:** When a community member or organization comes upon an individual/household.

All three methods involve assessing individual needs based on conversations and questions regarding housing, food, and income status. The Fife team will connect them with the appropriate resource based on responses to these inquiries. Some of these resources may be in-house, such as a care package or assisting them in getting an ID or social security card. They may refer them to a community partner for services that the City does not offer. This process would involve making an appointment or sharing a person’s name within the community organization. According to Fife, it is their goal to create personal connections. If appropriate, they arrange transportation to the appointment by offering a bus ticket or other transport. Referrals are only part of getting the support; they attempt follow-up either in-person or over the phone to ensure they can get the help they need, see if they need further support, and let them know that we care about them.

In 2022 they assisted and connected **122 individuals** with additional resources, permanent housing, and access to help as a direct result of the street outreach program.

C. SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of work will include exploration of entering into an ILA to formalize the partnership to support their street outreach program or consider a one-time payment to the City in committing to at least one year of support for outreach program.

D. TIMEFRAME/PROJECT SCHEDULE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILA or one-time payment consideration by Port • ILA or one-time payment consideration by Fife • Current funding outreach FTE expires 	May 4, 2023 May/June 2023 June 30, 2023
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E. FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Total Cost: \$72,000

Source of Funds No funding source has been identified.

Item	Budget Estimate	Expenditure to Date	Additional Anticipated Expenditures	Anticipated Future Expenditures
Street Outreach Funding	\$72,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$72,000			

Financial Impacts: This is a one-time payment to the City of Fife.

F. NEXT STEPS

- Determine if the Commission wants to support this proposal and fund the City of Fife's street outreach program.
- Develop and negotiate ILA and one-time payment with the City of Fife.
- Prepare Action Item for Commission approval at the May meeting.

G. ATTACHMENTS

- Federal Street Outreach Program overview
- Expenditure breakdown of potential funding

Attachment 1

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Core Elements of Effective Street Outreach to People Experiencing Homelessness

Coordinated street outreach that identifies and engages people living in unsheltered locations, such as in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, encampments, and on the streets, plays critical roles within systems for ending homelessness. Effective street outreach reaches people who might not otherwise seek assistance or come to the attention of the homelessness service system and ensures that people's basic needs are met while supporting them along pathways toward housing stability.

Most street outreach in communities is currently funded through a patchwork of government programs and private resources, with varying mandates, requirements, and performance measures. It is also not funded at levels that would allow for implementation of the full range of activities and approaches described here in most communities. Communities should, however, be striving to strengthen the roles their street outreach programs play within effective systems for helping people who are living unsheltered return to stable community living in safe and affordable housing.

This document, which was developed collaboratively with our partners at Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), is not intended to replace the mandates or metrics of individual programs. Rather, it is intended to identify core elements of effective street outreach that can be implemented under various funding streams, and which are broadly applicable to a variety of communities, geographic contexts, and sub-populations.

It is important to acknowledge that the implementation of such efficient systems requires access to housing affordable to people who are exiting homelessness. Strategies to expand the supply of such housing can be implemented by all levels of government and across the public and private sectors, including removing local policy barriers that limit housing development in the private market, prioritizing people experiencing homelessness for available housing resources, and expanding affordable housing opportunities through actions across all levels of government.

Core Elements of Effective Street Outreach

It is our hope that communities will use this list of core elements of effective street outreach to assess their current outreach efforts, at both the program- and system-level, and to identify opportunities to build upon and strengthen those efforts within their systemic approaches to ending homelessness, particularly unsheltered homelessness.

Street Outreach Efforts are Systematic, Coordinated, and Comprehensive.

- Street outreach is conducted on behalf of the community rather than one agency, requiring collaboration among multiple stakeholders. Knowledge of and engagement with all partners implementing street outreach efforts leads to more strategic use of resources and more comprehensive coverage and identification of all people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

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- Street outreach is coordinated among various providers engaged in ending homelessness and across different entities such as Federal, State, local government, and non-profits. These entities may utilize multiple funding sources to conduct street outreach.¹
- Street outreach efforts are also coordinated with the broader network of programs, services, or staff who are likely to encounter individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness, but whose regular focus is broader than homelessness. This might include law enforcement and other first responders, hospitals, health and behavioral healthcare providers, child welfare agencies, homeless education liaisons, workforce systems, faith-based organizations, and other community-based providers.
- Street outreach efforts are connected to coordinated entry processes. People sleeping in unsheltered locations are assessed and prioritized for assistance in the same manner as any other person assessed through the coordinated entry process.
- All street outreach contacts and housing placements are documented in HMIS or another local data system, such as an active or by-name list. Outreach workers have access to data systems to be able to input data, look up previous contacts with the person experiencing homelessness, and access information on available resources.
- Where street outreach providers or coordinated-entry processes have established data-sharing agreements and protocols, outreach providers can access data that helps them more effectively focus on supporting housing outcomes. Data on frequent use of shelter, emergency health services, and jails, when reviewed alongside HMIS or by-name list data, can lead to more comprehensive identification of high-need individuals.

Street Outreach Efforts Are Housing Focused.

- The goal of street outreach is to make connections to stable housing with tailored services and supports of their choice, such as health and behavioral health care, transportation, access to benefits, and more.
- Street outreach does not require individuals to enter emergency shelter or transitional housing as an 'interim step' or prerequisite to accessing stable housing. However, street outreach does make immediate connections to emergency shelter or temporary housing to provide safe options while individuals and families are on a pathway toward stability.
- To the extent possible, street outreach utilizes Housing First approaches that do not impose preconditions to make referrals to permanent housing, shelter, or other temporary housing, such as sobriety, minimum income requirements, absence of a criminal record, completion of treatment, participation in services, or other unnecessary conditions. Some housing options in the homelessness system may not be available due to specific eligibility criteria.

Street Outreach Efforts Are Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed, and Culturally Responsive.

- Street outreach utilizes a person-centered approach, focused on the individual's strengths and resources, and never makes assumptions about what a person might need or want.

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- Street outreach workers provide people experiencing homelessness with multiple opportunities to say 'no' and make repeated offers of assistance as necessary throughout the engagement process.
- Street outreach staff receive regular training in evidence-based practices, including trauma-informed care, and are proficient in utilizing such practices.
- Street outreach providers employ outreach staff with lived experience and offer commensurate compensation to all outreach staff.
- Street outreach workers provide warm handoffs to coordinated entry or to shelter, housing, and service providers (e.g. outreach staff may offer to physically accompany the individual to appointments to provide support).
- Street outreach efforts are respectful and responsive to the beliefs and practices, sexual orientations, disability statuses, age, gender identities, cultural preferences, and linguistic needs of all individuals.
- Street outreach efforts analyze local data regarding racial inequities and disparities among people experiencing homelessness and tailor and customize their efforts to ensure that equity is being achieved within their outreach activities and outcomes. This might include diversifying staff and leadership, assuring appropriate geographic coverage, training all staff in issues of equity and cultural competency, and regularly analyzing performance and outcomes with a focus on racial equity.
- Street outreach workers utilize problem-solving techniques to identify strengths and existing support networks, explore possible safe housing options outside the homelessness service system, such as reunification with family, and connect the individual to community supports and services.

Street Efforts Emphasize Safety and Reduce Harm.

- Street outreach providers have protocols in place to ensure the safety of all individuals seeking assistance. These protocols help ensure that people fleeing domestic violence, as well as dating violence, sexual assault, trafficking, or stalking, have safe and confidential access to the coordinated entry process and domestic violence services.
- Street outreach efforts utilize harm reduction principles, including non-judgmental, non-coercive provision of services and resources.
- Street outreach efforts accept that some individuals may not initially accept offers of emergency shelter or housing assistance. While maintaining a focus on creating connections to permanent housing, outreach workers establish rapport and reduce harm by providing critical, life-saving resources such as food, water, clothing, blankets, and other necessities.



Attachment 2: City of Fife Expenditure Breakdown of Outreach Program

Program Operations			
Costs Associated with Payroll			
Engagement	\$ 6,000.00	Purchase of lunches to get people to attend weekly outreach events. Advertisement of events, and food and hygiene bags for people in need.	We hold weekly outreach events at the Community Center in addition to physically walking the street and going to the known encampments. The outreach events have proved to be successful as resources are available on-site and in a warm/secure location.
Housing Search and Placement	\$ 32,000.00	First and last months rent, move-in expenses.	We have had a 33% success rate in placing people we have worked with in permanent housing.
Housing Stability Case Management			
HMIS Data Collection and Entry			
Services to Special Populations	\$ 24,000.00	Purchase of food, hygiene, and clothing, for those in need.	A number of people we have worked with are in need of clothing used on a regular basis as well as for job interviews. Food is also a top need for the population we are working with. There are limited food banks in Fife, and the ones we do have have very minimal operating hours.
Subcontracted Services			
Supportive Service Costs			
Transportation	\$ 5,000.00	Bus passes, uber rides, and gas for vehicles	Transportation to dr. appointments, additional services, and jobs are a regularly requested item.
Other Program Costs			
General Liability Insurance			
Office Equipment			
Office Internet			
Office Space			
Office Supplies			
Office Utilities			
Sub-Leased or Leased Unit Turn-Over			
Sub-Leased Unit Damages (during tenancy)			
Staff Training / Conference / Per Diem	\$ 5,000.00	Staff training and training for people looking for employment.	To assist in success we offer soft skills, and financial management trainings for people seeking services. Staff trainings are also included in this request.
Telephone			
Program Operations Category Sub Total	\$ 72,000.00		
Direct Costs SUBTOTAL	\$ 72,000.00		