



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

AGENDA REQUEST & STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: March 22, 2023

SUBJECT: Resolution converting 1.0 FTE Behavioral Health Specialist II and 1.0 FTE Peer Support Specialist positions from limited duration to regular

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Move approval of Resolution No. 2023-015 to convert 2.0 limited duration FTEs to regular FTE positions within the Health Services Fund.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

Originally funded through a 5-year federal grant received from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in 2019, the Deschutes County Co-Responder program is a partnership between Deschutes County Health Services (DCHS) and the Bend Police Department. The Co-Responder program allows for behavioral health professionals to work closely with law enforcement and respond simultaneously to mental health crises in the community. This approach has allowed for real time, in the field interventions focused on the needs of the individual, and facilitates connecting individuals with community-based services. Once initial contact had been made, the co-responding peer support specialist is able to provide follow up services by engaging with the individual in crisis, helping to reduce barriers to necessary services and providing ongoing support to ensure successful follow through and engagement.

Since the start of this program in 2019, co-responders have had 2,769 encounters with 1,784 individuals. Of those seen, 1,597 had a severe and persistent mental illness and/or a co-occurring disorder. The co-responder has been able to provide over 890 formal consultations to law enforcement and countless ad hoc consultations. Of the total encounters co-responders have had with individuals experiencing severe and persistent mental illness, 22% (503) were diverted from the criminal justice system and 22% (493) were diverted from the hospital. Furthermore, as DCHS embarks on expanding our non-law enforcement community crisis response, the co-responder will serve a vital support for our mobile crisis team. The co-responder will serve as a liaison to our law enforcement partners in the field, will be able to support law enforcement on calls for service, and will provide added capacity to our mobile crisis team as we face the new wave of incoming calls

for service.

Through staff vacancy and other savings, Deschutes County will have approximately \$284,140 remaining at the end of the Co-Responder grant term on September 30th, 2023. Deschutes County has been in communication with the Government Project Officer for this grant, who is encouraging DCHS to apply for a no-cost extension of this program and believes we are likely to receive this extension. Funding from this no-cost extension would extend the duration of this program through September 2024.

DCHS is requesting approval to reclassify the 1.0 FTE Behavioral Health Specialist II (position #2824) and 1.0 FTE Peer Support Specialist (position #2625), funded through the SAMHSA Co-Responder grant, from limited duration to regular. At the end of the no-cost extension, DCHS will consider the future of these positions within the budgeting process.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

None. A five-year fiscal analysis is attached.

ATTENDANCE:

Holly Harris, Deputy Director, Behavioral Health
Adam Goggins, Program Manager, Behavioral Health
Dan Emerson, Budget Manager