



**TO:** T.C. Broadnax, City Manager

**FROM:** Nadia Chandler Hardy, Assistant to the City Manager/NCS Director

**COPY:** Public Safety, Human Services, & Education Committee  
Pam Duncan, Human Services Division Manager

**SUBJECT:** Youth and Young Adult Crisis Center and Emergency Shelter

**DATE:** December 29, 2014

**SUMMARY:**

Staff will provide an update on the Youth and Young Adult Crisis Center and Emergency Shelter project. The City of Tacoma and Pierce County have been working together on this project to improve the continuum of housing and services available to youth who are experiencing a housing crisis. More specifically, the project addresses the need for emergency shelter and crisis support services for this vulnerable population. Community Youth Services, a youth service organization based in Olympia, WA, has been selected as the Center Operator and is currently working with the City to acquire a facility and develop the necessary policies and partnerships to successfully operate the Center.

**BACKGROUND:**

Currently, there are over 300 unaccompanied youth and young adults on the Access Point 4 Housing placement roster who are in need of housing and critical support services. The 2014 Pierce County Point-in-Time Count revealed 490 unaccompanied youth and young adults who were experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. These numbers represent a fraction of the need. Using a formula calculation recommended by several national organizations, it is estimated that 3,000 unaccompanied youth and young adults experience or are at risk for prolonged homelessness in Pierce County. Approximately 1,000 are highly vulnerable youth under the age of 18.

In 2013, a local study of 51 unaccompanied youth and young adults found that low income, African American, and LGBTQ populations in Pierce County are most affected by homelessness. Of the total sample, 84% were engaged in substance abuse, and 84% reported experiencing a mental health issue. 60-80% were physically or sexually abused by a family member or guardian. These statistics indicate a strong need for shelters and services that are specifically tailored to the needs of youth and young adults.

The Tacoma-Pierce County area has been without a youth shelter for over three decades. The current efforts to establish a youth crisis center and emergency shelter have evolved out of the work of a number of groups in the community, including the Youth Coalition, Pierce County Youth Advisory Council, the Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adult Steering Committee (associated with the Tacoma/Lakewood/Pierce County Continuum of Care), and a Blue Ribbon Panel comprised of high-level executives and public officials who champion this work. In addition, the current City Manager has made this project one of the top priorities of his administration.

The establishment of a youth crisis center and emergency shelter is the next step in improving the continuum of services available to unaccompanied youth and young adults. It builds on the Housing 4



Success initiative, which launched in January 2013 with a focus on transitional and permanent housing options for this population. While those housing interventions are successfully providing mid to long-term options, there is a need for emergency shelter and short-term crisis interventions. The City of Tacoma has partnered with Pierce County Community Connections through a Memorandum of Understanding to jointly select a Center Operator, identify a site, and fund the purchase, rehabilitation, and on-going operations of the Center. The City of Tacoma will be responsible for acquiring the site and hold the lease with the Center Operator. However, the City and County will share in the ongoing oversight of the Center operations.

**ISSUE:**

Progress on the project involves the following accomplishments in 2014:

- Development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Tacoma and Pierce County that outlines the expectations and scope of the partnership
- Selection of a Center Operator (Community Youth Services) through a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process that was jointly issued by Pierce County Community Connections and the City of Tacoma

Next steps include the following:

- Development of a \$75,000 Pre-Development contract between the City and Community Youth Services for the purpose of assisting in site identification and design, negotiating service partnerships, developing operating policies/procedures, and completing other necessary preparations for the operations of the Center
- Engaging the assistance of the City's Real Property Services staff to identify potential sites and facilities for purchase
- Starting the conditional use permit application process, once a site has been identified

**ALTERNATIVES:**

This is an information briefing only. There are no alternatives presented.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The City of Tacoma has budgeted \$2,575,000 out of the Mental Health Substance Use Disorder fund in 2015-16 for this project. The breakdown is as follows:

- \$75,000 for Pre-development contract
- \$1,500,000 for capital acquisition and rehab
- \$1,000,000 for operations

Since this is an informational briefing only, no fiscal impact statement has been prepared. The contract for pre-development work is being negotiated by City staff and will be handled administratively, due to the level of funding not meeting the threshold requiring Council approval.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This is an information briefing only. There is no recommendation.