



City of Seattle

Jenny A. Durkan, Mayor

Human Services Department

Jason Johnson, Acting Director

Date: June 28, 2019

To: Councilmember Lisa Herbold
Civil Rights, Utilities, Economic Development and Arts Committee

From: Tiffany Washington, Deputy Director Human Services Department

Subject: Response to SLI 15-17-A-2

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to present to the Committee HSD's Homeless Strategy and Investment (HSI) Action Plan for LGBTQ Homeless Services in response to SLI 15-17-A-2.

Background

In the Fall of 2018, staff from the Homeless Strategy and Investment division met with staff from the PRIDE Foundation and the Ingersoll Gender Center to discuss their community's concerns regarding the treatment of LGBTQ persons experiencing homelessness at City funded shelters. At that meeting, it was clear that a focus on cultural competency and quality services for LGBTQ persons experiencing homelessness should become a priority for HSI. Subsequently, during the 2019 budget process SLI 15-17-A-2 requested that HSD provide guidelines for homeless service provision to the LGBTQ community.

Process

The homeless service system is complex with a variety of program types, models and interventions. Each of these intervention types serve a different purpose in the system, meet different needs, and have different methods of delivering services. Part of any system transformation work undertaken by HSI includes identifying the unique barriers to access and quality of service in specific interventions. The emphasis of this plan is focused on a specific intervention type. Conversations with staff at Ingersoll Gender Center and the Pride Foundation found most of the LGBTQ community concerns are with access to and discrimination in emergency shelter, therefore HSI chose to focus first on improvements to emergency shelter, which is expected to be the most impactful place to start and allow us to bring learnings to other intervention types.

Given the short timeline allowed to develop the plan and respond to the SLI, HSI contracted with Ingersoll Gender Center to conduct listening sessions with community and develop a set of recommendations to HSI on how Emergency Shelter and HSI processes should be improved. This ensured the resulting plan is highly informed by the concerns of the community and those agencies that advocate on their behalf.

HSI utilizes a targeted universalism approach to systems planning where improving access and services for the most marginalized and negatively impacted members of a community will result in better access and services

for all members of the community. Consistent with this approach, Ingersoll Gender Center focused their community engagement and resulting recommendations on improving services for transgender persons experiencing homelessness. Working from these recommendations from Ingersoll Gender Center (Attachment 1), HSI developed an action plan that can benefit all members of the LGBTQ community experiencing homelessness.

Once HSI received the recommendations from Ingersoll Gender Center, a workgroup was convened to develop HSI’s Action Plan. The workgroup was comprised of representatives from each of the HSI units, other City departments and community activists. The workgroup was tasked with working from the recommendations, incorporating feedback from their communities and developing a plan that was comprehensive enough to adequately address the needs of LGBTQ persons seeking emergency shelter.

Workgroup Members	Affiliation
Karter Booher	Ingersoll Gender Center
Leo Segovia	Ingersoll Gender Center
Gunner Scott	Pride Foundation
Manuel Venegas	COS LGBTQ Commissioner
Erika Pablo	SOCR – LGBTQ Commission Liaison
Loren Othon	SOCR – Gender Justice Project
Michael Taylor-Judd	HSD External Affairs Unit
Shawn Fettig	HSI Data, Performance and Evaluation Unit
Mary Flowers	HSI Contracts Unit
Ben Cantrell	HSI Contracts Unit
Shawn Neal	HSI Contracts Unit
Tara Beck	HSI Planning Unit
Joy Hunt	HSI Planning Unit
Harold Odom	HSI VISTA
Dusty Olson	HSI Directors Office

In addition to their representation on the workgroup, the City’s LGBTQ Commission was also engaged in other ways throughout the process. At the onset they were engaged to determine how best to include them in the process. After the recommendations were received, The LGBTQ commission was provided the full report and with an opportunity for feedback to inform the action plan development. A draft plan was presented to the LGBTQ people of color committee for feedback and the full plan was presented to the LGBTQ Commission.

Action Plan

The Action Plan (Attachment 2) was developed within the context of a critical time in the homeless system. The City of Seattle and King County are currently in the process of developing a combined Regional Authority to govern the King County homeless system. This could potentially result in the removal of homeless contracts from HSD and the corresponding staff transitioning to a new Regional Authority. This may result in potentially significant changes to processes and contracts beginning in 2020. Until this consolidation occurs, many of the functions that impact people’s experience of the homeless system, such as Coordinated Entry (CEA) and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) are under the jurisdiction of King County. While the City has influence as a partner, HSI is not able to dictate unilateral changes to functions such as data collection.

These considerations all influenced the development of this plan. Rather than dictating specific outcomes, this plan lays out a body of work that is comprehensive, thoughtful, long-term system planning done in partnership with the community, stakeholders and other funders. HSI is not waiting until the new Regional Authority is established to begin this process but is prioritizing those items within our control or aren't anticipated to be significantly impacted by the outcome of the Regional Authority process.

Quality systems change takes time to be implemented well. Due to HSD's role as a funder, funding processes and contracts are the most impactful tools through which HSI can impact system change. Therefore, this action plan lays out a body of work that begins immediately and is implemented in stages through the next competitive funding process for emergency shelter. This approach is consistent with the system transformation efforts initiated by HSD in the last several years, where technical assistance, capacity building and contract changes led to shifts in service models and investments through the last Homeless Investments Request for Funding Process.

While the initial focus on this plan was on improving the response of emergency shelters to LGBTQ persons experiencing homelessness, many of the resulting actions have potential benefit across sectors. HSD leadership reviewed the plan and determined that several of the items should be developed and implemented department wide. These items will be assigned to a cross-department workgroup for implementation. There is also significant intersection with some work occurring in the Aging and Disability Division on ensuring that age-friendly initiatives reach the LGBTQ community. Leveraging multiple areas of HSD will increase the impact of this Action Plan.

Immediate Next Steps

The focus of this action plan was HSI contracts and shelter providers, but due to the intersectional nature of oppression and the complexity of the homeless response system, many elements of this plan reach beyond the initial scope. There are elements that require partnering with King County. Before specific action items can be accomplished, HSI must partner with our colleagues at King County to develop buy in to the plan and determine the best way to accomplish the outcome. Once it was clear their involvement would be necessary, there were attempts include them in the planning, but the timeframe limited their ability to participate fully. It will be critical to have discussions and engage in joint planning and implementation going forward.

For this work to be successful, the staff charged with implementing the plan, planning the service investments and monitoring the contracts will need to increase their own cultural competency. We cannot hold providers to a standard that we are not able to achieve ourselves. Therefore, one of the first steps will be to begin critical discussions and training within HSI. This has already begun, with Ingersoll Gender Center providing a Trans 101 cultural humility training as part of their contract for community engagement. That was the bare minimum for us to have the skills and knowledge necessary to develop this plan and is insufficient to ensure the success of this system effort. Additional conversations, training and relationship building with the community will be a key factor in determining the impact of the larger efforts.

Multiple items in the action plan require a financial investment. HSI does not have a budget for training, technical assistance and community engagement efforts. Funding for these activities is usually identified as needed from underspend or other unallocated funds. The level of training and engagement necessary to implement this plan will require a dedicated budget to ensure success. Identification of the funding necessary to carry out the plan will be a critical next step.

Conclusion

The work to develop this LGBTQ Action Plan has been an outstanding example of partnership between the Human Services Department and community members. While much work still needs to be done to develop on-going relationship with the LGBTQ community, this process was a strong start. Based on their positive experience in this process, the agencies that represent this community have reached out to HSD leadership to identify other ways to partner with HSD. The HSD staff who participated in the workgroup are excited to share this work with their colleagues and to continue to shepherd this work through implementation within our division and the department. Even though this is a time of transition for the Homeless Strategy and Investment staff, they are committed to the value of this effort to ensure that LGBTQ persons experiencing homelessness have equal access to safe and affirming shelter and homeless services.

LGBTQ Action Plan			
Goal 1: HSI Division regularly engages with the with the LGBTQ Community to inform policy and practice	Lead	Timeline	Budget
Inform community of upcoming efforts to reform shelter system through a public rollout of the initiative	HSI/HSD Leadership	June 2019	
Engage with LGBTQ community to build deeper relationships	Planning unit	On-going	
Develop a community engagement plan	Planning unit	4 th quarter 2019	
Connect with staff at community agencies and shelters throughout improvement process to inform policy and program changes	Planning and Contracts units	On-going	
Solicit feedback on LGBTQ experience of homeless shelters and other programing	Planning and Contracts units	On-going	Cost for stipends for community participation
Support LGBTQ by/for programs in their efforts to address homelessness and support community	Budget team	Dependent on budget	Support for by/for programs
Encourage hiring engagement/outreach in LGBTQ communities for positions in contracted agencies	Contracts unit	On-going	
Provide updates to community partners on progress of action plan	Strategic Advisor	Quarterly	
Goal 2: HSD implements an LGBTQ equity assessment in partnership with community	Lead	Timeline	Budget
Research facility certifications and other cultural competency tools in use	Planning unit	3 rd quarter 2019	
Identify budget to support community contract and/or participation in tool development	Budget team	3 rd quarter 2019	
HSD contracts with a community agency or convenes workgroup to develop equity assessment tool	Planning unit	1 st quarter 2020	
Develop policies to incorporate the use of tool in contract monitoring	Contracts unit	1 st quarter 2021	
Develop process to incorporate assessment into funding process through application questions and scoring	Planning unit	Next funding process	
Goal 3: LGBTQ cultural competency is a critical component in the next homeless investments competitive funding process	Lead	Timeline	Budget
Identify LGBTQ persons experiencing homelessness as a priority population in homelessness funding processes	Planning unit	Next funding process	

Prioritize funding for gender non-segregated programming, specifically shelters	Planning unit	Next funding process	
Target outreach encouraging LGBTQ organizations to apply in funding processes	Planning unit	Next funding process	
Goal 4: Shelters are safe and affirming places for LGB, transgender and non-binary persons	Lead	Timeline	Budget
Research local and national best practices to understand what is working in other communities, including the USICH toolkit	Planning unit	3 rd quarter 2019	
Work with community to determine which best practices should be implemented in our shelter programming	Planning unit	3 rd quarter 2019	
Develop plan for accommodating transgender/non-binary victims/survivors of domestic violence/sexual assault in homeless shelters	Planning and contracts units	2 nd quarter 2020	
Develop plan to increase access and service quality for LGBTQ families in family homeless shelters	Planning and contracts units	2 nd quarter 2020	
Develop plan to increase protections for LGBTQ persons experiencing homo/bi/trans phobia and discrimination in homeless shelters	Planning and contacts units	2 nd quarter 2020	
Explore the feasibility of LGBTQ specific wings, floors or full shelters	Planning unit	2 nd quarter 2020	
Determine which shelters have or could have non-gender specific hygiene facilities	Planning and contracts units	1 st quarter 2020	
Goal 5: HSI Division has data on LGBTQ persons experiencing homelessness to inform policy and practice	Lead	Timeline	Budget
Conduct thorough review of available data in HMIS and CEA to determine what is currently collected and how it can be utilized	HSI DPE units	4 th quarter 2019	
Work with community to determine what LGBTQ specific data and benchmarks are being used in other private and public sectors that could be applied to homelessness	Planning and DPE units	4 th quarter 2019	
Partner with King County PME and contracts team to align current data collection standards	HSI DPE units	3 rd quarter 2019	
Develop standard for data collection on gender, requiring contracted providers to use client self-report gender for all data reports	DPE and Contracts units	2 nd quarter 2019	
Work with stakeholders and HSI staff to determine data needs, potential benefits and concerns for collecting additional information on LGBTQ identity	Planning and DPE units	2 nd quarter 2020	
Research cost if adding additional data fields is determined to be beneficial	Budget team	2 nd quarter 2020	Cost for changes to HMIS

Conduct focus groups to collect qualitative information about the experience of LGBTQ program participants	Planning unit	On-going	Cost for stipends for community participation
Determine if LGBTQ can be included as a demographic category in the 2020 PIT Count Survey	PIT Count reps	4 th quarter 2019	
Goal 6: HSI Division contract language identifies expectations related to the identification of gender	Lead	Timeline	Budget
Require programs to utilize self-identified gender for all participants	Contracts unit	June 2019	
Develop contract language on the collection of identification, including not requiring gender self-identification to match identification documents	Contracts unit	June 2019	
Goal 7: HSD demographic data collection systems accommodate the new Washington gender X marker on identification	Lead	Timeline	Budget
Change any pertinent contract language in all HSD contracts	Cross departmental workgroup	Dependent on state timeline for ID changes	
Ensure information is disseminated to programs	Workgroup	Dependent on state timeline	
Work with King County to adopt changes to HMIS and data standards	HSI DPE team	Dependent on state timeline	
Work with Bitfocus to build change into HMIS	HSI DPE team	Upon completion of other items	Cost for changes to HMIS
Goal 8: Providers are adequately trained on serving LGBTQ participants including gender identify, gender diversity and cultural humility	Lead	Timeline	Budget
Develop process for accounting for performance pay withholding as source of funding for technical assistance training	Contracts unit	June 2019	
Conduct landscape assessment of available training opportunities and resources	Cross Departmental Workgroup	3 rd quarter 2019	
Work with LGBTQ communities to approve existing trainings or develop standard training for providers on serving LGBTQ participants	Cross Departmental Workgroup	3 rd quarter 2019	Cost to support contract for training development
Write BIP in 2020 for technical assistance training if HSI performance pay is insufficient	Budget team	2 nd quarter 2020	

Explore options to require training as a condition of funding	Planning unit	Next funding process	
Incorporate best practices and learnings into learning circles and technical assistance activities	Planning and contracts units	1 st quarter 2020	
Sponsor regular trainings for providers	HSD	On-going beginning in 2020	Cost to support regular HSD sponsored trainings
Goal 9: HSI Division is monitoring programs to ensure appropriate response to LGBTQ persons experiencing homelessness	Lead	Timeline	Budget
Standardize review of grievances during monitoring	Contracts unit	1 st quarter 2020	
Engage program participants for feedback on their experiences and incorporate feedback into continuous program improvement plans	Contracts unit	2020 monitoring	
Review intake forms to ensure LGBTQ cultural competency, gender self-identification	Contracts unit	2020 monitoring	
Identify agency practice on the collection of ID and the procedure when ID doesn't match gender identity	Contracts unit	2020 monitoring	
Develop plan for enforcement when necessary	Contracts unit	1 st quarter 2020	
Utilize LGBTQ cultural competency tool	Contracts unit	2021 monitoring	
Goal 10: HSD has a process to better address grievances prior to the stand-up of the new Ombuds Office	Lead	Timeline	Budget
Conduct landscape assessment of how grievances are addressed across HSD	Contracts unit	3 rd quarter 2019	
Verify with agencies how grievance policy is currently provided to participants	Contracts unit	2020 monitoring	
Research grievance processes best practices from other organizations such as HIV/AIDS planning council	Planning unit	3 rd quarter 2019	
Develop contract language that distinguishes between grievances and discriminatory policy or practices that states expected program response	HSD Contract Compliance unit	2 nd quarter 2020	
Develop process where community advocates can bring issues/concerns with programs to the attention of HSI	Strategy and contracts unit	3 rd quarter 2019	
Facilitate increased connection between programs and community advocates to allow for sharing of issues/concerns	Strategy and contracts unit	On-going	

Goal 11: Planning for the new Ombuds Office at the Regional Authority for homeless governance is fully informed by community concerns and recommendations	Lead	Timeline	Budget
Provide full copy of Ingersoll Recommendations to planning group for Ombuds office	Strategic Advisor	June 2019	
Ensure HSI staff who are participating in LGBTQ service and access improvements can provide input to Ombuds planning process	HSI leadership	When planning begins	
Facilitate LGBTQ community participation in the planning of the Ombudsman Office	HSI leadership	When planning begins	
Recommend that Ombuds Office is marketed not only to homeless serving programs but also other community programs that may serve LGBTQ communities, communities of color, and disabled communities.	HSI staff	During planning process	
Facilitate connections between Ombuds Office staff and communities that HSI has developed relationships with	Planning unit and Strategic Advisor	When Ombuds in place	
Goal 12: HSI Division has a partnership with SOCR to increase capacity to better serve the needs of the LGBTQ community	Lead	Timeline	Budget
Determine the availability of LGBTQ trainings to City employees supported by SOCR	Planning unit	3 rd quarter 2019	
Regularly provide LGBTQ commission updates on action plan progress and solicit feedback	Strategic Advisor	Quarterly	
Learn how the Gender Justice Project and the Gender Equity team can be leveraged to support work and inform policy	Strategic Advisor	3 rd quarter 2019	
Request training for HSI staff and contracted agencies on understanding the difference between discrimination and grievances	Strategic Advisor	4th quarter 2019	Any cost associated with training from SOCR
Support program participants in pursuing discrimination claims as appropriate	Contracts unit	On-going	
Goal 13: HSD has a more LGBTQ affirming culture	Lead	Timeline	Budget
Require staff to participate in LGBTQ cultural humility training	HSD leadership	As available	Cost to provide training if not provided by SOCR
Model the use of gender pronouns in all HSD meetings	Everyone	On-going	

Encourage HSD to establish a gender-neutral restroom	HSD LGBTQ+ Affinity group	June 2019	
Engage Change Team in a discussion on the intersectionality of race and LGBTQ oppression	HSD LGBTQ+ Affinity group		Cost for SME facilitator
Increase focus on oppression and discrimination of LGBTQ communities when discussing marginalized communities	HSD LGBTQ+ Affinity group	On-going	
Explore how violence against trans and gender diverse persons can be incorporated into the gender-based violence training and response led by MODVSA	MODVSA		