



Tim Burgess
Seattle City Councilmember

April 17, 2015

Catherine Lester, Acting Director, Human Services Department
City of Seattle, Washington

Re: City Council Expectations for the Human Services Department

Dear Ms. Lester,

Congratulations on your appointment by Mayor Murray and confirmation by City Council to serve as the Director of the Human Services Department through April 13, 2019. Thank you for bringing your talents to work on behalf of the people of Seattle. You enter City service at a time when services for those who are most vulnerable, including those experiencing homelessness and the elderly, are top issues in Seattle. We have high hopes for your work and the work of your office.

As part of Council's due diligence regarding appointments, we conduct the public review you just experienced and we set out expectations for the tenure of appointees in a letter. This letter makes clear Council's expectations and has been placed in Appointment 22, which contains your appointment file.

The Council expectations, listed below, are intended to enhance the Human Services Department Director's accountability to the legislative branch. The expectations also provide a basis for Council evaluation of the director. Council expectations are in addition to the Mayor's expectations and the director responsibilities established in the City Charter and Seattle Municipal Code.

City Council General Expectations for the Human Services Department Director

The Human Services Department Director will be responsible for the direction of funding and operating programs and services that meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable people in our community - families and individuals with low incomes, children, domestic violence and sexual assault victims, homeless people, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

1. Relationship with Council. The director is expected to maintain a constructive working relationship with the Council, as demonstrated by these actions:

- a. Make available prompt and complete responses to Council information inquiries.
 - b. Provide updates on policy development, operational concerns and financial matters of significance, so that the Council is informed of significant changes or controversies before the information reaches the media and/or the Executive submits a request for Council action.
 - c. Assist in the research and development of Council policy initiatives.
 - d. Implement formal policy direction provided by the Council.
2. Communication, Public Involvement and Management. The director is expected to demonstrate strong communication, involvement and management skills, with particular focus on the following Council priorities:
- a. Public communication.
 - i. Inclusive outreach to relevant stakeholders.
 - ii. A strong ethic of customer service.
 - iii. Information available so the public can track the budget and the department's performance.
 - b. Broader Organizational Management. The Human Services Department operates in partnership with other City departments and community partners to accomplish its mission.
 - i. Coordinate productively with other City departments.
 - ii. Maintain strong working relationships with other governmental entities.
 - iii. Maintain strong working relationships with mission-related partners (builders, advocates, funders, tenants and owners).
 - iv. Operate within budget constraints and pro-actively manage expenditures.
 - v. Provide a fair and equitable approach to the award of City funding.
 - c. Personnel Management. The Director works with high-performing staff.
 - i. Develop and maintain strong employee engagement.
 - ii. Provide an inclusive work environment that offers equitable opportunities for all.
 - iii. Address issues of succession planning and the professional development of existing staff.
 - d. Service Delivery.
 - i. Ensure that on-going day-to-day services are provided effectively and efficiently, and that the department tracks its performance in delivering such services.
 - ii. Make certain the department is able to deal with localized emergencies or service disruptions and has thoroughly planned how to manage its operations in case of a City-wide emergency.

- iii. Continue outcomes-based approach with special attention to how investments and polices address community disparities.

The Human Services Department will lead the City's human services efforts through many challenges in the years to come. The Seattle City Council looks forward to working with you to ensure that the Human Services Department continues to contribute to strong, healthy communities and increase opportunities for people of all income levels to live in our city.

Sincerely,



Tim Burgess, Seattle City Council President

Cc:

Edward Murray, Mayor, City of Seattle

Seattle City Councilmembers

