



Memorandum

TO: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
FROM: Champ Thomaskutty, Director
RE: Lutheran Community Services Northwest – Shelter Lease Agreement Amendment #1
DATE: MARCH 12, 2026

Attached is a lease agreement amendment between Whatcom County and Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW) for your review and signature. In preparation for the necessity to operate a summer shelter in response to wildfire smoke and/or extreme heat, as determined by the County's Health Officers, this amendment extends the agreement through 10/31/2026. LCSNW will lease the facility to the County during the extended agreement period at a rate of \$1,000 per month, with use fees of \$2,500 per day, when the facility is utilized as an emergency shelter.

▪ **Background and Purpose**

This agreement outlines the requirements for leasing a 6,000 square foot facility, utilized by the County as a severe weather shelter, with space for up to 60 guests. The primary function of the shelter is to serve as a life-saving intervention during severe weather conditions. The facility is located at 925 N Forest Street, which is an ideal location, as it is close to downtown Bellingham, near a bus line, has a viable HVAC system, and is available as a short-term rental. LCSNW have also been willing to accommodate this operation, which is not the case with other locations that the County pursued.

▪ **Funding Amount and Source**

This amendment increases funding by \$32,000. Total funding for this contract may not exceed \$98,455 and is provided by the Consolidated Homeless Grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce. These funds are included in the 2026 budget. Council authorization is required as the funding added by this amendment exceeds 10% of the amount authorized by Council.

Please contact Chris D'Onofrio, Housing and Homeless Services Supervisor at 360-778-6049 (CDonofrio@co.whatcom.wa.us) if you have any questions.