

01-12-2022 Town Council Meeting Responses to Council Questions

ITEM #10: Consider Adopting a Resolution Supporting Funding for a Fourth Position for the Orange County Street Outreach, Harm Reduction and Deflection Program

Council Question:

Could you ask SOHRAD staff to provide a breakdown of the numbers served by locale (Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Hillsborough, etc.)?

Orange County Staff Response:

SOHRAD serves people living unsheltered (they have no residence) so it's commonplace for team members to serve people in Chapel Hill one day and Carrboro the next or vice versa. The team serves the entire County, including Hillsborough. About 95% of the work is concentrated in Southern Orange County, about 85-90% in Chapel Hill.

Council Question:

Could you ask SOHRAD and/or PEH staff to provide data on the COVID-related impact over the last 1-2 years on the amount of need they are seeing and requests for support?

Orange County Staff Response:

SOHRAD was able to start operations in October 2020 thanks to a COVID-related funding stream (CARES Act Emergency Solutions Grant, or ESG-CV), so we cannot offer pre/post pandemic stats – all of their work thus far has had COVID-related impacts. Prior to having a street outreach team, we saw specifically that the unsheltered population was most in need of general COVID information and prevention supplies. SOHRAD team members have provided this directly in the form of information and PPE, as well as reducing risk to people experiencing homelessness by connecting people to permanent housing (65 people) and emergency shelter and other temporary destinations (85 people). SOHRAD assisted the County mobile COVID vaccination unit in getting 26 people vaccinated for COVID. SOHRAD team members offer case management and other support services to people experiencing homelessness who are COVID+ in the County's hotel isolation program – this program has served 17 people in the past four weeks. The team is also gearing up to staff a temporary cold weather hotel program while IFC is unable to serve new guests at the emergency shelter due to a COVID outbreak there.

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Council Question:

Would negotiating with Orange County delay the expansion of SOHRAD verses the Town fully funding the expansion and not pursuing negotiations in shared cost?

Staff Response:

The funding of SOHRAD for this fiscal year would not be delayed by the negotiations of a long term agreement with Orange County. We would provide the funding necessary (\$34,000) to support the new position this fiscal year. We are hopeful that a new agreement will be put in place that will help guide funding allocations in future years.