

Thurston Regional Housing Council Policy and Procedures for Homeless Services Emergency Fund

Purpose

To establish a Homeless Services Emergency Fund (HSE) to assist service providers facing an imminent loss of client housing and homeless services. The HSE funds are intended to provide an interim solution to an urgent and acute problem that was unforeseen by the applicant. The terms emergency or urgent are intended to describe the need of residents of Thurston County who face significant or imminent health and safety danger due to an unforeseen external circumstance. It is not intended to provide funding to solely address emergency or urgent needs of an organization due to budgeting short falls.

I. Emergency Funding

The Regional Housing Council (RHC) will set aside a minimum of \$200,000 of available homeless services funds to establish an HSE fund allocation. The RHC may decide to allocate additional funds or funds from other sources to add to the HSE fund. Any HSE funds not allocated by the end of the contract period, will be added into the following year's HSE fund pool.

II. Submitting a Request

Homeless Services Emergency Fund activities must be eligible to receive the allocated homeless services funds, which are intended to support homeless services for low-income populations.

Eligible activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Support to a large encampment experiencing a sweep wherein individuals will be displaced, and support is not available elsewhere in the community.
- The standing up of a new program to address a public health/safety threat such as the threat of smoke/fire to an encampment or the local community.
- Support for a shelter experiencing an issue with the facility that could lead to the displacement of individuals residing there and could be mitigated by repairs.

An agency requesting HSE funds must first submit a written request to the Homeless Services Advisory Board (HSAB) that addresses the following:

- a. A narrative request that addresses the following:
 - i. Why the emergency funding is needed, specifically addressing the health and safety consequences of failing to provide the HSE funds, as well as the nature of the circumstance that led to this emergency, including the timeframe within which funds are needed.
 - ii. A statement that clearly differentiates between current homeless response services and the urgency of the proposed services.
 - iii. A description of how the emergency funds will be used.
 - iv. A description of how the agency intends to fund the services ongoing once HSE funds are expended if funding is not being used for a one time cost.

- v. A statement describing that no alternative sources of funding are available to the agency to address the need, and list of partner agencies within the Homeless Crisis Response System who have been solicited for support.
 - vi. Summary of past HSE fund requests made by organization within the last three years, whether approved or not.
- b. A budget specifying how the HSE funds will be used.

III. Evaluating a Request

The HSAB will evaluate requests for HSE funds based on the following criteria:

1. The agency and activity are each eligible for SB 2163 funding
2. Failure to provide HSE funds will either:
 - a. Reduce or eliminate an existing service that serves a vulnerable population and reducing or eliminating the service will result in a clear and direct threat to health and safety; or
 - b. Address an imminent and clear threat to health and safety that was not known during the time of program application for annual RFP process; or
 - c. Result in the displacement of homeless or formerly homeless individuals or households.
3. The requesting agency is in good standing with all current or recent contracts with Thurston County.

IV. Decision-Making Process

The Homeless Services Advisory Board and Regional Housing Council, respectively, will adhere to the following process for receiving and deciding upon funding requests:

1. Requests for HSE funds must be submitted to Thurston County and discussion of the request will be added to the agenda for the upcoming HSAB meeting. If there is no HSAB/RHC meeting scheduled within two weeks from date of submission, an emergency meeting will be called.
2. HSAB members will discuss and vote on the request at the first available meeting.
3. The HSAB chair/co-chair will present the request and their recommendations at the first available RHC meeting.
4. RHC will make the final decision to approve the request.
5. HSE funding awards must be approved by Thurston's Board of County Commissioners (BoCC). Contracts will be executed in a timely fashion following BoCC approval.
6. The Office of Housing and Homeless Prevention will distribute HSE funds until all HSE emergency funds are exhausted.
7. Agencies may not receive more than one HSE funding award per year.

The Homeless Services Emergency Fund Policy and Procedures will be reviewed on an annual basis. If changes are needed, the HSAB Chair and Co-Chair will provide recommended changes to the RHC for approval.

Policy approved by: Thurston Regional Housing Council

Policy effective date: January 24, 2024