



Snohomish County Council

Committee: Health and Community Services
ECAF: 2023-0629
Motion: 23-234

Analyst: Nicole Gorle
Date: June 6, 2023

Consideration:

The Executive's Office requests Council consider approving proposed Motion 23-234 which would approve and authorize the annual contract between Snohomish County and the Volunteers of America (VOA) for operation of the Dispute Resolution Center in 2023.

Background:

The Washington State Court Improvement Act of 1984 ([RCW 7.75](#)) allowed municipalities, counties, and corporations organized exclusively for dispute resolution to establish a Dispute Resolution Center (DRC).¹

In 1987 the County passed ordinance 87-020², requiring the establishment of a county dispute resolution program as authorized under the Court Improvement Act of 1984. This ordinance established [SCC 2.550](#) and allows the County to contract with a municipality or nonprofit to operate the DRC. Additionally, the code establishes a funding mechanism from the DRC through a district court filing fee for civil actions and small claims. Revenues generated from these fees go solely to funding the DRC. The filing charge for civil actions is \$10.00 and \$15.00 for small claims. In 2021, District Court collected \$103,648.50 in surcharges.

The DRC for Snohomish County is operated by Volunteers of America, Western Washington (VOA). The VOA DRC was Washington States first DRC pursuant to the Court Improvement Act of 1984 and "provides a wide range of professional and affordable conflict resolution services that include: Fair Housing and Landlord/Tenant Services, Large Group Facilitation, Mediation, Small Claims Court Mediation, Workplace Consultation, and a variety of training programs." The DRC is required by County Code [SCC 2.550](#) to provide these services to residence without charge or at a small fee based on a sliding fee scale.

Also provided in the ECAF packet is the Annual Report of 2022.

Current Proposal:

Scope: Motion 23-234 approves Contract HCS-23-80-2301-018 between Snohomish County and the VOA for the operation of the Dispute Resolution Center.

Duration: January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023

Fiscal Implications: allowable costs are actual expenditures per the contract budget – Exhibit C not to exceed \$140,000

2023 Budget: Yes

Future Budget Impact: No

Handling: Expedite (requested via email)

Approved-as-to-form: Yes. Contract utilizes a standard template that is approved as to form.

¹ [Court Improvement Act of 1984](#) (page 1378-1380, sections 501-510)

² [Ordinance 87-020](#) (link takes you to the Online Docs search)

Risk Management: Yes

Executive Recommendation: Approve

Attachment: None

Amendments: None

Request: Move to GLS on June 14th for consideration.