



Legislation Text

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To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Katherine Smith, Director of Community Resources

Prepared By:

Michelle Halstead, Director, Commissioners' Office

Presenter: Devin Granbery, Sheridan City Manager; Shawn Lewis, Englewood City Manager;
Samma Fox, Littleton Assistant City Manager

Subject:

1:00 PM *Tri-Cities Homeless Action Plan Discussion

Purpose and Request:

Provide an update on the Tri-Cities Homeless Action Plan and seek direction to deepen partnership between Arapahoe County and Tri-Cities Homelessness Policy Committee.

Background and Discussion: The Tri-Cities Homelessness Policy Committee was formed in 2018 to address homelessness in Littleton, Englewood, and Sheridan, CO. While homelessness is evident throughout the state, the Tri-Cities Group shares physical borders and often collaborates on regional issues. The Tri-Cities Group is comprised of elected officials and city leadership, non-profit and state partners, public safety experts, and others who understand a 'one size fits all' approach isn't feasible. Their goals are to understand the root causes of homelessness, offer flexible solutions, and utilize proven strategies to address this issue. The group achieved several milestones over the last three years in studying and developing strategies to reduce homelessness and its impact on the region, including:

- Completed a Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal (PESTEL) analysis of regional services for unhoused people (attached for reference).
- Completed two assessments with the University of Denver Center for Housing and Homelessness to better understand family and chronic homelessness in the Tri-Cities (attached for reference).
- Partnered with the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative who coordinates services with providers from

throughout the region.

- Created an Action Plan with the Florence Aliese Advancement Network (attached for reference).

Findings that emerged from the reports shed light on the facts about homelessness in the south metro area:

- The top causes of homelessness for families are inability to pay rent, change in employment status, and loss of a job.
- The primary barriers to permanent housing are the increased cost of housing, low or no credit score, and inability to pay rent.
- Three out of four homeless youth were likely kicked out, have a family that can't house them, or don't have a responsible guardian.
- In the last two years, the majority of respondents slept on the streets at least once.

Each of the three cities adopted the Tri-City Homeless Action Plan this fall following several joint study sessions and presentations. Designed for implementation over the next three years, this plan provides key research findings as well as strategies designed to reduce the impact of homelessness on those experiencing it as well as the larger community. The next steps in implementing it are:

- Acknowledge the unique needs of families and individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Dedicate a full-time coordinator to implement the plan.
- Continue to partner with Arapahoe County and service providers.
- Increase data collection and tracking practices.
- Enhance local and regional coordination.
- Leverage partnerships to proactively address the health and behavioral health of single adults experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
- Study housing opportunities to increase successful exits from homelessness.

In early 2021, the Board of County Commissioners approved taking a leadership role in convening regional homelessness conversations, following several study sessions in 2020 regarding the County's current activities and needs. Earlier this year, the Board approved hiring a temporary, grant-funded county position to stand up this programmatic work over the next few years.

One of the action plans first priorities is to hire a full-time coordinator to help implement the plan, in coordination with the County. The cities would like to partner with the County to hire this position - consistent with the Board's regional approach - to work in close coordination and partnership. The cities are seeking support to develop an intergovernmental agreement with the County that would coordinate the implementation of the Tri-Cities Action plan in a manner to ensure connection to homelessness work and goals established by the County and regional best practices. The cities would provide funding for this temporary position while the County would provide oversight of the position. Pending direction from the Board, County staff will work with municipal staff to develop the details of an IGA that would be brought back to the Board for final approval.

Fiscal Impact: The Cities will pay the costs of the temporary, full-time employee. The County's costs would be approximately \$1,000 (computer, materials) and in-kind (office space, supervision time).

Alternatives: The Board could choose not to direct staff to develop an intergovernmental agreement.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

- ☐ Be fiscally sustainable
- ☐ Provide essential and mandated service
- ☒ Be community focused

Staff Recommendation: Staff is supportive of partnering with the Tri-Cities to develop an IGA for final Board approval.

Concurrence: County Attorney's Office