



**City of Seattle**  
Human Services Department

**Date** July 30, 2010

**To** Councilmember Burgess, Chair of the Public Safety, Human Services, and Education Committee

**From** Dannette R. Smith, Acting Director, Seattle Human Services Department

**Cc:** Rebecca Deehr, Mayor's Office; Becky Guerra, City Budget Office

**Subject** Response to Statement of Legislative Intent 33-4-A-1

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The City of Seattle has made a significant commitment to seek creative, effective approaches to helping offenders turn their lives around and become contributing members of our community. In response to a Statement of Legislative Intent adopted by the City Council during the 2010 budget process, the Human Services Department (HSD) has been working to design a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of CO-STARS (Court Specialized Treatment and Access to Recovery Services), CURB (Communities Uniting Rainier Beach), and GOTS (Get Off the Streets). This report responds to the short-term and long-term activities specified in the Crime Prevention Programs SLI 33-4-A-1.

## I. BACKGROUND

In 2009, the City Council contracted with Professor Steve Herbert, PhD, from the University of Washington, to conduct an assessment of three public safety/human services projects: CO-STARS, CURB, and GOTS. Overall Dr. Herbert's 2009 report found that:

- Each program effectively uses case management to generate resources and opportunities for clients;
- Clients in each program reduce their criminal involvement in some fashion;
- For each program, especially GOTS and CURB, post-entry criminal offending is concentrated in a small number of clients.
- Program graduates see a striking reduction in jail usage.

Based on the above findings and extensive analysis detailed in the assessment, Dr. Herbert and his research team concluded that all three of the programs' performance was sufficiently strong to merit continued financial support by the City of Seattle. He also made several

Dannette R. Smith, Acting Director  
Human Services Department  
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 5800  
PO Box 34215  
Seattle, WA 98124-4215

Tel (206) 386-1001  
Fax (206) 233-5119  
TDD (206) 233-2778  
dannette.smith@seattle.gov

recommendations for strengthening connections between the programs and the criminal justice system, clarifying the simultaneous public safety and human service expectations, and defining metrics that would assist in further evaluation.

In approving funding through 2010 for CO-STARS, CURB, and GOTS, as well as funding for the Drug Market Initiative, the City Council demonstrated strong support for alternatives to traditional arrest and incarceration. The Statement of Legislative Intent requested that HSD work with CO-STARS, CURB, and GOTS to implement a series of short-term and longer-term steps to strengthen the effectiveness of these programs and develop a framework for long-term evaluation of the programs effectiveness. The short-term activities were in large part drawn from Dr. Herbert's assessment and recommendations.

## II. SLI SHORT-TERM ACTIVITY #1

*All three programs should develop more formal communications with King County District and Superior courts, Seattle Municipal Court, the Washington State Department of Corrections, the King County Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention (the King County jail), the King County Sheriff's Office and the Seattle Police Department. Given that clients in these programs will relapse and re-offend, it is advisable that each program consistently interact with the appropriate components of the criminal justice system to ensure coordination and minimize the use of unnecessary jail services. HSD should require the programs to establish these formal arrangements as an element of its contract requirements and stipulate that they be in effect by June 1, 2010.*

During contract negotiations for program year 2010, HSD began assessing the relationships and communication strategies that CO-STARS, CURB and GOTS have developed and implemented since 2006 with the criminal justice system. Several key factors were identified that determine the programs' formal communication strategies and their effectiveness in the reduction in the amount of time their clients spend in jail.

Even though the three programs are similar in the range of services they provide, most notably housing and treatment for chemical dependency and/or mental illness, they have distinct variations in program design. Differences include the population they serve, the operating philosophies they adopt, and the amount and frequency in which they provide their resources. These differences significantly contribute to the entities with which CO-STARS CURB and GOTS need to formally communicate and the appropriate communication protocols.

In analyzing the program design of CO-STARS, CURB and GOTS and reviewing Dr. Herbert's initial assessment of the three programs, HSD has identified the following three functions that are critical in the agencies' communication with the appropriate components of the criminal justice system to reduce relapse or re-offense:

1. Program Referral – a program may develop and utilize formal communication as a source for referrals into their program
2. Information Sharing – a program develops a partnership with criminal justice agencies to collect information about their clients
3. Coordination of Services – a program establishes formal communication with various law enforcement partners to effectively coordinate and provide services to clients.

The following section outlines the formal and informal relationships each program has established, why they were developed and what authority or opportunity they have to create new arrangements within the given contract year. From our analysis it was evident the programs had strong and effective formal communication strategies and partnerships. In Dr. Hebert's 2009 assessment indicated the programs did not have formalized relationships with the courts and Department of Corrections. The following detail of the formal partnerships for each program outlines what is considered very structured and coordinated formal partnerships.

### **CURB**

CURB is managed by the People of Color Against AIDS Network (POCAAN). The program works with individuals between the ages of 18 and 30 who live in Southeast Seattle. The community-designed program targets those who possess a criminal history (excluding violent offense) or are judged by staff to be at risk of developing criminal involvement. Case managers with street-level awareness engage potential and existing clients. Some clients come to CURB shortly after release from prison. Because POCAAN has a federally-funded prison re-entry program that assists ex-felons in finding employment, they have developed formal ties with the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC) through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). CURB clients are included in this MOA.

CURB utilizes the relationship with DOC as a referral source to enroll the appropriate people into the program and leverage additional program services. Since November 16, 2006, the date the MOA was executed, CURB has developed formal communication with DOC to serve former inmates that re-enter the upper Rainier Beach community and fit the program criteria. Based on the criminal history of the clients CURB serves and their direct link to the state corrections system, the relationship CURB has with the DOC is warranted as the primary and most appropriate relationship the program has with the criminal justice system. CURB also recognizes the importance of building a stronger base of formal relationships among other criminal justice agencies. CURB administrative staff is focused on improving their relationship with SPD in Southeast Seattle. CURB has reached out to the South Precinct Crime Prevention Coordinator to set up a Block Watch meeting, register for the August Night Out Program, and have general discussions about on-going crime problems.

CURB has developed strong and effective communication relationships with additional criminal justice entities. The formal relationship between CURB and the King County Adult Drug Court is very effective. Since January of 2009, CURB administrative staff has been

advocating to judges, prosecutors, probation officers and public defenders in Drug Court about the effective services CURB provides and the overall program design. CURB's monthly presentations to officials in drug court have resulted in a consistent and effective referral source for CURB judges and prosecutors agree to mandate specific clients that are not complying with the rules of drug court to enroll into CURB. The benefit of people referred to CURB has been the additional services they are able to receive. Drug Court participants only receive services that address their addiction and prevent relapse. CURB is able to wrap employment training, housing placements and peer counseling around the clients. The relationship between CURB and drug court has helped clients change their life and offer them the services needed to make the change.

### **GOTS**

GOTS, administered by the Seattle Neighborhood Group, is another community-designed program that targets 30 to 35 individuals with a current or historical association to the Central District of Seattle who possess established patterns of criminal offending. Like CURB clients, GOTS participants are frequently homeless, chemically dependent and or mentally ill. Initially, GOTS began outreach to individuals who gathered near 21<sup>st</sup> and Madison. Later, the target area shifted to 23<sup>rd</sup> and Union in the Central Area.

GOTS primarily serves clients between the ages of 35 and 59. The program's outreach model (peer specialist) is similar to that of CURB since GOTS' case management services are sub-contracted with POCAAN. GOTS is a deliberately small and targeted program. Based on the program capacity, eligibility criteria, geographical service area, and the overall intervention service model of the program, GOTS has only one formal partnership and two data sharing arrangements. GOTS has a formal communication arrangement with the Seattle Police Department (SPD). Information sharing protocols have been established with Seattle Municipal Court and DOC. GOTS and SPD are developing an additional communication strategy that will give GOTS administrative staff the opportunity to attend SPD East Precinct Roll-Call meetings once a month. This communication strategy will be implemented by October of 2010. The purpose of attending the Roll-Call meeting is to inform all officers patrolling "G" Sector (23<sup>rd</sup> and Union) about GOTS. At the same time, officers of "G" Sector will be asked to carry cards with GOTS contact information and distribute them to individuals who may fit the programs eligibility guidelines and need the services GOTS provides.

GOTS coordinates with the Municipal Court system to track jail bookings each day to determine the status of their clients. Program administrative staff currently meets once a quarter with King County Superior Court's Adult Drug Court to get a status report on GOTS clients enrolled in Drug court. Meetings may occur more often if the number of clients and assessments in Drug Court increases. DOC provides periodic reports that indicate when GOTS clients are back in prison and why.

### **CO-STARS**

The CO-STARS program is administered by Sound Mental Health (SMH), a mental health agency which provides program coordination, case management, and treatment services. CO-STARS is a program that serves up to 50 individuals who are homeless, need treatment for chemical dependency

and/or mental illness and are arrested frequently enough to result in five jail bookings in the previous 12 months. A majority of the clients are homeless individuals who gather in or near downtown Seattle.

Unlike GOTS and CURB, CO-STARS clients cannot self refer to the program. The program was designed by City and Court staff to see clients that are referred through Seattle Police Department's Neighborhood Corrections Initiative (NCI), Seattle Municipal Community Court, or the Day Reporting Center. The NCI program provides CO-STARS with approximately two-thirds of their client referrals. CO-STARS case managers are housed within Municipal Court. They work with the Judges, Prosecutors, Public Defenders, Probation Officers and Municipal Court administrative staff to ensure they maintain continuing contact with clients that have been arrested to provide the necessary support to get them out of jail and back into the program. The CO-STARS case managers also regularly communicate with the NCI team, Community Court and Day Reporting Center to assess how to support CO-STARS clients. Municipal Court staffs a quarterly meeting with representatives from CO-STARS, NCI, Day Reporting Center, public defender Associated Council for the Accused (ACA), and DOC to review the CO-STARS program and coordination issues.

SMH staff have made specific arrangements to work with King County Correctional Facility and interface with Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention, Jail Health, Jail Psychiatric, Veterans programs, custody, specialty courts and public defenders. These relationships create the opportunity for CO-STARS case managers and peer specialist to track clients throughout many of the jurisdictions in the criminal justice system.

### III. SLI SHORT-TERM ACTIVITY #2

*The Seattle Human Services Department (HSD) should assist CURB and CO-STARS in developing and implementing new recordkeeping systems to ensure that required client data are consistently captured and maintained over time. The CURB and CO-STARS programs are responsible for organizing and deploying their administrative resources to achieve this end. Effective recordkeeping arrangements should be put in place by June 1, 2010.*

#### A. Background on Recordkeeping

Record keeping is an important and necessary requirement of any service program. There are many different types of recordkeeping systems and the complexity of each system is dependent on the needs of the program/organization, the ability of staff to maintain the system and quickly produce reports, the availability of technological support, and financial resources.

HSD extensively and thoroughly reviewed and assessed the recordkeeping systems of CO-STARS and CURB. The changes detailed below have been updated in each contract and were put into effect immediately.

#### B. HSD Findings and Recommendations

Both CO-STARS and CURB have established recordkeeping systems that meet the Washington Administrative Code S246-810-035 recordkeeping requirement. Staff at both agencies maintains a file folder for each client in a secure filing cabinet. Each client folder includes the intake and assessment forms, service plans, criminal background check, consent and release forms, case notes, and other pertinent paperwork that document the progress made and services provided to the client.

In addition to the file folders, CO-STARS also has an elaborate and robust database system to collect and maintain information from the many contracts that they hold. The CO-STARS database is well designed and maintained. CO-STARS has considerable technical resources to maintain and operate this sophisticated database to meet all the needs of its funders, the agency, and the clients, although the production of some data reports may take time. All of the data points and indicators that are in the contract's Client Profile Demographic Report and in the Monthly Progress Report are captured in the database.

Since HSD finds that the current recordkeeping system is more than adequate to consistently capture and maintain CO-STARS client data, HSD recommends that the CO - STARS recordkeeping system stay the same for the current contract.

CURB has an Excel spreadsheet that captures each client's demographic information, type of services engagement, program status, and criminal justice related information such as currently on DOC, past arrest or conviction, and pending charges. In February this spreadsheet did not include all of the data points and indicators from the contract's Client Profile Demographic Report or the monthly progress report that are a part of the contract. In order to satisfy the current contractual obligations, HSD recommends that CURB staff incorporate into the spreadsheet all of the data points and indicators requested in the Client Profile Demographic Report and in the monthly progress report.

#### C. Agency Responses

SMH is improving their ability to provide relevant data more quickly. Although we recommend that CO-STARS does not change their recordkeeping system, CO-STARS indicated that they are willing to work with HSD if the client metrics proposed by Dr. Herbert are adopted in 2011.

With technical assistance from HSD, CURB staff is using an Excel spreadsheet that incorporates all of the important demographic information, service engagement and status information, criminal justice related information, and also all of the data points and indicators from the contract's demographic and monthly progress reports effective July 9, 2010.

#### IV. SLI SHORT-TERM ACTIVITY #3

*Sound Mental Health, the administering agency of CO-STARS, should collaborate with Plymouth Housing to resolve current misunderstanding about the proper scope of responsibilities of each organization in delivering client support services at*

*permanent and transitional housing facilities provided by Plymouth Housing. Clarification of responsibilities should be established by June 1, 2010.*

HSD identified the need to revise the Interagency Agreement between Sound Mental Health (SMH) and Plymouth Housing Group (PHG) and included this requirement as a program standard in the 2010 CO-STARS contract. SMH and PHG revised their Interagency Agreement to establish a response plan to address emergency issues after business hours. The revised Agreement includes a Collaborative Response Plan, communication guide, and contact list that staff can use in the case of emergencies at the housing facility. A copy of the Interagency Agreement is attached in Appendix B, and the new language can be found on pages 6 and 7 in the Collaborative Response Plan and Set-Aside Contact List attachments.

#### V. SLI SHORT-TERM ACTIVITY #4

*While some clients in all three programs drop out and otherwise become inactive, the proportion doing so in the CURB program is high-and very much higher than in the other two programs. CURB should review and revise its intake and screening mechanisms to ensure that clients enrolled in its programs are likely to benefit from available services. In doing so, it should develop clear standards for determining who is appropriate for enrollment. The revision of intake and screening tools should be completed by Tuesday, June 1, 2010.*

#### A. Background on Intake and Screening Mechanisms

The Intake and screening process is the gateway through which interested individuals are deemed eligible and ready for CURB case management services. The quality and completeness of the information gathered during the intake and screening stage is the foundation for good planning, advanced case management services, and better service retention. CURB's intake and screening process can be broken down into three phases: 1) Gathering of information from the individual and his/her criminal record to determine if the CURB Eligibility Criteria are met, 2) Completion of POCAAN weeklong orientation, and 3) Connection to CURB case manager at the end of the orientation.

#### B. HSD Findings and Recommendations

The original evaluation by Dr. Herbert indicated that CURB had a higher drop-out rate than CO-STARS or GOTS. Upon further clarification from Dr. Herbert, it became evident that the main reason for the high drop-out rate is due to the early classification of when an individual is considered to be an active CURB client. Initially, CURB staff considered an individual to be a client of CURB as soon as they begin a weeklong orientation. The five- day orientation is an intensive process that covers an extensive array of issues such as Life Skills Development, Workforce Prep, Career Development, and Technology Training.

Due to the intensity of the subject matter and time commitment, a high percentage of participants do not complete the weeklong orientation. However, this orientation is an effective way of determining which individuals are ready for case management in the CURB program. Both HSD and Dr. Herbert agree that individuals should not be considered clients

of CURB until they complete the weeklong orientation and agree to further case management services. The drop-out rate of those who have completed the weeklong orientation is a more valid and realistic indicator of those actually dropping out of the CURB program. HSD recommends that CURB not officially enroll clients into their case management program until they have completed the weeklong orientation. In addition, to ensure that the appropriate clients are enrolled in CURB, HSD recommends that CURB staff meet with clients at the end of the orientation week. At that time the staff will determine if the client is motivated and ready to engage in case management, explain what is expected and required, and then have the client sign a declaration of willingness to continue participation.

To increase client retention in the services clients are referred to and the overall CURB program, HSD has required that CURB staff:

1. Obtain more detailed contact information from clients at orientation.
  - Since this population is mostly transient and not likely to have phones, it is important to get information about where they can most likely be found if CURB staff needs to get in contact with them (on a street corner, at a church, via another person's phone, etc).
  - If clients do not provide this information, the case manager works with each participant to develop a plan on how best to connect with them.
2. Implement a more timely follow-up protocol with clients.
  - Follow up the same day by phone or via their contacts when the client does not show up for their meeting with the case manager. If client is able to be reached, schedule another appointment as soon as possible. If the client cannot be reached by phone, the case manager will work with outreach staff to connect with the client.
3. Develop and implement a formal referring out process.
  - The case manager completes the *Service Referral Section* on the **Service Referral & Exit Form** that is faxed to the identified services and followed up with a phone call or email. This provides a paper trail and documentation for CURB. (*Service Referral & Exit Form attached in Appendix C*).
4. Implement a follow-up protocol with service providers.
  - The case manager requests that the referred services complete the *Service Exit Section* on the **Service Referral & Exit Form** when the service provider has not been able to connect with the client after 2 weeks from the referral date, or the client drops out of the program/service, or the client completes the program/service. This provides timely updates on the client's progress and helps the case manager respond to the client's situation more effectively and efficiently. (*Service Referral & Exit Form attached in Appendix C*).

### C. Agency Response

CURB has implemented all of the recommendations regarding the intake and screening mechanisms made by HSD effective July 9, 2010.

## VI. SLI LONG-TERM ACTIVITY #1

*As part of HSD's development of performance goals and metrics that clarify the public safety and client outcomes intended by these programs, HSD should detail:*

- 1. Rationale for the specific performance goals, public safety and client outcomes and metrics chosen*
- 2. Characteristic(s) of the populations and geographic area(s) targeted by each program*
- 3. Data to be maintained by providers, including both service and criminal justice information*
- 4. Templates to be used by providers to report data and frequency with which the reports are to be filed*
- 5. Administrative structures required to adequately manage the programs, including the capabilities needed to achieve appropriate scale, sustain cross-agency partnerships, deliver services, and evaluate performance. HSD should determine the merit of maintaining the current three stand-alone programs and identify the advantage and disadvantages of combining programs and/or consolidating administrative functions.*

*By Tuesday June 1, 2010, HSD is requested to review with the Council's Public Safety and Education Committee a draft of the performance goals, public safety and client outcomes and metrics it expects to adopt and the rationale for their selection.*

*All of the remaining work associated with the longer term activities should be completed by July 31, 2010.*

### A. Background on Performance Goals, Metrics, and Client Outcomes

To address these activities HSD hired Dr. Steve Herbert based on his assessment of CO-STARS, GOTS, and CURB programs last year and his familiarity with the programs. See Appendix D for Dr. Herbert's full report.

At the time of the initial City financial investment, the three programs were collectively labeled by the City Council as Public Safety/Human Services Pilot Projects. This implies dual goals that include public safety related measures and human services measures for the individuals engaged in program services. Dr. Herbert recommends having both human service and criminal justice goals as well for these programs since the human services milestones lead to reduced criminal offending. He recommends the following long-term goals for all three programs: Attainment of permanent housing or housing independence; fulfillment of legal obligations; and statistically significant reduction in rate of recidivism of the client population. These programs increase public safety by helping their clients fulfill their legal obligations, securing housing and avoiding new criminal charges.

## B. HSD Findings and Recommendations

Dr. Herbert describes the proposed program metrics and rationale for these metrics in Section I of the report. His proposed metrics include the following categories of human service and public safety data: Housing and housing stability; adherence to treatment; management of addiction; income independence; physical health; criminal justice issues; and client self-assessment. Section II of the report proposes specific intermediate milestones and long-term goals. In Section III, Dr. Herbert outlines the following four options for evaluating if each program as a whole significantly affects their clients' recidivism rates: experimental study; stratified control group study; randomly selected control group study; and pre-/post enrollment study.

After discussing the feasibility and desirability of each option, Dr. Herbert recommends the pre/post enrollment study as the most feasible option by a wide margin. The pre/post evaluation of criminal charges of each program is a universally accepted method for evaluating whether a program significantly reduces criminal behavior as a result of their participation in the program. Dr. Herbert recommends this evaluation design to analyze the effectiveness of each program. Furthermore this option is very cost-effective if the expertise of the Seattle Municipal Court's research, planning and evaluation group is used. This group already produces recidivism analyses for various Seattle Municipal Court programs.

In Section IV of the report, Dr. Herbert identifies the following two options for managing program data: paper forms maintained in participant files; and a web-based database application. While the paper forms are the more cost-effective initially, there is a considerable cost of time and effort for the evaluator to collect the needed data for analyses. HSD staff have worked with agencies to ensure that they are at least using Excel worksheets to track client progress.

Dr. Herbert identifies the merit of a Web-based database in allowing City staff to run the data report and diminishing the need for an external evaluator. Although a web-based database would be the most sophisticated and robust to efficiently capture and track large volume of data, the reality of developing and maintaining a web-based database is dependent on the needs of the program/organization, the ability of staff to maintain the system, the availability of technological support, and most importantly, the availability of financial resources. Given these constraints, HSD staff have researched and outlined two different types of database, MS Access and Adsystem Inc. (note: there many companies that offer web-based database. Adsystem is used as an example here because many of the City's funded agencies/programs are currently using Adsystem) and their associated costs which are described in Appendix E.

An Access database could potentially be developed in-house in less time but would be less robust and sophisticated due to the limitation of the MS Access program. Although it is possible to put an Access database on a shared website where all users can access it, the security issue is another issue to be address. Specialized database developer company like Adsystem have the capability to develop highly robust and sophisticated

database and also already have security measures in place, however the cost is significantly higher.

Appendices I and II of Dr. Herbert's report list his proposed client metrics and a proposed data template for the programs. HSD supports the goals, metrics, data template, and evaluation approach recommended by Dr. Herbert. His prior knowledge of the program which he gained through the assessment process of the three program models conducted for the City Council in 2009 was invaluable in responding to the SLI.

## VII. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The recommendations for the short-term activities listed will provide the appropriate administrative structure that will improve the quality of the services for CURB, GOTS, and CO-STARS. Seattle Neighborhood Group, Sound Mental Health, and POCAAN, the administering agencies of GOTS, CO-STARS and CURB were closely involved in the evaluation of existing policies and protocols and approved the recommendations. Sound Mental Health has completed the MOA with Plymouth, and both parties have signed the agreement. The database and recordkeeping system at SMH is prepared to incorporate, collect and track new data points laid out in the short term activities and the overall evaluation design of all three programs. Seattle Neighborhood Group has begun working with SPD, to set up roll call meetings at the East Precinct. POCAAN has worked with City staff to implement the various changes to the program intake and screening process and the recordkeeping system.

The costs outlined in implementing the proposed evaluation framework found in Dr. Herbert's current report may be prohibitive in the context of the City budget. However, if funding is available, HSD supports the conclusions outlined in Dr. Herbert's 2009 report regarding the positive outcomes for all three programs.

There is potential for gaining some non-City funding to support a more comprehensive, long-term evaluation of program outcomes. The Defenders Association and various stakeholders are prepared to launch a community-based diversion model called Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) in Seattle's Belltown neighborhood and the Skyway area of unincorporated King County. The Defenders Association is seeking foundation resources to implement the program which has many common characteristics with CURB, GOTS and CO-STARS although it differs in some ways – in particular focusing on having clients referred by law enforcement. Despite these differences, there may be an opportunity to look at a common evaluation framework and obtain financial resources to expand data systems for evaluation purposes. The metrics and an evaluation approach contained in this report have been shared with the stakeholders developing LEAD and there is some interest in further collaboration.

## VIII. APPENDICES

- a. CO-STARS Data Collection and Reporting Form
- b. CO-STARS and Plymouth Housing Group 2010 MOA
- c. CURB's Service & Exit Form
- d. Consultant Report of Performance Goals, Public Safety and Client Outcomes and Metrics and Rationale
- e. Data Collection System Options
- f. Summary of Statement of Legislative Intent Short Term Activities
- g. Summary of Statement of Legislative Intent Long Term Activities