

Human Services Department Director – Council Appointment Questions

Approach and Vision

1. Why do you want to be the HSD Director? How has your prior work and life experience prepared you for this challenge, and what unique perspective do you bring to it?

My life experiences and extensive work in both community and city government have prepared me to become HSD's Director.

It starts with family – in my case it's both my birth and chosen families that have shaped me profoundly. I am a daughter of Korean immigrant parents and grew-up in south King County. Unfortunately, some of my earliest memories are rooted in fear and pain associated with racism, xenophobia, sexism, violence, mental health, and poverty. My resiliency grew over the years in part due to community connections and governmental resources in times of need. As an adult, my greatest privilege is being mom to my daughter and son. I was intentional about creating an inviting home environment that promoted love, safety, creativity, identity, curiosity, and an overall tenor of belonging. My home became a place where other kids and family members stayed. My personal experiences and education informed my life's work to serve and seek justice. I continue to live my values at home, in community, and at work.

My professional relationship with the City of Seattle started when I worked for a community-based organization (CBO) located in the Chinatown-International District. The CBO had contracts with the Human Services Department (HSD) for its youth development program, through which I participated in trainings such as Youth Undoing Institutionalized Racism co-facilitated by HSD employees. I experienced first-hand the incredible and collaborative racial equity work led by HSD, which compelled me to eventually pursue an opportunity with the City.

I joined HSD in 2010 as a Senior Grants and Contracts Specialist. I was thrilled to work alongside the very leaders who inspired me. At HSD, including a temporary assignment with Council, I've held nine positions and was promoted six times in my nearly 13-year tenure. Throughout my tenure, I've endeavored to make improvements to reduce barriers or decrease institutional harms when possible. I've made dear friends, grieved with colleagues, celebrated life and work accomplishments, dedicated years to the Change Team to advance racial equity, and led groups of various sizes through significant change. I've partnered with community to tackle challenges and I've learned many important lessons.

HSD has endured a series of substantial institutional challenges in recent years due to several reorganizations and significant leadership turnover, with the last permanent director confirmed in 2018 and a total of four different directors helming the Department the last five years. Fortunately, HSD's incredibly diverse employees are dedicated, smart and hardworking—however, even with this advantage, any organization experiencing these kinds of changes will be challenged. I am fully committed to enhancing HSD's stability to ensure a thriving Department. A thriving HSD will yield improvements in our direct services, contracts, convening, and policy efforts. I understand the importance of staff morale in fostering synergy for every corner of the Department. Since 2021 as Acting Director, I've focused on staff well-being, rebuilding executive leadership, re-engaging the Change Team with leadership, and strengthening operations. Lasting transformational change takes an open-minded leadership team, relational culture, and appropriate amount of time.

I'm committed to HSD's mission and have loved each role, including my current Acting Director position. Post pandemic, we are less reactive and are coalescing around our future. It would be a tremendous honor to provide steady and accessible leadership as the next HSD Director.

2. What are your major goals for HSD over the next three years? What do you see as the primary challenges facing HSD in the coming years?

HSD strives to create a world where the needs of our residents are met so they can thrive. We prioritize community-driven solutions and work tirelessly to ensure community voices are heard. In the next three years major goals for HSD include:

1. Improving employee morale and building a strong workforce.
2. Strengthening operations of our financial, funding and contracting, and direct services.
3. Being accountable to racial equity goals through an updated strategic plan.
4. Building and nurturing relationships with diverse communities and regional partners.

Primary challenges facing HSD include (1) growing substance abuse, (2) sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, and (3) constraints due to a recovering economy.

Substance abuse, especially as it relates to growing fentanyl use, can be deadly, and is a significant contributor to homelessness and economic struggles. While King County and the state are leaders in this effort, the City must ensure our residents are getting their needs met through existing resources and exploring potential pilots. HSD will leverage our contract with Public Health Seattle-King County, and partnership with King County Department of Community and Human Services, to access treatment programs that are evidence-based and tailored to meet the needs of individuals with substance use disorders.

The homelessness challenge continues to be a top priority for HSD. HSD will continue to support the King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) as they develop specialized housing support programs that provide shelter, case management, and other essential services to individuals experiencing homelessness. As part of the city-wide Unified Care Team, HSD will continue to ensure that people living unsheltered are connected to shelter and services that meet their needs.

A struggling economy exacerbates poverty, which can trigger substance use and homelessness. HSD will continue to work with local employers and community-based organizations to develop employment and job training programs that provide essential skills and job opportunities in our Seattle Youth Employment Program and re-entry services for adults.

Addressing the challenges of substance abuse, homelessness, and a recovery economy requires a multi-faceted approach that involves various stakeholders. A motivated and supported staffing team with strong operational policies and procedures will improve the quality of our customer service. An updated strategic plan, developed in partnership with community and grounded in evidence-based practices, will illuminate for HSD a clear roadmap to advancing racial equity in human services. Working collaboratively with other regional partners and community members will increase the likelihood of broader and sustainable outcomes.

3. How will you ensure that Councilmembers and legislative staff receive timely information needed from your department for Council to make sound policy and budgetary decisions, including responses to Council requests even regarding priorities that differ from those of the executive branch?

The community looks to the City of Seattle, regardless of branch or department, to foster a thriving city for all. As Acting Director, I have prioritized timely and transparent responsiveness with accurate information to Councilmembers and legislative staff. HSD has solicited and welcomed feedback from the Council for process improvement. Internally, HSD adheres to defined communication protocols to ensure we provide factual information on a wide spectrum of complex human services issues including homelessness, community safety, behavioral health, gender-based violence, food access, and more. Clarity and expectations of timeliness have helped streamline communication across the Department of 400+ employees, four divisions, three office buildings, and hybrid work environments. As “One Seattle,” it is my expectation that we maintain respectful relationships across the City and communicate between the Executive and Legislative branches of City government effectively. When requested information is not immediately available, HSD will continue to offer explicit timeframes and follow through accordingly.

4. How will you work with other departments to achieve the goals of the City, particularly surrounding homelessness, which touches many departments? How about outside stakeholders, including KCRHA, and how does the department ensure accountability and results from our partners?

As a member of the Mayor’s multi-departmental Unified Care Team (UCT), HSD coordinates efforts with KCRHA and service provider partners to ensure offers and connections to shelter and essential services for those living unsheltered citywide. I am fully supportive of collaboration across partners for the implementation of the UCT’s geographically based teams this year; this effort will bring together community stakeholders to address challenging issues related to unsheltered homelessness in the city. We have dedicated and engaged leaders and staff to support this effort.

I believe in the importance of working in collaboration with the Mayor, Council, other City departments, and KCRHA to effectively reduce homelessness in our community, and look to KCRHA as the leading regional entity. I believe that a comprehensive approach, including supportive services, affordable housing, and community engagement, is essential in addressing homelessness.

HSD maintains a service agreement with KCRHA. As part of that development, HSD and KCRHA collaborated to ensure alignment on all documented expectations. This includes how and what is reported to HSD. As reports are submitted, HSD reviews the reports and discusses performance with the KCRHA. In addition to reviewing reports, the following monitoring activities are also taking place:

- Monitoring performance standards and program requirements
- Reviewing and processing monthly invoices
- Tracking expenditures to ensure that funds are used appropriately per contract terms
- Performing fiscal reviews of sub-recipients to ensure proper usage of funds and contract/grant compliance
- Identifying deficiencies in performance of fiscal compliance and corrective action as needed (in such cases HSD is also responsible for following up)

5. What is your organizational management approach? How will you review internal operations at HSD to determine if they warrant improvement? What is your leadership approach and how do you support staff morale at times of change?

My organizational management approach includes a culture of inclusion, curiosity, continuous improvement, and orientation towards solutions and outcomes (what we're trying to achieve together). It's important to me that people understand the 'why' and are clear about our greater role/mission. It's also important to me that HSD approach the work in partnership with community and are mindful of our positional authority as funder and direct service provider. How we approach our work is therefore a reflection of our values. I am moving HSD to embrace department-wide clear and measurable goals, racial equity and anti-racism principles, and collaboration.

As public stewards, it is essential that we regularly review and assess our processes and procedures to identify areas for improvement, which we will do through feedback from staff and clients, as well as data analysis and benchmarking against other organizations. One of my goals is to strengthen our operations in financial, funding and contracting, and direct services. We will develop a framework, including schedule and training, on how HSD updates its policy and procedures. Having a proactive process improvement structure will ensure we're methodical and current. Having visibility to the process will also increase trust.

I am an adaptive leader and have made meaningful contributions throughout my career in community and in government. A foundational facet of my leadership approach and support of morale is through relationships. Consistent engagement, collaboration, and communication are important. I celebrate accomplishments and recognize people and teams for their efforts. I will continue to collaborate with HSD's Senior Leadership Team, Change Team, Caucuses, Labor, and other employee groups to improve things that matter, such as our commitment to the Race and Social Justice Initiative and other significant opportunities to come. I have utilized other City resources such as the Office of the Ombuds, who is currently engaging staff to assess morale so we can make improvements. I care deeply about employee wellbeing and fully appreciate this is an ongoing endeavor and not a one-time activity.

Leading with a Racial Equity Lens

6. What is your role in moving HSD to becoming an anti-racist multicultural organization and support the implementation of the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative?

I believe that every individual has the right to live and thrive in a world free from racism, discrimination, and prejudice. Our society has deeply-rooted inequalities and systemic racism is prevalent in government institutions, organizations, and policies. HSD is not immune to this and we have a responsibility to act. I have been a Change Team member since I joined HSD over a decade ago and led special projects such as administering a special RSJI funding process. I am also a member of the Asian Pacific Islander Caucus and have participated on a city-wide affinity group. As a former Planner, I have utilized the city's Racial Equity Toolkit in developing requests for proposals.

As HSD Director, I will expand my commitment to moving the Department towards becoming an anti-racist multicultural organization. We know that our workforce, stakeholders, and the broader community are diverse and that our policies and practices must be equitable.

I am committed to:

- **Acknowledging Racism:** Recognizing that racism exists within their organizations and taking responsibility for addressing it is important. This requires creating space for honest and open conversation about the prevalence of racism and the ways in which it affects people.
- **Examining Policies and Practices:** A thorough assessment of existing policies and practices will be conducted to identify any hidden or overt biases. This includes examining how hiring and promotion decisions are made, how budgets are allocated, and how feedback is given to employees.
- **Diversifying Leadership:** HSD will thrive with diverse leaders across the department that reflect the communities they serve. This means actively recruiting, promoting, and retaining people of color.
- **Training and Educating Team Members:** Base-line training that addresses racism, diversity, and inclusion should be provided to all employees, including senior leadership. This training should be ongoing and address topics such as unconscious bias, microaggressions, and cultural competency. The City's Racial Equity Toolkit, racial equity power analysis, and Undoing Institutionalized Racism (UIR) by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (PISB) are important City-sponsored tools and community-led frameworks for more transformative change. Notably, PISB's [Anti-Racist Organization Principles](#) include (1) Analyzing Power, (2) Developing Leadership, (3) Gatekeeping, (4) Identifying and Analyzing Manifestations of Racism, (5) Learning from History, (6) Maintaining Accountability, (7) Networking, (8) Sharing Culture, (9) Undoing Internalized Racial Oppression, and (10) Undoing Racism. We need access to a variety of resources and HSD has a long history with UIR.
- **Listening and Engaging:** HSD must actively listen to and engage with people who have experienced racism. This means creating welcoming spaces for people to share their experiences and concerns, and taking action to address those concerns when possible.
- **Setting Goals and Tracking Progress:** HSD needs clear racial equity goals that are baked into its updated strategic plan.

HSD shares in the above work and I will support my teams to implement and lead by example, as well as ask employees to be active practitioners and learners.

7. How are HSD managers held accountable for doing the same thing in their individual work units, so that all levels of management are in alignment?

We will update HSD's strategic plan in the coming year. The strategic plan will inform annual division and unit work plans and ensure alignment, collaboration and clarity.

Employees, including managers, thrive when they are provided clear expectations, manageable workloads, have autonomy to perform their roles and responsibilities, and the support and tools they need to do their best work. HSD managers are held to a high standard and have regular coaching and training, annual workplans, and performance reviews. These proactive measures hold managers accountable. When additional support is needed, more intentional coaching is available with clearly articulated pathways for improvement. We've built an infrastructure that reinforces effective communication and culture through a cadence of meetings and other forms of communication.

The success of managers starts with a strong and consistent executive Senior Leadership Team. I have dedicated great time and care, in partnership with internal and external stakeholders, to hire and onboard the majority of HSD's senior leadership in the past two years. Our HSD executives are

extraordinarily talented, and they represent the diversity of our community.

8. How do you center community and prioritize voices of people of color in the work of HSD? Please provide some example outcomes of this centering.

Depending on HSD's top leadership and other related factors, there have been periods of great successes and there have been periods of misalignment. I am fully committed to centering community and prioritizing the voices of people of color in our work. This year, for example, HSD will partner with community to ensure their feedback improves our competitive funding processes (i.e. request for proposals). Some measures include:

- Conducting an equity analysis to assess the current funding process and identify any existing inequities. The analysis will focus on understanding the experiences, needs, and perspectives of underserved communities and identify any biases in the funding process.
- Creating an objective set of criteria for equity to guide the funding process. The criteria should and will include measurable indicators such as the diversity of funding recipients, the impact of the funds on communities of color, and the inclusion of community members in the decision-making process.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of our funding process on a regular cadence to review if we're advancing racial equity. Such evaluation will incorporate feedback from contractors and their communities, as well as measurable outcomes of the contracts. This ongoing evaluation is essential to proactively improve the HSD's funding process and ensure that it aligns with its equity goals.

By taking these steps and ensuring that community-centered, anti-racist practices are at the forefront of our work, we can better serve our communities and prioritize the voices of those who have been historically oppressed and marginalized.

Examples of how I've centered community and prioritized voices of people of color include having diverse representation on hiring panels including Change Team/Caucus and community members. Having diverse voices at each stage of hiring processes has resulted in excellent hires and increased trust. When leading or overseeing funding processes, workgroup and rating panels had diverse representation to ensure the selection yielded culturally responsive services with agencies more often led by people of color.

Human Services Department

9. What do you see as the biggest challenges facing HSD and the department's most promising unmet opportunities? What's in the way of realizing those opportunities?

In question #2 I offered some challenges and opportunities.

Additional examples include:

- Resource constraints - The field of human services is often challenged with maintaining quality services in the face of resource constraints which includes contracting requirements, competitive funding processes that may be disruptive to a network of providers, restricted use of funds, and available funding amounts. HSD will always operate within a budget and will have mixed fund sources, so the opportunity before us is to ensure we are reducing barriers to

funding, increasing collaboration with partners to fund community-driven solutions, and assessing our investments and their impacts.

- Staffing - HSD is heavily reliant on its staff to provide critical services. Organizations like ours are vulnerable to staffing shortages or turnover which can disrupt service delivery and put stress on existing staff. It's imperative we prioritize the wellbeing of our workforce and mitigate secondary trauma that is often associated with human services.
- Meeting the needs of our diverse populations - HSD employees are from diverse backgrounds and cultures, and many speak multiple languages. Still, we must continue to hire and retain diverse staff across all units to increase language access and increase our cultural responsiveness.
- Managing data and evaluating our impact -- Effective data management is essential in the human services field to track the delivery of services, outcomes achieved, and to measure program effectiveness. We are assessing our current database systems and will hire research-oriented and/or data scientist this year.

10. At a high level, could you please describe HSD's role in the oversight of funded organizations, communicating the outcomes of those investments, and ensuring that organizations are accountable for those outcomes? Are there any places where you see opportunities for improvement? When organizations are not meeting expectations, how does HSD work with them to help them improve?

As stewards of public funds, contract monitoring is an essential role to responsibly achieve the desired results. Monitoring provides HSD with the information necessary to assess the fiscal and programmatic accountability of service providers and ensures we're compliant with city, state and federal requirements. At a high-level those monitoring activities include:

- Monitoring performance standards and program requirements
- Reviewing and processing monthly invoices
- Tracking expenditures to ensure that funds are used appropriately per contract terms
- Performing fiscal reviews of sub-recipients to ensure proper usage of funds and contract/grant compliance
- Identifying deficiencies in performance of fiscal compliance and corrective action (in such cases HSD is also responsible for following up on the implementation of the corrective plan)

HSD is committed to prioritizing partnerships with community-led organizations and recognizes the need for strong relationships and clear communication to effectively address deficiencies. Some examples for mitigating deficiencies include technical assistance and/or a corrective action plan. Persistent deficiencies are escalated within the HSD and addressed depending on the severity of the issue.

HSD would like to be more strategic with our community-led partners who often represent the voices and needs of underserved communities and are better equipped to implement culturally responsive programs. We envision increased and proactive technical assistance (e.g., one-on-one or group trainings) and utilization of technology (i.e. video tutorials).

In the years to come, HSD is planning to develop an external dashboard to better communicate the outcomes of our various investments. In the interim, HSD is tracking outcomes and working with each of

our funded organizations to ensure that they are performing as outlined in their contract. Our [annual report](#) summarizes our efforts from the prior year and can be found on our website.

11. What specific and measurable outcomes should HSD look to when measuring success both within HSD and externally with human service providers?

When HSD has an updated strategic plan we will create a companion dashboard to transparently report our progress and lessons learned. This dashboard will be the basis for our annual report as well. HSD uses the Results Based Accountability framework for our strategic planning and theory of change efforts. In this framework you will see quantity, quality and impact performance measures. Our current framework focuses on the six investment areas:

1. Promoting healthy aging
2. Addressing homelessness
3. Supporting safe communities
4. Supporting affordability and livability
5. Promoting public health
6. Preparing youth for success

Our [annual report](#) offers both quantitative and qualitative data, and some measures include:

- # of unduplicated families served through family supports
- # of youth who participated in paid opportunities through Seattle Youth Employment Program
- # enrolled into the Utility Discount Program
- # of emergency meals served to low-income and vulnerable populations
- # of survivors who received advocacy services
- # of referrals to shelter
- # of those who received medical care through mobile medical van
- # of people who received long-term care assessments

Measurable indicators to assess HSD's operational successes include metrics such as on-time contracting and invoice reimbursements, feedback from competitive funding processes, and number of hiring applications and retention (do people want to work at HSD). This time these metrics are reviewed internally for process improvement purposes.

Public Health

12. How would you describe HSD's role with respect to the King County Board of Health? How does HSD ensure that the Board is aware of its concerns, priorities, and positions? How can we ensure that the City is partnering with Public Health to get the best results possible, particularly around issues of public health and behavioral health?

HSD has a critical role for the City's relationship with the King County Board of Health. HSD utilizes the Interlocal Agreement between the City and Public Health Seattle-King County (PHSKC) to ensure city residents receive maximal public health results and benefits. HSD's Health Integration Strategic Advisor directly engages the Board of Health and PHSKC to effectively support the three City Councilmember representatives. HSD ensures the representatives are apprised of the City's priorities and serves as a subject matter expert.

HSD administers a contract with PHSKC on an annual basis; the 2023 budgeted amount is approximately \$17.5 million. The contract is a critical avenue in leveraging PHSKC's technical and policy expertise such as epidemiology, communicable diseases, injury prevention, violence interruption, and health care for vulnerable populations. PHSKC's Director has a reporting relationship to the Mayor.

Dr. Faisal Khan and I have connected and I look forward to strategically partnering with him on matters of alignment and opportunity.

13. Over the past few years, several areas where the City provides funding to Seattle – King County Public Health have gained visibility over the past few years. These include COVID, behavioral health including substance-use disorders, abortion, and gun violence. How has HSD's partnership with Public Health changed over this time, and how should it continue to change?

HSD and PHSKC's partnership strengthened over the years with the overlapping and large-scale demands. We worked closely throughout the pandemic, for example, in keeping our older adult population safe while providing door-to-door food, supplies and vaccinations – a complete pivot from our ordinary congregate meal programming. We worked with health specialists to provide testing and vaccinations in de-intensified shelters. HSD and other city partners quickly stood-up the de-identified shelters and often relied on PHSKC to provide and interpret the most up-to-date health guidance. HSD continues to partner with PHSKC's to support the relatively new Regional Peacekeepers Collective strategy, as well passing through funding for increased access to critical health care such as abortion. Staff and leadership teams across both departments worked around the clock to meet the unprecedented challenges.

The partnership stems from our long history including previous disease outbreaks going back to SARS, Ebola and HIV/AIDS, to name a few. This also includes addressing the health care needs of people living unsheltered, pregnant and parenting teens, and people at risk for a myriad of communicable diseases, including individuals with mental health disorders and substances use disorders.

Moving forward, it's important to partner with Dr. Kahn to affirm what's working and identify opportunities to mitigate both the current and future needs for the City of Seattle.

14. The Interlocal Agreement between the City and Public Health has not been updated since 2011. Especially given all of these issues of mutual interest, would you support updating it to reflect the partnership's evolution? If not, what do you see as some triggers of an update?

Yes. Given the new leadership at both HSD and PHSKC, it'll be prudent to review both the Interlocal Agreement and contract. Updates may be necessary and I'm committed to partnering with Dr. Kahn and other key stakeholders such as the Mayor's Office and Council to engage in a thoughtful process.

15. The Public Health – Seattle & King County Fatal Overdose Dashboard indicates that the explosion of fatal overdoses is concentrated in the Seattle subregion, with 60% (589) of King County's 1,003 fatal overdoses in 2022. That represents a 72% increase over 2021, far exceeding the 9.8% increase in South King County in 2022 (280 fatalities or 28.7% of total in KC). Although HSD does not currently contract for behavioral health services (that being the purview of PHSKC and DCHS), given this trend, do you think it would be warranted for the department to take on an expanded role in regional policymaking and contracting in the areas of SUD prevention and treatment? If so, what would that look like? If not, what more can or should the City of Seattle do to address SUD and expand access to comprehensive

treatment services?

PHSKC and the King County Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) are best positioned to address the region's behavioral health crisis, and Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) specifically.

That said, the City has filled gaps and/or piloted programs in the past. When this occurs, HSD's role has a clear focus area and coordinates with partners. For example, HSD developed and/or funded harm reduction and drug user health services such as access to needles and condoms, and promoted efforts focusing on those greatest risk of becoming infected and dying during the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980's and 1990's.

Presently, as mentioned in question #12, HSD provides policy support to three Board of Health City Council representatives. Additionally, HSD represents the City of Seattle on a regional Opioid Abatement Council (OAC) as part of the Washington State Opioid Settlement funds. OAC's responsibilities include oversight of fund distribution, an annual review of expenditure reports, and development and maintenance of a centralized public dashboard or other repository of information. An update will be provided to Council as requested in the Statement of Legislative Intent [HSD-605-A-001-2023](#) by May 1, 2023.

King County Regional Homelessness Authority

16. How do you envision HSD working most effectively with the King County Regional Homelessness Authority, and how close is that vision to being realized? What steps will you take to ensure accountability and results from KCRHA for funds that Seattle has provided? How is HSD building and investing in its relationships with KCHRA partners?

HSD's role is both funder and partner to KCRHA as the contract administrator and member of the Unified Care Team. We work most effectively when organizational roles are clear, and communication with the right people is timely and transparent. HSD and KCRHA have both experienced transition throughout the year and we've worked thoughtful to strengthen our relationship.

Active contract monitoring is essential to achieving desired results. Some standard practices include:

- Monitoring performance standards and program requirements
- Reviewing and processing monthly invoices
- Tracking expenditures to ensure that funds are used appropriately per contract terms
- Performing fiscal reviews of sub-recipients to ensure proper usage of funds and contract/grant compliance
- Identifying deficiencies in performance of fiscal compliance and corrective action (in such cases HSD is also responsible for following-up on the implementation of the corrective plan)

Additionally, KCRHA and HSD have weekly meetings to ensure teams have access to timely information, support, and technical assistance as needed/requested.

HSD partners with KCRHA to support contracted outreach providers and have made ourselves available to assist in identifying partners and resources for new projects. Following the anticipated agreement with KCRHA as it relates to geographically based outreach and services outlined in Council Budget Action [HSD-035-C-001-2023](#), HSD will be well-positioned to communicate our role in supporting KCRHA in the months and years to come.

17. How is HSD working with KCRHA to ensure that Council Budget Action HSD-035-001-2023 is being implemented? The Executive proposed that HSD take on responsibility for geographically based outreach to those experiencing homelessness and Council shifted the body of work to KCRHA and provided funding to support this work administratively. How will HSD system navigators support KCRHA staff and contractors in their performance of this work? What is HSD's role more generally on the Unified Care Team, and how are its efforts tracked and managed?

HSD is committed to aligning with Council, the Mayor's Office, the community, and our regional partners on how to best leverage our resources to support individuals experiencing homelessness. While the CBA has yet to be finalized, we're encouraged by the progress made by our two organizations and look forward to reporting out to Council on our agreement once finalized.

HSD's role on the Unified Care Team as part of the newly designed geographic based teams is intended to help coordinate service delivery efforts and community relations within an assigned region. While HSD is not responsible for scheduling removals or conducting removal operations, our main objective is to support individuals at encampment sites by coordinating connections to shelter and services that meet their needs, in partnership with KCRHA and providers. HSD works with the UCT and KCRHA to plan this engagement efforts at encampment sites weeks, if not months in advance of a scheduled removal date.

Metrics related to this work are reported quarterly to Council as part of the Statement of Legislative Intent [HSD-301-A-001](#) report. At a high-level this includes offers of shelters, enrollments, and ethnicity data. HSD tracks client interactions, analyzes trends, leverages data from HMIS, and compiles results from custom HSD surveys (i.e., the decline data). HSD shares this data with UCT to support their SLI report. UCT is responsible for reporting on these and other efforts as part of its SLI. HSD will continue to track data that is useful in analyzing our ability to house unsheltered individuals (e.g., reasons why a person experiencing homelessness may decline an offer of shelter).

18. How is HSD working with KCRHA to ensure that Council Budget Action HSD-034-B-001 is implemented? This CBA expanded funding for a KCRHA contract to support vehicle residents as a stopgap while safe parking lots are being stood up. Please provide some specific examples of the work that KCRHA is doing to support vehicle residents and the outcomes of that work.

KCRHA is lead for program design and awarding a contractor once HSD transfers the funds. This program is in the planning phase.

Last year, KCRHA administered a request for proposal for an RV Safe Lot program which was awarded to the Low Income Housing Institute. To date, a property suitable to host the RV Safe Lot has not yet been identified so the funds have not been implemented. Additional funding for RV Safe Lots was included as part of the City's 2023 Adopted Budget which has been transferred from HSD to KCRHA for implementation.

Over the past year, the City of Seattle has been exploring City-owned properties that could support future safe parking efforts. HSD is lead on a landscape analysis which is currently in development. While the City owns various parcels and properties, there is not an abundance of unused properties that are suitable for RV Safe Lots. HSD has extended its landscape analysis to include parcels that are owned by

state and federal partners and those conversations are still ongoing.

Topical Questions

19. In the past, HSD has sometimes been very late in getting dollars to funded organizations. These delays can cause serious operational and fiscal issues for funded organizations. What steps has HSD taken to ensure that money is getting out the door faster? Does HSD have internal efficiency benchmarks to measure its own performance? What factors cause these delays, and to what extent can they be mitigated?

Ensuring our providers have timely contracts is a top priority. The majority of HSD's contracts are executed on time, however, there are some contracts that are delayed for a variety of reasons. In some cases, providers require extensive technical assistance. In some cases, HSD has experienced staffing shortages. There are times when contract negotiations are prolonged due to complexities related to budget and/or policy decisions. Regardless, we are committed to process improvement and have made great strides this year.

In 2023, HSD is implementing the City's contract management system so that providers have a more standard experience with City contracting processes, along with improved contracting procedures to ensure that contracts are implemented by their start date. HSD tracks annual Department-wide contract implementation statuses that are reported to Division Directors and their teams. The goal moving forward is 100% of contracts signed by the beginning of the contract period, most contracts spanning January-December.

20. Historically, HSD has been primarily a contracting organization, connecting organizations to funding. But I know that HSD staff were on the front lines helping to pivot shelter resources in the early days of COVID and, more recently, they provided on-site assistance to families in South Park who were affected by flooding. Is HSD's mission evolving? If yes, is the department appropriately staffed for increasing direct service provision? If not, what are the trade-offs when staff who are not professional responders become involved in response to emergent situations?

Generally, HSD functions as a funder, convener, and direct service provider to fulfill our mission. Contracting with community-based organizations, which represents 79% of our budget, is a critical way the City connects people with resources they need. As a direct service provider, for example, HSD provides case management across King County, enrolls qualified residents into the Utility Discount Program, and provides youth with employment opportunities.

Many City departments have a unique role during times of emergency. HSD serves as the City's lead for Mass Care and Housing function, otherwise known as ESF 6. Our role is to convene a group of agencies and lead a coordinated response during an emergency. HSD recently filled this role during the December South Park Flooding event by executing contracting with three community-based organizations. Many of the providers acquired for this emergency were not trained in emergency response. HSD worked alongside providers and was able to onboard new partners, house families, support individual needs, and provide food.

During HSD's response to COVID, it was all hands on deck to support our most vulnerable in homelessness shelters that needed to be de-intensified. HSD staff also supported front line providers such as food banks, by taking on shifts in kitchens and preparing and delivering meals to those self-isolating at home. While these efforts were outside of "normal operations" for the Department, they

directly aligned with our mission and Continuity of Operations Plan to serve and support the most vulnerable in our community.

I'd like to thank the many HSD employees who worked around the clock, during holidays and weekends, to achieve the above. HSD employees are servant leaders and ready to help. I've personally taken many shifts with my colleagues and even bonded with CEO Dones during our shift at a severe weather shelter at City Hall. While HSD is prepared for occasional emergencies and associated planning, we are tracking emergency response trends and assessing capacity needs.

21. In October of last year, HSD staff briefed this committee on the ongoing HSD Financial Improvement Plan. At that time, there were a few objectives still outstanding, and I'd like to get updates on them from you, along with some information about why each of them matter and how they will mean better service for HSD's customers.

a. Is HSD's federal and state billing current?

HSD has made considerable progress in reducing aged receivables through implementing process improvements and better coordination with funders. This work continues to be a high priority for the Department through 2023.

b. Has account review been completed, with all disparities reconciled?

HSD is in the process of implementing its financial transactional quality assurance function (G/L project cost accounting team) and all 2022 reconciliations are complete. In 2023, HSD will contract with an external certified public accountant firm to perform a comprehensive review of historical Human Services Department (grant) fund balances.

c. Has HSD finalized its new cash forecasting approach?

A new cash forecasting model has been implemented and is being refined as current year data is received.

d. Has HSD finalized its new methodology for overhead cost allocation?

In 2022, HSD worked with City finance and business systems teams to streamline the overhead allocation processes. In 2023, HSD will review the trade-offs, risks, and internal capacity needs associated with a methodology change with City finance to determine the appropriate implementation timing.

22. From HSD's perspective and based on what providers are sharing, to what extent do wage equity concerns put at risk funded organizations' ability to deliver services? Council added \$7.1 million to HSD's budget in 2023 merely to provide contract inflation consistent with the CPI-W increase, and the recent UW study found that nonprofit human service workers were underpaid by 37%. How does HSD both maximize the reach of funded services and advocate for those services to be fairly compensated? (This question acknowledges Statement of Legislative Intent HSD-300-A-001 and doesn't request analysis or recommendations – it's looking to understand HSD's approach to balancing two priorities.)

HSD administered the request for proposal that led to the contract with UW for the wage study. HSD

leadership, myself included, attends a monthly Seattle Human Services Coalition sponsored “Wage Equity Funding Roundtable.” This roundtable includes regional funders including several foundations, Department of Education and Early Learning, King County’s Department of Community and Human Services, and HSD. I have heard providers share their concerns and reviewed the study, and I remain committed to the roundtables and other venues to discuss potential opportunities. The contract with UW and Seattle Human Services Coalition, respectively, also includes briefings to policy makers. HSD promotes information sharing and designed the contracts to support this intentional effort.

HSD agrees that competitive wages will support recruitment and retention efforts, which will have an impact on the quality of services. Now that we have access to baseline information, analysis and recommendations, it’s clear all funders have work to do to address this challenge.

HSD contracts are typically awarded from Request for Proposals. As noted in question #2, one of my goals is to strengthen our funding and contracting policy and practices. One critical question we will ask is ‘how can HSD promote equitable wages.’ For example, we’ll need to consider how we review budgets and how we score applications. HSD is committed to engaging community as we review our funding process and contracting policy and procedures in 2023.

Aside from how we award providers, we typically negotiate contracts in partnership with each provider. We review costs within the awarded amount and agree upon performance metrics accordingly, including quality, quantity and impact. In the absence of additional resources, we will need to determine how to scale services. Again, HSD is committed to engaging community to find a path forward and will pay close attention to the broader funding community.

23. What is HSD’s vision for the community safety work housed in the new Safe and Thriving Communities division, and how does it align with/complement Mayor Harrell’s expanded vision for the new CARE Department, which will be geared towards a nonpolice response to emergencies? HSD established the Safe and Thriving Communities Division in part to shift safety investments into community-based organizations, focusing on BIPOC communities. Could some of the work of the Safe and Thriving Communities Division help inform programming in the CARE Department? How and when will HSD evaluate the impact of the division’s work on the communities it was created to serve?

HSD’s Safe and Thriving Communities (STC) Division embodies a vision for community safety that centers those most impacted by violence and trauma in the prioritization, design, and implementation of strategies that get to the root of violence in our communities. STC’s investments are about building community-level capacity and a collective response within BIPOC communities to respond to critical incidents, support victims and their families, and build the foundation for viable economic and educational pathways for communities that have been historically disproportionately negatively impacted by community violence and the criminal legal system.

STC’s work complements the Mayor’s expanded vision for the new CARE Department as it implements a nonpolice response to emergencies. While STC is focusing on community-led solutions, CARE will offer an alternative response. STC can connect the perspectives and experiences of community-driven responses. CARE’s data can inform where there may be gaps in services that STC can solve for. Additionally, there are other collaborative opportunities such as cross-departmental trainings (e.g. trauma informed care). Recently, I connected with Director Reba Gonzales to inquire about their research and community engagement data to help inform an upcoming STC community safety request for proposal – collaboration also means avoiding duplicate efforts and planning together.

HSD is continuously monitoring the impact of STC's work at the program level through performance-based indicators tied to funded organizations' contracts and theories of change. Embedded in STC's 2023 and 2024 activities is a deeper dive into the impact of STC's investments on the community and the individuals participating in the programming. STC is also incorporating feedback it received from the Office of the City Auditor on past community safety efforts and some key contractors such as PHSKC Regional Peacekeepers Collective have already identified an evaluator.

24. The recent gender-based violence RFP process unfortunately resulted in gaps in services for several marginalized communities in Seattle. We were (are) happy to support your efforts to mitigate the impacts for 2023. However, what will HSD do differently to ensure a comprehensive range of services is funded for the City's diverse communities, and that prior investments in human services infrastructure are preserved, in future funding allocations?

All of HSD's planning and request for proposal (RFP) processes include a racial equity analysis, data and research review, community engagement, and alignment with city priorities. These components of RFP development aim to ensure that the community's needs and priorities are met and addressed through the Department's investments. HSD will continue to invest time and resources into well-designed, community informed, and equitable funding processes to ensure that the City invests in a comprehensive range of services for the City's diverse communities.

The recent gender-based violence RFP was an open, competitive process with essentially the same budget amount (AWI was added). As a result of the community rater recommendations, and some existing providers not applying, there were changes to the previously funded system. For example, there was an increased investment in previously under resourced services for indigenous communities, refugee and immigrant communities, and commercially sexually exploited individuals.

An RFP with the same level of funds will typically not result in awards that maintain prior investments. There are ways to ensure funding is distributed in a more prescriptive manner if that's the desired result. As an example, an RFP can distribute funds where 1/3 is allocated towards case management, a 1/3 towards flexible spending, and a 1/3 towards legal services. Another important improvement is to ensure key partners who are not applying for funds are co-designing the RFP and serving on the rating panel. Stakeholder engagement is critical at each stage of the process. Finally, if there is a provider who offers a unique service for a unique priority population, HSD may consider if that provider should receive a direct contract.