

**Snohomish County****Human Services**

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MEMORANDUM

Date: February 1, 2023

To: Lacey Harper, Executive Director

From: Mary Jane Brell Vujovic, Director of Human Services

Re: HSD FTE LID LIFT REQUEST – ARPA/SLFRF FUNDS

The Human Services Department (HSD) is requesting a lid lift for six (6) FTE ARPA/SLFRF-funded position as described below. None of these positions will have an impact on the General Fund.

The positions being requested are in addition to the 12.5 FTE ARPA/SLFRF funded positions that were approved in the 2022 budget and the additional 11 positions approved in the 2023 budget for a total of 23.5 existing ARPA/SLFRF funded positions. All of the positions approved in 2022 have been filled (one is in the process of being refilled). We have recently received positions numbers for the 2023 positions and are in the process of filling them. None support the program or functions outlined below and some were added by the Snohomish County Council to our Behavioral Health/Veterans Division. It is anticipated that we will be able to apply cost savings associated with not filling nine (9) of these positions until March, 2023 to this request.

The amounts shown below include an estimated COLA for both 2023 and 2024. The total request is for **\$983,625** in ARPA/SLFRF funds for 2023 and 2024. All would be paid from the T2 **Housing and Homelessness** fund since all directly relate to obtaining or retaining housing.

New Start Center Contract Management

HSD is requesting one (1) FTE Human Services Specialist II to oversee the planning, selection of providers, coordination, implementation, monitoring, and reporting on the operation and services provided by subcontractors at the two New Start Centers in Everett and Edmonds. The creation of these facilities to offer low-barrier sheltering in conjunction with wrap-around services has been in direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic during which the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Snohomish County has grown as has the need for non-congregate sheltering/bridge housing to ensure the health of individuals experiencing homelessness and the general population.

It is anticipated the cost of this position, including all associated costs will be \$84,059 for ten (10) months in 2023. It is anticipated the position will cost an additional \$120,817 in 2024.

Energy Assistance Program (EAP)

Human Services is also requesting one (1) FTE Human Services Specialist I and three (3) FTE Energy and Weatherization Assistant II positions to provide direct services for the delivery of utility assistance to low-income residents. The total cost for these four (4) positions for ten (10) months in 2023 and all of 2024 is provided below.

| Title | Pay Grade | 2023 Cost | 2024 Cost | Total Cost |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Human Services Specialist I | 237 | \$76,259 | \$109,683 | \$185,942 |
| Energy/Weatherization II (3) | 308 | 175,014 | 251,718 | 426,732 |
| TOTAL | | \$251,273 | \$361,401 | \$612,674 |

This year, the EAP has had an unprecedented number of applications for assistance with a large number of vulnerable Snohomish County residents in crisis, having received shutoff notices or having already had their utilities disconnected. The EAP currently has a backlog of 1,000 applications for assistance from residents with past due utility bills and is currently closed to new applicants.

The EAP does not have enough staff to process all the requests and staff have been working overtime at a pace that cannot be sustained as our inability to process all the applications from eligible applicants continues.

This crisis is directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Utility companies are now shutting off service after an extended period during which there was a pandemic-related moratorium on disconnection of services. Now that the moratorium has been lifted, EAP anticipates receiving a significant number of new requests as more shutoff notices are being sent out by the utility companies.

As noted above, this challenge has been directly created by the COVID-19 pandemic and represents a significant health and safety risk to low-income households in need. Continued inability to process applications for these needed services if left unaddressed would also result in additional utilities being needlessly disconnected since the EAP grants limit the amount of funding that can be used to support staffing costs and we would not be able to process applications to distribute all of the funds designated for payment of utilities without additional staff support.

Approval of the filling of these four (4) positions with ARPA/SLFRF funds will benefit hundreds of vulnerable households in our county.

Administrative Services

The pandemic has resulted in doubling of the annual HSD budget, primarily in the Housing and Homelessness service category, and ARPA/SLFRF funds carry extensive administrative requirements for compliance. As a result, our departmental staffing level has risen from 238.375 in 2019 to 308.5 in the approved 2023 budget. We are therefore requesting one (1) FTE Accounting Specialist who will be responsible for assisting with processing payroll and other related duties. The filling of this position will allow HSD to maintain its excellent track record of fund source compliance, allowability of all costs, and accurate and timely payment of all HSD staff.

It is anticipated the cost of this position will be \$68,109 for ten (10) months in 2023. It is anticipated the position will cost an additional \$97,966 in 2024.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

cc: Kara Main-Hester
Brian Haseleu
Vanessa deSalome
Jackie Anderson
Mike Liddicoat