

2021 Seattle City Council Budget Action

Council Budget Action: Agenda

Tab	Action	Option	Version
HOM	005	E	001

Budget Action Title: Repurpose 8.0 FTE for a new Homeless Outreach and Provider Ecosystem in HSD, add \$2,100,000 GF to HSD, and state legislative intent

Ongoing: Yes Has Budget Proviso: No

Has CIP Amendment: No Has Attachment: No

Primary Sponsor: Tammy Morales

Council Members:

Staff Analyst: Jeff Simms

Council Bill or Resolution:

Date		Total	LH	TM	KS	AP	DJ	DS	AL	BC	LG
	Yes	0									
	No	0									
	Abstain	0									
	Absent	0									

Summary of Dollar Effect

See the following pages for detailed technical information

	2021 Increase (Decrease)	2022 Increase (Decrease)
General Fund		
General Fund Revenues	\$0	
General Fund Expenditures	\$2,100,000	
Net Balance Effect	\$(2,100,000)	
Total Budget Balance Effect	\$(2,100,000)	

Budget Action Description:

This Council Budget Action would replace the Unsheltered Outreach and Response Team included in the Human Services Department's (HSD's) budget with the Homelessness Outreach and Provider Ecosystem (HOPE). This action would add \$2.1 million GF to HSD's budget for hotel staffing and capacity. In addition, the budget action would state legislative intent for the use of more than \$26 million in Emergency Solutions Grant COVID (ESG-CV) funds in the 2021 Proposed Budget.

In 2020, more than 600 shelter beds have been relocated to or established in hotels utilizing a combination of City and County funding. The use of hotels has deintensified existing shelter programs and created non-congregate shelter opportunities for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. This budget action would state the Council's intention for the use of ESG-CV funds in HSD's 2021 Proposed Budget, as follows:

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"ESG-CV funds in HSD's 2021 Proposed Budget should prioritize funding eligible expenses related to maintenance of shelter capacity purchased by the city as of November 23, 2020, including beds located in hotels, should those expenses exceed other available resources designated or appropriated for that purpose. Funds should not be expended to increase shelter, rapid re-housing, or homelessness diversion capacity if sufficient funding to maintain current programs is not available."

This action would repurpose the 8.0 FTEs proposed for the Unsheltered Outreach and Response Team. The repurposed staff would constitute the new HOPE team. HOPE would coordinate and support community-based agencies contracted to provide homelessness outreach, and City staff would coordinate litter picks, trash removal, provision of sanitation and hygiene services, storage or retrieval of personal property, and, when circumstances require, relocation or removal of property. Removals would not be used as a first response to encampments. Instead, City departments would collaborate with providers to address obstructions and behavior through thoughtful and respectful dialogue and problem-solving, engaging both unsheltered and housed residents and addressing specific neighborhood needs and priorities. The team would act within the parameters of a framework developed between the Mayor, Council, residents of Seattle, and those who are living outside. The framework, as emailed to Council offices on October 26, 2020, states the following:

(1) United front: Mayor, Councilmembers, and service providers lend their support to a common framework, and will prioritize available resources to implement these principles in practice.

(2) Plan of action: We commit to do the most we can under current conditions and the capacity of our provider network with new, significant, one-time resources, intending to earn support across the spectrum of stakeholders for this approach. Because of City of Seattle and King County investments, we expect a significant amount of permanent supportive housing to come on-line over the next year to help individuals who are chronically homeless. We commit to collaborate with providers to address capacity issues that may impact the ability to undertake the work that is planned for 2021, bearing in mind the need for expertise to work with culturally defined populations and people with complex behavioral health challenges.

(3) Set expectations: many if not most people living unsheltered in Seattle, including many who are longstanding residents as well as others who were last housed outside Seattle, will remain in that situation over the next year.

(4) Principles:

- In addition to supporting current resources, relocate at least 425 additional people from unsafe conditions on the streets into safe lodging (e.g., temporary hotels and enhanced shelters), through outreach that leads to placement in lodging appropriate to the needs of the individual given available resources.
- Focus lodging offers towards unsheltered people who face a variety of barriers to accessing lodging and permanent housing, a group that is disproportionately Black and Indigenous and disabled; and in situations with significant impact on individuals who are unsheltered, neighborhoods and the city as a whole (public safety; impact on struggling businesses and vulnerable neighborhoods; individual and public health, including COVID-19 vulnerability; public disorder).
- In recognition that our city cannot currently offer enough placements, the City will continue to make efforts to assist individuals camped in public spaces for the near term to care for themselves, connect with available supports, access hygiene and trash removal, while working to minimize negative impacts on them and on surrounding businesses and communities.
- The City will continue to advocate for additional resources at the regional, state, and federal level, but

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Seattle does not have, and will not have, sufficient lodging or permanent housing placements to match all or most of those living unsheltered over the next 15 months. There may be circumstances in which moving people is necessary, even in a pandemic, but in those limited cases such activity should be planned and implemented with great care and alternative workable living arrangements made available.

(5) Consistent messaging:

- COVID requires an approach that promotes and protects public health. Since the beginning of March and in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the City has primarily focused on conducting outreach and suspended scheduled encampment removals to limit the spread of the COVID -19 virus except in the most extreme circumstances. This approach is likely to continue through 2021.
- The only successful way to reduce the prevalence of people living unsheltered is to afford people access to lodging, housing and services that match their circumstances (attention to initial placement). For some, this is solely a matter of affordability with minimal supports, while for others this is a matter of affordability accompanied by appropriate support services to facilitate retention of housing over a longer period of time.
- Appropriate lodging for a particular person means accommodation that is accessible, adequate, and consistent with basic standards of shelter or housing, including support for hygiene, sanitation, food preparation, security, peace, privacy and dignity; and without barriers that could result in the individual being turned away or excluded.

(6) Outreach

- The Mayor, Council and providers commit to a transparent, accountable and collaborative co-design of a street to housing program that utilizes the temporary COVID-resources and on-going City funding for temporary lodging and permanent housing and is inclusive of other stakeholders, such as community associations and businesses. We recognize that time is of the essence, particularly as a result of COVID-19, the challenges for businesses in recovering from COVID economic impacts and the arrival of fall/winter weather. We agree to work together expeditiously, and in good faith with the common goal of housing unsheltered people.
- The City will continue to commit millions of dollars to address trash removal, hygiene, health promotion and harm reduction (sharps containers, health outreach in coordination with Public Health)
- The City concurs that removals will not be the first response and will collaborate with providers to address obstructions and behavior through thoughtful and respectful dialogue and problem-solving, engaging both unsheltered and housed residents, addressing specific neighborhood needs and priorities.

(7) Lodging and Housing

- The City will work with providers to coordinate, screen and match individuals based on the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and HUD requirements identifying the best lodging and permanent housing resource for their situation and needs. Lodging and housing availability will be transparent and known to those doing actual outreach and screening work, insisting on race equity, ensuring resources do not skew disproportionately toward white individuals or people with few barriers.
- The staffing model for hotel programs must be realistic in light of the complex behavioral health needs of many participants, and the lack of available alternative sites or programs to meet their needs.

To ensure fulfillment of the above framework, this action would add \$2.1 million GF to HSD's budget to support hotel capacity and staffing. This funding would ensure the services and activities to respond to unsheltered homelessness have the resources to operate effectively in alignment with the above framework. The addition of these funds would ensure that City support for people currently sheltered in hotels continues rather than displacing those being served in order to create capacity to serve people

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currently living on streets or in public spaces. HSD would scale down this investment if alternate funding sources became available to continue hotel sheltering. These funds would be used to do the following:

- Prevent individuals now sheltered in hotels staffed by social service programs, such as the Downtown Emergency Services Center, Catholic Community Services, Public Defender Association, Asian Counseling and Referral Services, or Chief Seattle Club, from discharge or displacement due to lack of capacity;
- Support a staffing model for the planned expansion of hotel sheltering using ESG-CV funds to serve high-barrier individuals with complex behavioral health needs or who have a substantial impact on the surrounding community;
- Allow the expansion of hotel sheltering with ESG-CV funds to serve high-barrier individuals with complex behavioral health needs who do not display characteristics that make them high-risk for COVID-19, especially individuals and households who have inordinate impacts on surrounding businesses and communities;
- Support adaptations to existing housing approaches, such as rapid re-housing, to create permanent housing strategies for individuals with complex service needs who may be unlikely to succeed in programs that have lower intensity interventions; or
- Increase the number of hotel rooms procured for hotel sheltering for individuals with complex service needs.

Budget Action Transactions

#	Transaction Description	Position Title	Number of Positions	FTE	Dept	BSL	Fund	Year	Revenue Amount	Expenditure Amount
1	Increase appropriation for emergency shelter		0	0	HSD - HS000	HSD - BO-HS-H3000 - Addressing Homelessness	00100 - General Fund	2021	\$0	\$2,100,000