

Homelessness Prevention and Housing Stability Services Program

Seattle City Council
Affordable Housing, Neighborhoods and Finance Committee
November 22, 2016

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT & OFFICE OF HOUSING

Proposed Ordinance

- Housing Levy program guidelines are set by an Administrative and Financial Plan
- Funds under the new Levy won't be available until OH completes and Council approves the new Administrative and Financial Plan
- Need legislation this year to prevent a delay in service delivery

Program Overview

- HSD currently funds 7 agencies to provide homelessness prevention services and funds 2 rapid rehousing programs through the Seattle Housing Levy
- Prevention programs serve people with a short-term housing crisis
- Prevention program participants must be low-income Seattle residents with a documented housing crisis
- Rapid rehousing participants must be referred through Coordinated Entry

Proposed Changes for 2016 Levy

- Changes identified through Levy renewal planning process:
 - Flexibility to use Levy funds for stabilization services in addition to direct financial assistance
 - Option to provide up to 12 months of assistance in a 36-month period when needed in to avert housing loss or to assist RRH participants signing a new lease
 - Use HMIS ‘Return to Homelessness’ data to track participant success post-program completion

Homelessness Prevention and Housing Stability Services – program detail

- \$11.5 Million over 7 years, Assist 4,500 households
- **Eligibility:**
 - Homeless or at risk of homelessness
 - 50% of Area Median Income or below
 - Inadequate financial resources to secure or maintain stable housing without assistance
 - Financial assistance may not exceed 12 months in a 36-month period
- **Financial assistance is available for:**
 - Rent payments
 - Rent or utility arrears
 - Security and/or utility deposits and other move-in costs
 - Transportation assistance needed to secure housing
 - Agency staffing and associated service delivery costs

Additional Changes to Align with Pathways Home

- HUD technical assistance provider Matt White conducted training for providers on best practices in peer communities
- Key themes:
 - Eviction is terrible for families, but doesn't always lead directly to homelessness
 - Overcrowding, rather than eviction, is more commonly the event immediately preceding literal homelessness
 - Recommended highly targeted and uniform screening criteria for prevention enrollments
- Prioritization: households with the greatest risk of homelessness, including extreme overcrowding and prior history of homelessness
- Prioritization tool implemented on a trial basis in 2017

Measuring Success

- The Human Services Department will provide an Annual Report including:
 - Households served
 - Financial information including average amount of assistance per household
 - Demographic data: race, gender, disability status, household income and household composition
 - Outcomes including number/percent of households exiting to permanent housing at program exit and number/percent of households that do not return to homelessness