

Memo

Date: January 31, 2023

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

From: Michael Bailey, Deputy Director, Human Services Department

Subject: Response to SLI HSD-301-A-001 - Request that HSD provide a quarterly report on activities responding to unsheltered homelessness

Introduction

This report is offered in response to 2023 Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) [HSD-301-A-001](#), which requests a quarterly report from the Human Services Department (HSD) providing basic performance metrics and information on the Unified Care Team (UCT) and the collaborating departments and agencies that manage the City's response to unsanctioned encampments. This report provides data collected by HSD in Quarter 4 (Q4), which spans October 1 – December 31, 2022, and a summary of full year 2022 outcomes.

Beginning in 2022, 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, HSD System Navigators are on-site to coordinate outreach and provide shelter referrals until the site is resolved. KCRHA now oversees the deployment of City of Seattle-funded outreach agencies and provides a report on referrals originating from these organizations below.

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. As noted in the prior report, these agencies frequently collect internal data that is not reported to KCRHA. An example of that data was provided in the last report. Typically, outreach agencies engage with a substantially larger number of individuals than are entered into the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) because agencies do not put individuals into HMIS until a substantial relationship is established.

In the fourth quarter, outreach programs (as of January 13, 2023, data for one provider is not available) cataloged a total of 388 new households enrolling in the program during the quarter for a total of 1,870 households enrolled and 413 households referred to housing or shelter (see Table 1). As previously noted, this data does not reflect situations in which housing or shelter was unsuccessfully sought. For example, data maintained by the HOPE Team recorded more than 877 shelter recommendations originating from homelessness outreach providers in the fourth quarter, which led to 433 referrals (note that shelter and housing connections can also be established directly with programs without going through the HOPE Team).

Table 1: Homelessness Outreach Agency Data for October 2022 through December 2022

New Households Enrolled	Total Enrollment	Referrals to Shelter	Referrals to Authorized Encampment	Exits to Permanent Housing	Average HMIS Consent Rate
388	1,870	386	27	0	84%

Note: Data missing for one contracted agency at time of this submission.

KCRHA continues to plan to reprocur outreach contracts in 2023 with some new data reporting requirements. KCRHA plans to take comments on the first request for proposals (RFP) in late winter before releasing the RFP for submissions. It is anticipated that awards from that RFP will be made in the spring and go into effect in the summer of 2023.

In addition, KCRHA, the Mayor’s Office, and Seattle’s Human Services Department (HSD) continue developing an agreement to move the centralized recording of shelter vacancies and process for matching those vacancies with individuals from HSD to KCRHA, per Council Budget Action HSD-035-C-001-2023. The outcome of that transfer will potentially impact these quarterly reports in the future.

Q4 2022 Outcomes

Referrals and Enrollments

In Q4, HSD made 433 referrals (duplicated) to shelter, representing 378 unique individuals. This represents a decrease of 181 referrals, or 29%, compared to Q3 2022. Year-over-year this represents an increase of 34% compared to Q4 2021. These referrals were made in collaboration with 18 outreach providers, from 114 encampment sites, and partially based on 877 shelter recommendations (duplicated). This was a decrease from last quarter when System Navigators received 1,258 recommendations. In Q4, 100% of HSD referrals were to either 24/7 enhanced shelters (77% of total referrals) or tiny houses (23% of total referrals).¹

For shelter referrals where data on race was collected (77% of Q4 referrals), 52% were made to people experiencing homelessness who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) which is consistent with Q3, when BIPOC referrals were 54% of the total. As evidenced by the [2022 Point in Time \(PIT\) Count](#) and the [Homelessness Management Information System \(HMIS\) data](#), such individuals are disproportionately represented in King County’s homeless population. According to the 2022 PIT, BIPOC groups comprise roughly 52% of unsheltered individuals.

In Q4, 186 individuals were confirmed by HSD as enrolling into the shelter they were referred to, an increase of 22% year-over-year. This represents an enrollment rate of 49.2% for the quarter, an increase compared to 46.1% in Q3. As mentioned in previous reports, shelter enrollment tracking is challenging

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.

due to the data match required between the HSD collected data 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.

Reasons for Shelter Offer Declines

As discussed in HSD’s previous Q3 2022 SLI submission, HSD began tracking reasons for declined offers of shelter in Q4 2022. As exhibited in Table 2, there were a total number of 298 offers for which unsheltered individuals provided a reason for declining them. The most common reasons provided were "Does Not Want Shelter" (24%) or "Wants Tiny Home" (21%). Another 11% of individuals responded with "Wants Permanent Housing." Seven percent declined for "Other Reasons" that largely included medical issues and individuals indicating they already secured shelter.

Table 2 also breaks down reasons for decline by the type of shelter System Navigators offered individuals. These include offers at enhanced shelters, tiny house villages, or both. Of the total 298 declines, 227 were related to enhanced shelter offers. The leading reason for enhanced shelter declines was "Wants Tiny Home" (27%) followed closely by "Does Not Want Shelter" (26%). Of the 26 declines related to tiny house village offers, the leading reason was "Location" with 9 offers declined or 35% of all THV declines.

Table 2: Provided Reasons for Declined Offers of Shelter³

Provided Reason	Total	Offered Only Enhanced Shelter Bed	Offered Only Tiny House Village Bed	Offered Both Enhanced and THV Bed
Does Not Want Shelter	72 (24%)	60 (26%)	4 (15%)	8 (18%)
Wants Tiny Home	62 (21%)	62 (27%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Unknown	34 (11%)	16 (7%)	4 (15%)	14 (31%)
Wants Permanent Housing	32 (11%)	29 (13%)	1 (4%)	2 (4%)
Vehicle/RV-Related Issue	20 (7%)	6 (3%)	0 (0%)	14 (31%)
Other Reason	20 (7%)	15 (7%)	3 (12%)	2 (4%)

² The match between HSD 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 HSD 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.

³ Data does not represent all offers of shelter made in Q4 2022 as HSD began collecting reasons for declined offers beginning on October 21, 2022.

History of Negative Shelter Experiences	17 (6%)	17 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Wants Placement with Partner/Family/Friends	13 (4%)	7 (3%)	5 (19%)	1 (2%)
Does Not Want Communal Space	12 (4%)	10 (4%)	0 (0%)	2 (4%)
Location	11 (4%)	2 (1%)	9 (35%)	0 (0%)
Storage Issue	3 (1%)	1 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (4%)
Pets Not Allowed	2 (1%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total	298	227	26	45

HSD plans to continue working in partnership with KCRHA to improve monitoring and data collection, particularly as the regional homelessness authority begins to rebid their homelessness contracts.

Operations

Included within the 2023 Adopted Budget, [HSD-035-C-001](#) directs HSD to partner with KCRHA to develop an agreement that would shift responsibility for geographically-based outreach from the former to the latter. HSD and KCRHA will work throughout Q1 2023 toward this agreement with the goal of executing an MOU by March 1, 2023. HSD, KCRHA, and the Mayor’s Office have started discussions and look forward to collaborating on the development of this proposal. HSD looks forward to providing additional clarity on what data both parties can share related to encampment response and detailing how this will impact future submissions related to [HSD-301-A-001](#).

FY 2022 Outcomes

In 2022, HSD facilitated 1,831 referrals to shelters, an increase of 52% compared to 2021. Of these referrals, 99% were to enhanced shelters (73% of total referrals) or tiny house villages (26% of total referrals). This compares to 92% of referrals to enhanced shelters or tiny house villages in 2021. Over the year, System Navigators made referrals from 30 different outreach and service organizations and 201 encampment locations.

Referrals from providers and service organizations were made from 4,446 total shelter recommendations (duplicated). This represents an increase of 17% compared to 2021. HSD were able to confirm 746 enrollments (duplicated) into shelter in 2022, an increase of 30% compared to 2021 when there were 576 confirmed enrollments. From these enrollments, 680 unique individuals were confirmed as enrolling into shelter, which is also an increase from 512 in 2021. Due to the challenges confirming enrollment information mentioned earlier in this report – this is likely a significant undercount of the number of enrollments into shelter programs based on the total shelter referrals by System Navigators in 2022. However, enrollment data provides an additional data point to measure historical trends.

Data on race was collected for 85% of shelter referrals for the year and 53% of those referrals were made to people experiencing homelessness who are BIPOC. As indicated above, this is compared to the

[2022 Point in Time \(PIT\) Count](#) which found that roughly 52% of unsheltered individuals identified as BIPOC.

CC: Deputy Mayor Tiffany Washington
 HSD Acting Director Tanya Kim

For additional detail on Q4 2022 and FY 2022 results, please see the Table below:

Reporting Element	Q4			FY 2022		
Total Number of Referrals to Shelter, Duplicated	433 (353 HOPE Team System Navigator Initiated Referrals)			1,831 (1,256 HOPE Team System Navigator Initiated Referrals)		
Total Number of Referrals to Shelter, Unduplicated	378			1,490		
Number and Percentage of Shelter Referral Demographics	Gender	Number	Percentage (%)	Gender	Number	Percentage (%)
	Male	302	69.7	Male	1,295	70.7
	Female	119	27.5	Female	486	26.5
	Trans Female	1	0.2	Trans Female	7	0.4
	Trans Male	0	0	Trans Male	2	0.1
	Gender Non-Conforming	1	0.2	Gender Non-Conforming	5	0.3
	Data Not Collected	10	2.3	Data Not Collected	36	2.0
	Refused	0	0	Refused	0	0.0
	Race			Race		
	American Indian or Alaska Native	11	2.5	American Indian or Alaska Native	69	3.8

	Asian	6	1.4	Asian	52	2.8
	Black/African American	109	25.2	Black/African American	514	28.1
	White/Caucasian	160	37.0	White/Caucasian	721	39.4
	Multiracial	44	10.2	Multiracial	170	9.3
	Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	5	1.2	Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	21	1.1
	Data Not Collected	98	22.6	Data Not Collected	284	15.5
	Ethnicity			Ethnicity		
	Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	290	67.0	Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	1,368	74.7
	Hispanic/Latino	4	0.9	Hispanic/Latino	21	1.0
	Data Not Collected	139	32.1	Data Not Collected	442	24.0
	Breakdown of Referrals to Specific Shelter-Types				Shelter Type	Referrals
Shelter Type		Referrals	Percentage (%)	Enhanced Shelter	1,337	73.0
Enhanced Shelter		335	77.4	Tiny House Village	478	26.1
Tiny House Village		98	22.6	Basic Shelter	14	0.8
			Permanent Housing	2	0.1	
Number of Enrollments to the Referred Shelter Within a 48-Hour Period Following	195			746		

Referral, Duplicated		
Number of Enrollments to the Referred Shelter Within a 48-Hour Period Following Referral, Unduplicated	186	680