

**CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM**

**SUBJECT**

Report on the Findings of the 2013-2014 Human Services Needs Update

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**POLICY ISSUES**

The 2013-2014 Human Services Needs Update, along with the Human Services Element of the Comprehensive Plan, will guide the recommendations to Council from the Human Services Commission on the use of Human Services Fund and Community Development Block Grant resources for the years 2015 and 2016. The Needs Update findings also guide the Commission and staff in their roles as facilitators and planners in prioritizing projects over the next two years.

**DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL**

- Action
- Discussion
- Information

**BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**

The City allocates funds from the Human Services Fund (ultimately funded from general tax sources such as property tax, sales tax, etc.) and a portion of the Community Development Block Grant program (from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) on a two-year cycle to support community-based non-profit social services agencies that provide services to Bellevue residents. The City is currently in the 2013-2014 biennial cycle.

Every two years, Human Services staff conducts an extensive human services needs assessment to obtain a comprehensive picture of needs and issues in Bellevue. Data used in the report comes from a number of sources: a phone/online survey completed by over 600 Bellevue residents during February/March 2013; surveys completed by consumers of human services and providers; small focus groups (Community Conversations) conducted with groups such as older adults, multi-cultural communities, and youth; key informant interviews; conversations with City employees and faith community representatives; and extensive use of Census data, reports, and websites that provide information on national, state, county and sub-regional trends.

In spring and summer of 2014, the Human Services Commission will be developing recommendations to Council for the 2015-2016 biennial funding cycle. The Human Services Needs Update presented to Council will provide the background information upon which the recommendations will be developed. The Needs Update is also used extensively by community-

based agencies and their boards, citizen groups, City staff, staff in other local jurisdictions, and a number of faith communities for planning purposes.

Key emerging and ongoing trends and issues include:

- *Quality of Life in Bellevue:* Satisfaction with living in Bellevue remains very high. In 2013, 96% of Bellevue residents who responded to the phone/online survey rated the overall quality of life in Bellevue as either “excellent” or “good”, compared to the 2011 rating of 98%. In 2013, the percentage of excellent ratings increased over 2011. Comments from other surveys and community conversations revealed specific qualities residents liked about Bellevue, including good schools, excellent community centers, the “green” environment, diversity, great parks, low crime rate, and clean streets.
- *Affordable Health Care:* In the phone/online survey, Bellevue residents have historically rated lack of affordable medical care and medical insurance within the top tier of major community and household problems. In 2013, it was estimated that about 14% of Bellevue residents between 19-65 years old, or 11,500 people, did not have health insurance. With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act Individual Mandate beginning in October 2013, there are hopes that the number of residents in Bellevue with access to affordable health care will increase. Lack of dental care due to cost continues to be a significant gap, affecting both adults and children including older adults receiving Medicare benefits. Mental health services have also been identified by providers and residents as a growing need for children, youth and adults, as is substance abuse treatment services to address increased usage both by adults and youth.
- *Continuing Impact of the Economic Downturn on Bellevue Residents:* Though unemployment rates are dropping and the job market is improving nationally, in the state, and locally, the impact of the economic downturn is still being felt by some Bellevue residents. Some indicators of this impact are evident in regard to the need for assistance for food. According to the Bellevue School District free and reduced price lunch program statistics, in the 2013-2014 school year 21.2% of students are eligible for this program, compared to 17.7% in the 2008-2009 school year. The number of Bellevue residents receiving federally funded food stamps (also known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) increased nearly 25% between June 2010 and June 2012. The demand for services from non-profit agencies continues to remain steady, with staff reporting that they cannot meet the need for services such as financial assistance, dental services, subsidized childcare and mental health counseling.
- *Affordable Housing:* Demand for homeless housing continues to outpace supply by a wide margin. In 2007, the East King County Plan to End Homelessness called for significant increases in prevention strategies and an additional 820 units of housing for single adults, 930 units for families and 96 units for youth and young adults. As of 2013, the total net gain of housing units for single adults was 12% of the goal, for families, 43%, and for youth and young adults, 62%. There is also an increased need for housing that is affordable to meet the needs of all economic segments of the community, including workforce housing, housing for older adults and people with disabilities. In eight consecutive phone/online surveys, Bellevue residents consistently rated lack of affordable housing as the top community problem.
- *Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault:* Providers of both domestic violence and sexual assault services report increases in the number of limited-English-speaking survivors who need their help. Services that are linguistically and culturally appropriate are critical. Community education efforts to address topics such as the effects of bullying and informing youth about the legal definition of assault are important to continue. Two ongoing issues to

monitor are the increase in human trafficking across the state and King County, including East King County, and on-line victimization of vulnerable youth.

- *Services for Older Adults:* Many providers and residents identified the need for more services for the growing population of older adults in Bellevue (13.9%) so they will be able to age in place. These include affordable and accessible housing, transportation, in-home assistance with daily tasks, support for family caregivers and adult day health programs. Another need expressed was for employment because, for some residents, retirement savings and other assets have not kept up with the increasing cost of living. In 2013, 25% of the total clients served in the Bellevue Hopelink Food Bank were 55 years or older, up from 16% in 2010.
- *Veterans:* The 2011 American Community Survey indicates that over 7,000 veterans currently reside in Bellevue; the largest percentage (32%) is 55-75+ and the smallest percentage (10%) is 18-34 years old. King County Veteran's Program staff report an increase in younger veterans who have significant war injuries returning to live with relatives which increases the need for caregiver support. Human services providers continue to see an increase in the number of veterans and their families seeking services, primarily in the areas of mental health (e.g. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), substance abuse, housing, employment, domestic violence and Military Sexual Trauma (MST). More outreach and education to veterans, particularly women veterans, is needed about federal, state and county programs for which they may be eligible.
- *Ethnically Diverse Populations:* The ethnic diversity in Bellevue continues to grow, as evidenced by the 2012 American Community Survey data showing that over a third of residents age 5 and over (35.6%) are foreign born and 42% of this population speak a language other than English at home. Other indicators include the high demand for English-as-a-Second-Language classes and an increase in interpretation services at health clinics and human services agencies. The Bellevue School District reports 84 languages spoken, with almost a third (32.4%) of students speaking a first language other than English. In 2013, 44.4% of Bellevue's students were White, compared to 71.4% in 1996. Chinese residents make up the largest portion of the city's non-White population; Asian Indians had the fastest growth rate since 1990, increasing by nearly 1,400%.
- *Transportation:* Inadequate public transportation was the top household problem reported by respondents to the phone/online survey in 2013 (22%), similar to 2009 and 2011. Comments by providers and consumers indicate that not having a convenient and affordable way to access human services or to get to work is a major barrier, especially for older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income people. Providers and participants in community conversations also indicated a need for other ways to increase mobility, such as using shuttles or volunteer drivers, when public transportation does not take them where they need to go.
- *Collective Impact:* The emerging paradigm of "Collective Impact" has begun to influence a number of programs and initiatives that profoundly affect Bellevue residents. Collective Impact operates under the assumption that large-scale social change comes from cross-sector coordination. Local examples include Eastside Pathways, a community wide partnership committed to providing every child in the Bellevue School District an opportunity to succeed in school and in life, and the Bellevue Adult Misdemeanant Probation Division which has made a commitment to utilize best practices and community partners to effect a meaningful reduction in recidivism.

The presentation will include brief remarks from Michael Yantis, Human Services Commission Chair, regarding the need for the City to support a broad spectrum of human services programs to

continue to help residents cope with the ongoing effects of the economic downturn, and the value of a strong human services infrastructure or “safety net” maintaining a vibrant, safe community.

**ALTERNATIVES**

N/A

**RECOMMENDATION**

N/A

**AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL OFFICE**

Draft 2013-2014 Human Services Needs Update