

Communities Supporting Safe & Stable Housing

Human Services Investment Plan for Homeless Services: 2012-2018

Investment Plan Public Comments

The public review period for the draft Communities Supporting Safe & Stable Housing Investment Plan was May 11 to May 31, 2012. A community meeting was held in Seattle City Hall, Bertha Knight Landes Room to introduce the draft plan and investment framework for 2013 to 2018. Participants included community members, providers and staff. Twenty-seven (27) comments were received. A summary of the *common themes* and responses are presented below.

Common Themes	Response
<p>Investment Principles: Commitment to Neighborhood Health & Safety</p> <p>Comments and questions were related to purpose of Good Neighbor Plans; requests for additional clarification on these requirements; the responsibilities of service providers and potential costs associated with implementation of plans; and accountability, acceptance, and inclusion; protecting the confidential locations (e.g. domestic violence housing).</p>	<p>Good Neighbor Agreements are one of the tools to help our service providers, businesses and neighbors work together to create safe environments for our clients and for the people who live and work in the immediate neighborhood. These agreements are critical to make certain that clients are served in the most supportive environment possible.</p> <p>The specific requirements for Good Neighbor Plans/Agreements will be detailed in HSD funding allocation processes (Request for Investments) and in contracts with our providers.</p>
<p>The Need for Shelter</p> <p>Comments included concerns that plan did not focus on immediate needs for shelter and unmet needs for shelter; case management and other services would be required in shelters – these services are costly and are not needed by all program participants. Concerns about shifts in investments from intervention to models that are not addressing immediate needs of those without shelter.</p>	<p>The City of Seattle's Human Services Department remains firmly committed to providing emergency shelter for those who need it and recognizes that shelter is a critical first step in getting people off the streets and on the pathway to stable housing. Funding in the investment category of "Intervention," which includes overnight shelter, transitional housing and day centers, will remain unchanged for 2013 and 2014.</p> <p>Federal government last year cut Seattle's Community Block Grant allocation by 17 percent potentially affecting shelter funding, the City stepped in to "backfill" the shortfall with General Fund dollars.</p>
<p>Needs for Housing and Services</p> <p>The need for more affordable housing for all population groups was commented on by many people. Housing models need to include shelter, low barrier housing, transitional, rapid rehousing and housing first models. Comments also noted needs for services to address mental illness, chemical dependency, health, and jobs/employment/training.</p> <p>Housing First, Harm Reduction and Needs of Chronically Homeless Individuals</p> <p>Suggestions were made that the plan should include more information, emphasis and priority on Housing First and harm reduction models. Special needs of chronically homeless, aging, disabled adults were noted in several comments, along with suggestions of additional information that should be included in the Investment Plan.</p>	<p>The plan reflects these needs. Additional information was added to the plan to emphasize these needs.</p> <p>The draft HSD plan clearly identifies Housing First as one of the important models eligible for funding, and in fact provides additional funding for these and other Housing Placement, Stabilization and Support programs over a six-year period .</p>

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<p>Specialized services for Domestic Violence Survivors Suggestion that all providers assisting women and women with children to have basic level of competence in screening and responding to Domestic Violence issues. Comments that policies need to recognize and balance clients' privacy and confidentiality with desire to collect data.</p> <p>Specialized services for Youth/Young Adults Support needed for both specific services for sub-population groups; at the same time, need for all service providers to effectively serve youth of color, LBGT and sexually exploited youth. Comments that services and investments should be integrated.</p>	<p>The plan reflects these needs. Additional information was added to the plan to emphasize these needs.</p> <p>The plan reflects these needs. Additional information was added to the plan to emphasize these needs.</p>
<p>Investment Priorities Comments received from agencies noted that many providers already practice these principles; concerns raised that implementation of principles could add costs for programs, especially for programs operated by smaller agencies. More details requested on standards, measures and evaluation for these principles.</p>	<p>No additions or changes to the plan were made.</p> <p>The cost to administer program requirements will be monitored by HSD. The specific requirements for Investment Principles will be detailed in HSD funding allocation processes (Request for Investments) and in contracts with our providers.</p>
<p>Resources and Leveraging Funding</p> <p>Comments suggest that more funding is needed. Concerns and disappointment that resources are not projected to increase over time. Questions about leveraging federal resources, specifically policies to use City funding to leverage HUD funding ("McKinney" resources).</p> <p>Comments encouraged the City to look at totality of its funding and integrate investments across areas (e.g. neighborhood investments with service investments; investments for youth, families, education, and violence prevention.)</p>	<p>No addition or changes to the plan were made.</p> <p>The importance of leveraging of federal, local and philanthropic funding is discussed in the plan. The specific strategies for leveraging these resources are developed using the framework outlined in the investment plan to respond to opportunities and changes in the funding environment.</p>
<p>Community Engagement</p> <p>Comments received noted and appreciated the extensive community engagement process. Others asked questions about the specific involvement of key stakeholders, including people who are homeless and formerly homeless in the planning discussions; and requests to be included in future conversations to develop solutions.</p>	<p>No additions to the plan were made. The plan describes ways in which HSD involved members of the community, including individuals and family members who were experiencing, at-risk of and formerly homeless.</p>