SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL
CENTRAL STAFF

June 20, 2019

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Members of the Select Committee on Homelessness and Housing Affordability
From: Jeff Simms, Central Staff
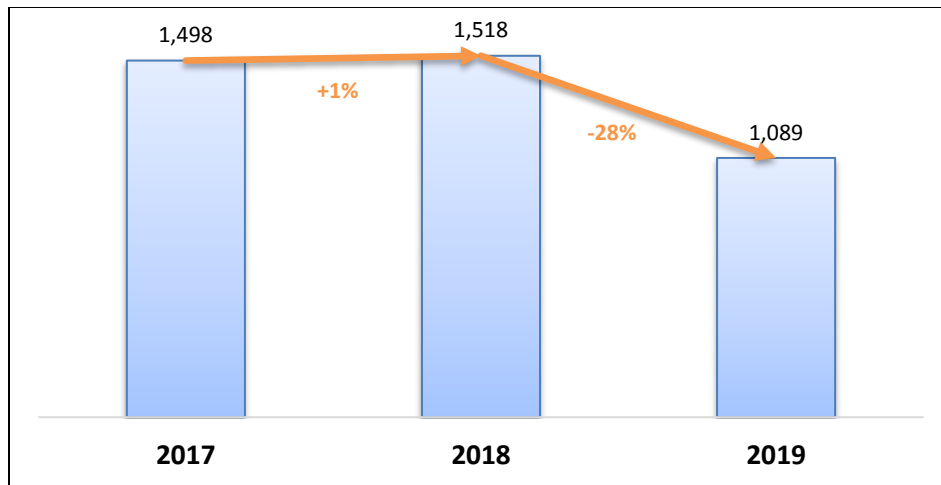**Subject:** Background on Youth Homelessness in Seattle

On Monday, June 24, 2019, the Select Committee on Homelessness and Housing Affordability (Select Committee) will receive briefings on and discuss homelessness among unaccompanied youth and young adults (youth). This memo provides context for the planned presentations by All Home and Youthcare.

Point-in-Time Count

In the latest point-in-time count for King County (titled *Count Us In, 2019*), youth homelessness had decreased by 28 percent from the prior year.

Figure 1: Number of Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness

Reliability of Point-in-Time Count Findings

The findings from the point-in-time count have received some criticism, particularly related to the estimates of chronically homeless adults. However, unlike the point-in-time count's findings of a large decrease in the number of unsheltered, chronically homeless adults, the decrease in youth homelessness has not received substantial criticism. The perceived reliability may stem from different methodologies. The estimation of chronic homelessness is derived by mathematically applying the results of a randomized survey to the number of individuals located by the actual street count. In contrast, the street count teams count the number of individuals and estimate their ages, which results in the estimate of the number of youth experiencing homelessness.

It is notable that teams conducting the point-in-time count were provided substantial support from youth currently or recently experiencing homelessness. Nearly one-fourth of the people with lived experience of homelessness who served as guides to help the street count teams locate individuals experiencing homelessness were youth.

In addition, the methodology for the youth homelessness count utilized additional best practices for youth that have emerged in recent years. For example, the count included a site-based survey of all youth at certain locations, even if they are not experiencing homelessness, to better locate the population, including at libraries, schools, community centers, and youth serving organizations in the county. Given the different methodologies, the findings related to youth homelessness may be more reliable.

Investments in Ending Youth Homelessness

The decrease in youth homelessness also corresponds with a significant increase in resources for addressing youth homelessness. In 2017, All Home was awarded a $5.4 million federal grant to accelerate efforts to end youth homelessness. The community plan for the grant allocated these funds among the five projects listed in the table below.

Table 1: Allocation of Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project Grant Funds

Project	2-Year Budget	Description
Bridge Housing	$2,932,216	Short-term placement in a transitional housing program until a rapid re-housing unit is located.
Navigators and Diversion	$1,276,368	Training all providers in housing navigation and diversion services and providing a flexible funding pool for diversion.
Youth Engagement Team	$813,244	Multi-disciplinary teams to help youth and families reunify or access short-term housing while services are delivered (immediately prior to or within days of experiencing homelessness).
Behavioral Health Crisis Response	$340,416	24/7 mobile crisis teams to deescalate crisis that have access to crisis stabilization beds that can be used for up to 14 days.
Planning Board	$60,000	Planning grants to support implementation and coordination, as well as compensation for youth participating on the board.
TOTAL	**$5,422,244**	

Potential Follow-up Questions

Councilmembers may want to consider the following areas for follow-up and exploration:

1. How have the demonstration funds been invested compared with the plan proposed in the application? What implementation challenges have the demonstration projects faced? Have the identified challenges resulted in modifying how funding is allocated?

2. How do the projects receiving support from the demonstration funds differ from work underway prior to the grant funds being received? Has this resulted in changes to programs that existed prior the demonstration projects? What is being done differently that is working better?

3. What lessons from the work to end homelessness among youth can be applied to other populations experiencing homelessness?

cc: Kirstan Arestad, Central Staff Director
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