



MEMORANDUM

TO: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
FROM: Erika Lautenbach, Director
RE: Opportunity Council – Housing and Essential Needs Program Contract
DATE: June 7, 2022

Attached is a contract between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council for your review and signature.

▪ **Background and Purpose**

Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) is a program of the Washington State Department of Commerce Consolidated Homeless Grant (CHG) and provides funding for rent and utility assistance, essential needs items, and case management for recipients whose eligibility is determined by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). Commerce provides funding to each county for these services. This is a sole source contract with the Opportunity Council as the administrator of the Whatcom Homeless Service Center. Annually, the Opportunity Council will serve 175 HEN-eligible individuals with rental assistance and case management services, and 230 will receive essential needs items.

▪ **Funding Amount and Source**

Funding for this contract, in an amount not to exceed \$2,530,694, is provided by the Washington State Department of Commerce CHG. These funds are included in the 2022 budget. Council approval is required as funding exceeds \$40,000.

▪ **Differences Between Previous Contracts**

This is a new contract; however, the Opportunity Council has administered the HEN Program through previous contracts since 2014. This contract includes the following changes from the previous contract (WC Contract #201805015):

- Redefines the Opportunity Council's Community Services Division as the administrative entity for HEN rather than sharing HEN administration responsibilities with the Whatcom Homeless Service Center.
- Removes Commerce's Consequences of Non-Compliance as they were omitted from the current Consolidated Homeless Grant.
- Reduces the number of households served with rent and utility assistance from 214 to 175 because the budget in this contract is reduced by \$10,000 and clients are staying in the program longer, resulting in less people exiting and less households served.
- Reduces the number of households served with essential needs items from 425 to 230 due to the reinstatement of bus fares and an increase in the costs of items, resulting in reduction of supplies and accordingly with increased costs, a reduction in the number of households served.

Please contact Ann Beck, Human Services Manager at 360-778-6055 (ABeck@co.whatcom.wa.us) or Kathleen Roy, Assistant Director at 360-778-6007 (KRoy@co.whatcom.wa.us) if you have any questions or concerns regarding this request.

