



Snohomish County Council

Committee: LJHS
ECAF: 2022-0305
Proposal: Mot. 22-138

Analyst: Heidi Beazizo
Date: March 22, 2022

Consideration

The Executive's Office requests Council consider approving proposed Motion 22-138 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 2022.

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 2021.

Current Proposal

Scope: Motion 22-138 approves Contract HCS-22-80-01-018 between Snohomish County and the VOA for the operation of the Dispute Resolution Center.

Duration: January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022

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

2021 Budget: YES

Future Budget Impacts: This agreement is only for the calendar year 2022

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

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

Handling: NORMAL

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

Risk Management: APPROVE.

Executive Recommendation: APPROVE.

Analysis: This agreement is consistent with past practice, RCW and County Code.

Attachments: NONE

Amendments: NONE

Request: Move to GLS on April 6, 2022 for Council to consider taking action.