



MEMORANDUM

TO: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
FROM: Erika Lautenbach, Director
RE: Opportunity Council – Leasing Specialist Services Contract
DATE: November 10, 2022

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

▪ **Background and Purpose**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care Sponsor Based Rental Assistance (SBRA) is a federally funded program providing long-term rental assistance to people with disabilities who have experienced homelessness. SBRA requires program participants to reside in housing owned or leased by a sponsor organization and arranged through a contract between the recipient and the sponsor organization. This contract provides funding for the Opportunity Council, as a Whatcom County SBRA sponsor, to provide linkage to rental subsidies, and leasing specialist services, which includes assistance for 80 clients served at one time, in locating eligible housing units, providing leasing support, serving as a liaison between landlords and clients, and assisting clients in preparing Section 8 and public housing applications.

This contract also provides funding for intensive case management services, to support at least 42 people annually, with a history of chronic homelessness. Intensive case management is typically a team-based approach with a lower staff to client ratio than standard case management, serving people with co-occurring disorders, including serious mental illness, substance use disorder, and physical health problems. This is one of two contracts awarded as a result of RFP 22-32.

▪ **Funding Amount and Source**

Funding for this contract, in an amount not to exceed \$454,470, is provided by HB 1590 (sales and use tax for housing and related services), mental health millage, the Behavioral Health Program Fund, and local document recording fees. These funds will be included in the 2023 budget. Council approval is required as funding exceeds \$40,000.

▪ **Differences between Previous Contracts**

This is a new contract, however, funding for these services has been provided through similar contracts since 2012. From the contract currently in place (WC Contract #201812036), this contract includes an increase in funding for operations and personnel costs for case management and community leasing.

Please contact Ann Beck, Community 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.

