

Addressing Human Service Wages

HSD Response to Revised SLI 281-1-B-2

August 2, 2018

Human Services Department



City of Seattle

SLI 281-1-B-2 Request of HSD

- Convene Stakeholders to engage with the City regarding workforce equity
- Report outlining the process; issues identified; comparison of salaries of similar job titles; impacts of other government and regional funders; and how other funders address wages.



SLI 281-1-B-2 Request of HSD

- Human service providers serve the most vulnerable and marginalized in our community. Providers report high turnover and burnout rate.
- Providers have said that the intellectual, social, emotional and physical demands are compounded by the lack of equitable compensation.



Stakeholder Process

- More than 40 community based organizations and other Human Services sector stakeholders were invited, with 18 representatives from 13 organizations participating.
- Co-developed the desired result of: all human service providers in Seattle pay a living wage that allows them to recruit and retain a skilled workforce who can deliver quality services.
- Starting point – homeless service providers



Issues

1. Wage Gap

- The human services sector is largely made up of women and people of color.
- National data shows that 70% to 82.5% of Social Workers, Social and Community Service Managers, and Social and Health Service Assistants are women.
- Currently, the average Community and Social Service worker earns \$47,683 annually.

2. Recruitment and Retention

Wage Comparison

- Stakeholder participants agreed to focus on homelessness services and their case manager classification.
- Comparison to HSD's direct service staff is problematic because HSD does not provide direct case management services for people experiencing homelessness.



Braided Funding

- When funds are braided, two or more funding sources are coordinated to support the total cost of a service.
- Organizations may receive majority City funding or multiple funding sources including federal, state, county, and philanthropic funding.



Considerations for Next Steps

- The cost implications of raising provider wages are unknown.
- A human resources consultant could perform a wage study to collect salary data from provider to determine a recommended wage structure.
- The issue of braided funding requires a joint regional effort for all funders to consider raising wages together.

