



# WORKFORCE SERVICES- FOLLOW-UP ON HOMELESS SERVICES DEEP DIVE

SOCIAL SERVICES APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE  
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## ISSUE BRIEF

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this issue brief is to determine if the Department of Workforce Services complied with the intent statements adopted by the Legislature during its 2018 General Session and specifically complies with the following from [UCA 36-12-13\(2\)\(F\)](#): “to report instances in which the administration may be failing to carry out the expressed intent of the Legislature.” The brief lists each item of intent language passed, followed by an agency response. The intent language was adopted in response to the Legislative Fiscal Analyst’s [Budget Deep-Dive into Homeless Services](#).

The Analyst has no concerns of non-compliance. This brief is for informational purposes only and requires no legislative action.

### **DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **House Bill 3, Item 65**

*The Legislature intends that the Department of Workforce Services prepare a report to the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst by June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 on how it plans to address the following funding challenges:*

- a. Difficulties in tracking budget and expenditure trends by program type (Rapid Re-Housing Assistance, Permanent Housing Services, etc.)*
- b. Increased coordination of the SHCC and CoC Collaborative Applicant monitoring and technical assistance processes*

#### ***Agency Response, Part (a):***

DWS has created new accounting codes for the state’s centralized accounting system (FINET) that will be utilized for all homeless transactions. Beginning July 1, 2018, DWS will include a unique program code and activity code combination for each service and funding type within FINET when homeless transactions are recorded. This will allow DWS to determine the amount of expenditures for each homeless service type by querying the FINET expenditure data.

This new system, coupled with work undertaken by DWS in 2017 to provide a five-year history of homeless service expenditures by service type, will facilitate expenditure tracking by service/program retroactively (for the last five years), as well as moving forward. This action is sufficient to address the intent language passed by the Legislature.

#### ***Agency Response, Part (b):***

The Housing and Community Development (HCD) Homelessness Programs Office (HPO) has met three times with the CoC Collaborative Applicant representatives to coordinate monitoring and technical assistance. The CoC Collaborative Applicants have agreed to utilize the same monitoring tool for all CoC-funded programs. Additionally, the CoC Collaborative Applicant representatives participated in the Allocation Committee for homelessness funding managed by HPO to coordinate funding efforts. The representatives will also participate on the HMIS Steering Committee. Collaborative meetings between the HPO and the CoCs will continue to occur on a quarterly basis. DWS notes that there are challenges with full monitoring and technical assistance alignment due to differing homelessness funding source policies,

expectations, and requirements; however, HPO and the CoCs continue work to coordinate and align by funding source, where possible.

### House Bill 3, Item 65

*The Legislature intends that the Department of Workforce Services prepare for the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst by June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, an update on the status of the following new homeless services:*

- a. *The coordinated services ID card*
- b. *The Rio Grande Safe Space*
- c. *The new HMIS dashboard*
- d. *Dignity of Work*

#### **Agency Response, Part (a): Coordinated Services ID Card**

The Coordinated Services ID card system was implemented on October 12, 2017. The system was implemented as part of Operation Rio Grande, to allow individuals to access the newly created Safe Space, and to control access to the space. Application for a card captures personal identifying information, including name, social security number, date of birth, UHMIS number, fingerprint and/or photo. 11,024 cards were created between October 12, 2017, and April 30, 2018. Of this total, 6,046 (54.8%) were duplicate cards, re-issued to individuals who lost their original card.

|                               | Total  |          |        |            |               |
|-------------------------------|--------|----------|--------|------------|---------------|
| Month                         | Issued | Reissued | Total  | Reissued % | Fingerprint % |
| <a href="#">October 2017</a>  | 1,342  | 231      | 1,573  | 14.7%      | 94.6%         |
| <a href="#">November 2017</a> | 910    | 795      | 1,705  | 46.6%      | 71.8%         |
| <a href="#">December 2017</a> | 543    | 686      | 1,229  | 55.8%      | 67.6%         |
| <a href="#">January 2018</a>  | 625    | 1,059    | 1,684  | 62.9%      | 62.7%         |
| <a href="#">February 2018</a> | 521    | 990      | 1,511  | 65.5%      | 67.4%         |
| <a href="#">March 2018</a>    | 538    | 1,141    | 1,679  | 68.0%      | 59.5%         |
| <a href="#">April 2018</a>    | 499    | 1,144    | 1,643  | 69.6%      | 50.5%         |
| <a href="#">Total</a>         | 4,978  | 6,046    | 11,024 | 54.8%      | 72.4%         |

**Table 1. Coordinated Services Cards Issued- October 12, 2017 – April 30, 2018**

Source: DWS June 2018 Status Report on New Homeless Services

Although some reissuance of cards was anticipated, due to the frequency with which transient individuals lose personal belongings, the rate of reissuance is higher than expected. It is also higher than the rate of reissuance for cards for the Catholic Community Services- Weigand Center, which were utilized prior to the implementation of the Coordinated Services Card system. Reissuance costs were not factored into the original cost estimate for the project, and have totaled approximately \$1,500 between October 2017 and April 2018. The Coordinated Services Card system will cease after June 2019, when The Road Home shelter and the Safe Space close.

**Agency Response, Part (b): Rio Grande Safe Space**

The Safe Space was established in October 2017, and requires scan of a Coordinated Services Card to access the area. The space is open daily from 7 am- 7 pm, and includes the following amenities:

- Tent to provide coverage from weather
- Updated security cameras
- Picnic tables
- Benches
- Drinking fountain
- Handwashing station
- Bike lockers
- Fence coverings
- Updated lighting
- Trailer for staff

The Safe Space boundaries also include the Catholic Community Services Weigand Homeless Resource Center, which provides the following services:

- Employment assistance
- Public assistance programs
- Housing diversion
- Housing case management
- Clothing, personal items storage
- Laundry
- Showers
- Haircuts
- Court and legal assistance
- Medical

Between October 27, 2017 and April 30, 2018, 4,844 individuals have accessed the space. During the same time period, 2,172 unduplicated clients received a service at the Weigand Center.

| Month                         | Total Card Scans | Total Individuals |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <a href="#">October 2017</a>  | 4,459            | 869               |
| <a href="#">November 2017</a> | 27,774           | 1,821             |
| <a href="#">December 2017</a> | 22,316           | 1,711             |
| <a href="#">January 2018</a>  | 35,934           | 1,979             |
| <a href="#">February 2018</a> | 42,782           | 2,029             |
| <a href="#">March 2018</a>    | 51,366           | 2,282             |
| <a href="#">April 2018</a>    | 51,387           | 2,243             |
| <a href="#">Summary</a>       | 236,018          | 4,844             |

**Table 2. Safe Space Access – October 27, 2017 – April 30, 2018**

Source: DWS June 2018 Status Report on New Homeless Services

**Agency Response, Part (c): New HMIS Dashboard**

The dashboard went live on January 19, 2018. Data is organized into four tabs: 1) System Overview, 2) HUD Performance Measures, 3) Emergency Shelter Performance, and 4) Transitional Housing Performance. Data may be sorted by date range, area, sub-population, veteran status, age group, household type, project, and homelessness service provider. Data has been updated quarterly, but will be updated on a monthly basis beginning June 2018. It should be noted that not all homeless service providers enter information into the Utah Homeless Management Information System (UHMIS) due to privacy laws or because they do not receive funding that requires them to do so.

### ***Agency Response, Part (d): Dignity of Work***

The Dignity of Work service began in November 2017, and has since supported 65 individuals' attachment to employment. The program is a partnership between industry, government, and service providers. Industry has identified ways to partner with individuals who have become or are becoming work-ready. DWS employment counselors work with individuals as they become work-ready and attached to employment. Service providers have increased collaboration specific to employment preparation and referrals to DWS employment counselors.

Some specific partnership efforts include:

- *Jobs Database:* DWS partners with employers to help make job matches with those seeking employment. DWS has posted 168 jobs in its database since the start of the program.
- *Job Fairs:* DWS partners with Catholic Community Services at the Weigand Homeless Resource Center to hold a monthly job fair. Approximately three to five employers attend each month, as well as over 60 homeless job-seekers who interact with the employers. DWS employment counselors engage with those job-seekers and help them apply for the jobs in the onsite computer lab.
- *DREAM Team Events:* Through this program (**Dignity Restored through Employment And Mentoring**, or DREAM), DWS partners with employers to set up events that act as a working interview for those job-seekers who are not otherwise able to attend an interview, and for employers who are hesitant to hire a homeless individual. An employer with open jobs identifies a mentor from its staff to work alongside a homeless individual, and then offers jobs based on performance.
- *Jobs A Day:* DWS partners with several staffing agencies to bring their application and onboarding processes onsite to the Weigand Homeless Resource Center, to help connect individuals to multiple possible jobs. These staffing agencies have both temp-to-hire and day-labor jobs each day. DWS employment counselors help individuals prepare necessary employment onboarding documentation and secure transportation. These jobs are often used as a probation period before individuals are placed permanently with the contracted employer.
- *Employment Workshops:* DWS coordinates with multiple partners to provide a wide array of life and work preparation skills designed to help homeless individuals obtain the skills and resources needed to successfully obtain housing and employment. These workshops began in January 2018; during the months of March 2018 and April 2018, 85 individuals attended one or more of the workshops (for more information, see the [workshop schedule](#)).

### **CONCLUSION**

DWS has taken significant action to address the intent statements adopted by the Legislature during its 2018 General Session; the analyst has no concerns of non-compliance. Several of the new homeless services have been successful since their implementation in October 2017; notably, there has been increased utilization of the Safe Space nearly every month, which may be a factor in the decrease in crime rate in the area. Additionally, the Dignity of Work (DOW) program has supported attachment to employment for several homeless individuals. While participation in the DOW partnerships is voluntary, noting the most successful programs will be useful in case of future opportunities to scale them up.

Additionally, improved data collection and tracking through the new HMIS dashboard, as well as better coordination between the HPO and CoC Collaborative Applicant representatives, will facilitate improved

transparency with regard to homeless service provision and budget indicators, as well as support data-based service delivery improvements.

The Coordinated Services Card system has been less efficient than anticipated, due to the high rate of card reissuance and related costs. The program will terminate in June 2019; however, if another similar program were considered in the future, at one of the new shelter sites or elsewhere, it should take into account the challenges and related costs associated with the current program.