Seattle Human Services

Memo

Date: November 17, 2022

To: **Councilmember Andrew Lewis, Chair, Public Assets & Homelessness Committee**

Councilmember Alex Pedersen

From: Michael Bailey, Deputy Director, Human Services Department

Subject: Response to SLI HOM-018-A-001 - Request that HSD provide a quarterly report on activities responding to unsheltered homelessness

Introduction

This report is offered in response to 2022 Statement of Legislative Intent HOM-018-A-001 (SLI), which requests a quarterly report from the Human Services Department (HSD) providing basic performance metrics and information on the Homelessness Outreach and Provider Ecosystem (HOPE) Team and the collaborating departments and agencies that manage the cleanup or removal of unsanctioned encampments. This report provides data collected by the HOPE Team from Quarter 3 (Q3), which spans July 1 – September 30, 2022.

Beginning this year, the King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) assumed oversight of City of Seattle-funded outreach and shelter contracts. The City and KCRHA work in collaboration to support those individuals living unsheltered by making shelter beds available and ensuring offers of shelter are made by outreach providers prior to a site being posted for removal. Once a site has been posted for removal, System Navigators from the HOPE Team are on-site to coordinate outreach and provide shelter referrals until the site is resolved. As KCRHA now oversees the deployment of City of Seattle-funded outreach providers, reporting on referrals originating with these providers will be reported on by KCRHA beginning with this submission.

King County Regional Homelessness Authority Update (as provided by KCRHA)

The King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) has eleven contracts (i.e., project service agreements) with nine different agencies to do homelessness outreach. According to the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS), these programs catalogued a total of 770 new households enrolling in the outreach programs during the quarter for a total of 2,575 households enrolled (see Table 1). A household enrolling a program typically reflects that a substantial relationship was established with the individual and does not reflect the full number of people the outreach agency encountered. For example, REACH's database for care coordination, which catalogues an individual once they have provided some degree of personally identifying information, catalogued 961 unique and known clients who were engaged in the last quarter for the two programs funded by KCRHA, approximately six times as many individuals as it entered into HMIS. Further, REACH estimates the number of unique and known clients it coordinated care for was likely less than half of the number of individuals encountered by its outreach workers.

Table 1: Homelessness Outreach Agency Data for July 2022 through September 2022

New Households Enrolled into Outreach Programs	Total Enrollments into Outreach Programs	Referrals to Shelter	Referrals to Authorized Encampment	Exits to Permanent Housing	Average HMIS Consent Rate
770	2,575	592	41	21	85%

In total, homelessness outreach agencies reported 592 referrals to shelter, 41 referrals to a tiny house village, and 21 exits to permanent housing. These numbers reflect successful connections to a shelter or housing situation, but not the total number for whom shelter or housing was unsuccessfully sought. For example, in the most recent quarter, data maintained by the HOPE Team recorded 1,258 shelter recommendations (duplicated) originating from homelessness outreach providers, only a portion of which were accepted. Similarly, REACH's care coordination data indicated that outreach workers discussed shelter placements with 491 individuals, more than eight times the number of shelter referrals that were entered into HMIS.

Because current entries into HMIS reflect such a small portion of the overall work of homelessness outreach agencies, KCRHA plans to explore different data reporting requirements when homelessness outreach contracts are rebid.

Q3 2022 Outcomes

Referrals and Enrollments

In Q3, the HOPE Team made 614 referrals (duplicated) to shelter, representing 542 unique individuals. This represents an increase of 156 referrals, or 34%, compared to Q2 2022. Year-over-year this represents an increase of 134% compared to Q3 2021. These referrals were made in collaboration with 17 outreach providers, from 92 encampment sites, and based on 1,258 shelter recommendations (duplicated). This was an increase from last quarter when the HOPE Team received 1,170 recommendations. In Q3, 100% HOPE Team referrals were to 24/7 enhanced shelters (76% of total referrals) or tiny houses (24% of total referrals).[1]

For shelter referrals where data on race was collected (83% of Q3 referrals), 54% were made to people experiencing homelessness who are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC). As evidenced by the 2022 Point in Time (PIT) Count and the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) data, such individuals are disproportionally represented in King County's homeless population. According to the 2022 PIT, BIPOC groups comprise roughly 52% of unsheltered individuals.

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[1] Types of shelter are defined as follows:
- **Enhanced Shelter** - shelters with 24/7-hour service and that provide many services such as meals, hygiene services, storage, and case management staffing to support individuals in leaving shelter for permanent housing.
- **Tiny House Village** - offer temporary accommodations for people who are living unsheltered and include small living structures, community kitchens, hygiene services, and case management to support exits to permanent housing.

In Q3, 250 individuals were confirmed by HSD as enrolling into the shelter they were referred to, an increase of 155% year-over-year. This represents an enrollment rate of 46.1% for the quarter, an increase compared to 41% in Q2. As mentioned in previous reports, shelter enrollment tracking is challenging due to the data match required between the HOPE Team and HMIS.[2] Individuals need to opt-in to share personally identifiable information with HMIS, which results in approximately 25% of shelter enrollments having anonymized data. The anonymized data makes it challenging to fully reconcile with HOPE Team referrals. KCRHA plans to develop a data reconciliation process to address the above-mentioned gap. Until such a process is developed, the enrollment data provided by HSD is likely to remain a significant undercount.

Operations

During Q3, HSD and the HOPE Team began work to improve data collection efforts. While the HOPE Team tracks offers of shelters made and accepted referrals, data on declined offers of shelter is not currently captured. System Navigators will begin tracking the reasons for declined offers of shelter in Q4. Beyond that, HSD is seeking the input of local governments and academia to further discuss data collection and related opportunities for collaboration. HSD hopes that this will allow us to better understand our clients and improve service delivery.

Additionally, the HOPE Team will sunset its original role and function at the end of the year and begin efforts to restructure the responsibilities of its members to align with the Unified Care Team's (UCT) new geographically based strategy. As previously mentioned, the UCT will work to leverage several geographically based teams to implement an array of solutions that go beyond encampment removals. These efforts are already underway as HSD staff are actively facilitating several regional outreach huddles in coordination with KCRHA and service providers across the city. The UCT expects that this new strategy will allow teams to build stronger relationships with community, housed and unhoused neighbors, outreach teams, councilmembers, and businesses within the region to deliver better results for all Seattle residents.

Key Outreach Activity

Through the facilitation of a downtown outreach coordination huddle with KCRHA and outreach providers, the HOPE Team efforts of note in Q3 included work downtown in the 3rd Avenue vicinity. Over the course of Q3, 76 referrals to shelter were made at various encampments in this neighborhood. Sixty-three of these referrals were to enhanced shelter and 13 referrals were to tiny house villages (THVs). In addition to these activities, the UCT continues to coordinate efforts downtown and in the Chinatown-International District with KCRHA's System Advocates and their Partnership for Zero initiative.

Other significant outreach coordination efforts of note were in North Seattle. These include efforts in the vicinity of Stone Ave N and N 125th St (19 referrals – 11 to enhanced shelter, 8 to THVs); N 96th St & Aurora Ave N (18 referrals – 11 to enhanced shelter, 7 to THVs); and along the Interurban Trail (12 referrals – 7 to enhanced shelter, 5 to THVs). All these locations included weeks of outreach coordination in partnership with KCRHA and outreach providers in advance of scheduled UCT encampment removals.

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[2] The match between HOPE Team and HMIS data is imperfect for several reasons. This includes approximately 25% of enrollments lacking personally identifiable information (PII) due to the HMIS data share mentioned above; individuals providing different PII (such as a name) to the HOPE Team or HMIS; individuals enrolling at a shelter over 48 hours after a referral is made; or individuals enrolling at a different shelter than which they were referred.

CC: Deputy Mayor Tiffany Washington

HSD Acting Director Tanya Kim

For additional detail on Q3 2022 results, please see the Table below:

Reporting Element	Q3		
Total Number of Referrals to Shelter, Duplicated	614 (437 HOPE Team System Navigator Initiated Referrals)		
Total Number of Referrals to Shelter, Unduplicated	542		
Number and Percentage of Shelter Referral Demographics	**Gender**	**Number**	**Percentage (%)**
	Male	433	71
	Female	161	26
	Trans Female	3	<1
	Trans Male	1	<1
	Gender Non-Conforming	2	<1
	Data Not Collected	14	2
	Refused	0	0
	Race		
	American Indian or Alaska Native	17	3
	Asian	18	3
	Black/African American	185	30
	White/Caucasian	233	38
	Multiracial	52	8

	Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	7	1
	Data Not Collected	102	17
	Ethnicity		
	Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	457	74
	Hispanic/Latino	8	1
	Data Not Collected	149	24

	Shelter Type	Referrals	Percentage (%)
Breakdown of Referrals to Specific Shelter-Types by Quarter	Enhanced Shelter	464	76
	Tiny House Village	150	24
Number of Enrollments to the Referred Shelter Within a 48-Hour Period Following Referral, Duplicated	268		
Number of Enrollments to the Referred Shelter Within a 48-Hour Period Following Referral, Unduplicated	250		