

Date: August 16, 2021

To: Councilmember Andrew Lewis, Chair, Select Committee on Homelessness Strategies and Investments and Councilmember Alex Pedersen

From: Tess Colby, Interim Deputy Director, Human Services Department (HSD)

Subject: Response to HOM-020-A-001 –Q1 and Q2 Report on Performance Outcomes of the HOPE Team

Introduction

This report is offered in response to 2021 Statement of Legislative Intent HOM-020-A-001 (SLI), which requests a quarterly report providing basic performance metrics of the Homelessness Outreach and Response Ecosystem (HOPE) Team. This report reflects HOPE Team data for Quarter 1 (Q1), which spans January 1 – March 31, 2021, and Quarter 2 (Q2), which spans April 1 - June 30, 2021.

Due to active contract negotiations, which included proposed enhancements to data collection and reporting by Human Services Department (HSD) contracted outreach providers, HSD was not able to submit a responsive report for the first quarterly report. Instead, the Q1 report outlined the proposed new contract requirements that would allow HSD to fully respond to the SLI in subsequent reports.

During contract negotiations, the Mayor’s Office and HSD met with providers to hear concerns about the proposed new operational, data collection, and reporting requirements to figure out a path forward. While final contract negotiations yielded no additional data collection or reporting requirements by contracted outreach providers to the HOPE Team, outcomes included:

1. Outreach contracts shifting to the King County Regional Homeless Authority (KCRHA) in 2022, which will allow for new metrics and data collection to be forward looking and created with a regional lens.
2. Per request by contracted outreach providers, they would not be required to be onsite during an encampment removal. HOPE Team System Navigators would ensure outreach is provided at priority encampment prior to a scheduled MDAR removal.
3. Honoring the requests of black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) led organizations to ensure their outreach is culturally appropriate.

As a result, this report reflects data collected by the HOPE Team’s System Navigators through their on the ground coordination efforts with providers and the facilitation of the shelter referral process. For future quarterly reports, the HOPE Team is in the process of developing additional data points to further highlight their collaboration with outreach partners through weekly coordination meetings, neighborhood specific huddles, and work to resolve priority encampment sites without the need for an MDAR removal.

HOPE Team

Included as part of the 2021 budget, the new eight-person HOPE Team changed HSD's role in coordinating outreach to those experiencing homelessness in Seattle. The HOPE Team's focus is two-fold:

1. To coordinate outreach in partnership with contracted providers to support people living unsheltered across the city. As part of this coordination, the HOPE Team manages the referral process into City funded "set-aside" shelter resources, as well as coordinates a response to requests for outreach received through the Customer Service Bureau, other City departments, the public, and elected officials.
2. To ensure that, in accordance with the MDAR 17-01s, every individual at an encampment prioritized for removal by a property-owning department (i.e., Seattle Parks & Recreation, Seattle Department of Transportation, Seattle City Light, etc.) receives an offer of shelter by the HOPE Team or its outreach partners prior to being asked to relocate.

Unlike the Navigation Team, HSD no longer leads encampment trash and debris mitigation efforts or encampment removal operations. Encampments in the right of way, parks, and sidewalks are now prioritized by the departments that own or are responsible for the impacted property. The HOPE Team supports their work by coordinating outreach and shelter referrals at their prioritized locations, with the goal of helping all those residing onsite into safer shelter spaces.

Q1 2021 Outcomes

In its first quarter of operation, the HOPE Team held weekly meetings with providers to discuss challenges and opportunities to improve upon the current shelter referral process. Referrals into the HOPE Team's "set-aside" resources, which are approximately 30% of the City's funded shelter spaces, are made when there is a service-match between an individual and a shelter program available, prioritizing recommendations from City department-identified high-priority sites.

The HOPE Team made 186 referrals to available shelter spaces based on 433 shelter recommendations from 16 different outreach providers in Q1. Of these referrals, 94% were to enhanced shelter or tiny homes, including to the [new hotel-based shelters that opened at the end of March](#), or tiny house villages. Both of those shelter types provide wraparound onsite services such as behavioral and mental health, case management, and housing navigation, to help end a person's experience with homelessness.

In February, the HOPE Team led emergency outreach efforts during Seattle's [record breaking snow fall](#). In partnership with Seattle Parks and Recreation, the Team made 380 wellness checks, provided 277 people with winter supplies, and transported 42 individuals experiencing homelessness to temporary emergency shelter. Following the closure of the temporary emergency shelters, the HOPE Team, in partnership with HSD's Homelessness Strategies and Investments (HSI) division and outreach and shelter providers, helped coordinate efforts to refer 83 individuals into shelter and hotel placements.

Q2 2021 Outcomes

In Q2, the HOPE Team made 432 referrals to shelter, the most recorded by HSD since tracking of this data began in Q4 2018. This was a 132% increase over the number of Q1 2021 referrals, and they were

made based on 1,097 shelter recommendations from 17 provider partners. The increase in recommendations and referrals reflects the availability of the new hotel-based shelters that opened at the end of Q1. Of these referrals, 95% were to 24/7 enhanced shelter spaces or tiny houses.

For referrals where data on race was collected (89% of Q2 referrals), 76% of referrals were to BIPOC individuals experiencing homelessness who are [disproportionally represented in the City's homeless population](#). In the referral workgroup convened during Q1, outreach providers advocated for recommendations of BIPOC individuals to be prioritized for referrals, as they are disproportionately represented within the unsheltered population and often face additional structural barriers to accepting and enrolling into shelter, as compared to the population at large.

Unduplicated enrollments into shelter also reached an all-time recorded high in Q2 with 214 individuals identified as entering shelter at an enrollment rate of 52.1%, another all-time high since this data began being tracked in Q1 2019. Note, tracking enrollments has been [historically difficult](#) as it requires comparing data collected by the HOPE Team and HMIS data—which are differing data sets. For instance, 24% of all HMIS shelter enrollments did not include a name, making it impossible to match them to any HOPE Team data. These challenges in tracking enrollments through HMIS are one of the data quality and metrics efforts that have been presented to King County Regional Homelessness Authority as an opportunity for re-design in the future.

The increase in referrals and enrollments benefited from the opening of two new temporary hotel-based enhanced shelters which added almost 200 hotel rooms to the City's shelter system capacity and represented 49% of the shelter referrals from the HOPE Team in Q2.

During record breaking [heat at the end of June](#), the HOPE Team activated its emergency heat response outreach on Friday, June 25, and System Navigators were in the field over the weekend through Monday, June 28 performing wellness checks, handing out water and other basic needs supplies, passing out flyers about the available cooling shelter and services, and offering transportation to cooling center locations. This work was done in coordination with Heath One and other City department partners. The HOPE Team facilitated the sharing of information with provider partners on the City's heat response efforts and available cooling center locations and resources for people living unsheltered. Over the course of the excessive heat event, the HOPE Team made 192 engagements with individuals experiencing homelessness, handed out 619 bottles of water, provided 135 basic needs supplies, passed out 220 cooling shelter/day center information flyers, and referred 30 individuals to City funded shelters and the temporary cooling shelter.

In closing, the HOPE Team has made tremendous strides standing up this new model and approach to supporting those living unsheltered in Seattle. Their collaborative efforts with outreach and shelter providers, City departments and community, have resulted in hundreds of people moving from encampments to safer spaces and on a pathway to ending their experience of homelessness. For additional detail please see the Table 1, below.

Table 1:

Reporting Element	Q1			Q2		
Total Number of Referrals to Shelter, Duplicated	186			432		
Total Number of Referrals to Shelter, Unduplicated	173			411		
Number and Percentage of Shelter Referral Demographics	Gender	Number	Percentage	Gender	Number	Percentage
	Male	104	56%	Male	281	65%
	Female	54	29%	Female	104	24%
	Trans Female	2	1%	Trans Female	7	2%
	Trans Male	0	0	Trans Male	0	0
	Gender Non-Conforming	0	0	Gender Non-Conforming	3	<1%
	Data Not Collected	26	14%	Data Not Collected	37	9%
	Refused	0	0	Refused	0	0
	Race			Race		
	American Indian or Alaska Native	44	24%	American Indian or Alaska Native	80	19%
	Asian	8	4%	Asian	12	3%
	Black/African American	41	22%	Black/African American	126	29%
	White/Caucasian	38	20%	White/Caucasian	104	24%
	Multiracial	12	6%	Multiracial	55	13%
	Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0	0	Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	9	2%
	Data Not Collected	43	23%	Data Not Collected	46	11%
	Ethnicity			Ethnicity		
	Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	133	72%	Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	331	77%
	Hispanic/Latino	3	2%	Hispanic/Latino	4	1%
	Data Not Collected	50	27%	Data Not Collected	97	22%
Breakdown of Referrals to Specific Shelter-Types by Quarter	Basic Shelter	12 (6%)		Basic Shelter	22 (5%)	
	Enhanced Shelter	90 (48%)		Enhanced Shelter	153 (35%)	
	Hotel Based Shelter	52 (28%)		Hotel Based Shelter	212 (49%)	
	Tiny House Village	32 (17%)		Tiny House Village	45 (10%)	

Number of Enrollments to the Referred Shelter Within a 48-Hour Period Following Referral, Duplicated ¹	95	216
Number of Enrollments to the Referred Shelter Within a 48-Hour Period Following Referral, Unduplicated	79	214

¹ Referrals to shelter by the HOPE Team in the NavApp can be matched with HMIS data to identify enrollments into shelter but there are numerous caveats which makes tracking this information difficult including, but not limited to:

- If an individual provided different personally identifying information (such as a name) in either the NavApp or HMIS;
- Opted to not share their personal information with other parties (which accounts for 24% of all HMIS data);
- Enrolled at a shelter other than the one they were referred to.