JAIL AND HOSPITAL DIVERSION

The City of Tacoma expends tremendous resources arresting and detaining individuals in the criminal justice system. In Tacoma, the percentage of individuals being arrested and detained who struggle with mental health and/or chemical dependency is disproportionately high. Working to divert individuals away from jail and into services that promote health and self-sufficiency not only saves critical City resources, but touches the heart of the matter; working to create a healthy community where all citizens have the opportunity to thrive.

The City of Tacoma adopted the .1% Mental Health Chemical Dependency sales tax in April 2012. Adoption of this tax allows for the collection of over $8 million dollars in revenue per biennium. Revenue collected provides funding for multiple contracts that work to meet the needs of vulnerable populations in our community. Extensive evaluation of current programs serving Tacoma and gaps present in services for residents struggling with mental health and/or chemical dependency, revealed critical areas to direct funding. One such area identified was supportive programming to assist individuals who are repeatedly arrested or hospitalized due to their mental illness or chemical dependency. Through a competitive application process, the City of Tacoma received seven proposals from programs seeking to meet goals around jail and hospital diversion. In total, four programs were awarded funding (identified below). In addition, the City has created three unique diversion programs for individuals identified to have a mental illness. Those programs are the City of Tacoma SCORE Jail program, City of Tacoma Co-Responder program and Tacoma FD CARES.

The City of Tacoma SCORE program embeds a fulltime mental health professional at South Correctional Entity (SCORE). This professional provides assessments and evaluations to the court in an effort to divert individuals away from long-term incarceration, and works to create a jail transition plan allowing individuals to discharge from jail with a clear direction of where they may obtain supportive services needed to successfully reintegrate into the community.

The City of Tacoma Co-Responder Program will be the first of its kind in the State of Washington. The City will embed two mental health professionals who will go out into the field to support Tacoma Police Officers when officers encounter individual with serious mental health concerns who would benefit from therapeutic services out in the field in an effort to de-escalate situations and divert individuals away from arrest for minor offenses (such as a public disturbance).

Tacoma Fire Department Community Assistance, Referrals and Education Services (TFD
CARES) program began in January of 2013. Working closely with individuals who are frequent utilizers of 911 emergency services, individuals are referred to Tacoma FD CARES where they are connected to community services and diverted away from unnecessary hospitalizations and repeated calls for service. Early estimates identify there are over 1000 individuals living in Tacoma that contact 911 in instances where their needs could be met by community providers. Directing these individuals to community services ensures valuable resources remain available for citizens requiring the highest levels of care. Statistically, the highest utilizers of services have been identified to have mental health and/or chemical dependency concerns. Working to meet policy objectives around reduction of costly interventions for individuals struggling with mental health and chemical dependency, the City’s mental health chemical dependency funding provides a critical source of support for Tacoma FD CARES.

JAIL AND HOSPITAL DIVERSION FUNDING
Programs/Names and Descriptions – Competitive Funding

1. Comprehensive Life Resources – New Beginnings - $103,758
   Funding provided under this program will ensure 100 new uninsured Tacoma individuals being served under Tacoma’s SCORE* program will have access to stabilization beds upon their return to the community. While receiving stabilization housing, individuals with co-occurring disorders will receive counseling and be offered services provided under Comprehensive’s Life Connection’s program.

2. Greater Lakes Mental Health Foundation, Inc. – Community Re-Entry - $81,600
   Funding provided under this contract will provide rental subsidies for 8 new Tacoma individuals who have been incarcerated in SCORE or the Pierce County Jail five or more times within a 12 month period. This program directly reduces costly interventions by meeting individuals’ needs for housing first in an effort to increase stability leading to adherence to mental health and chemical dependency treatment services.

3. Pierce County Alliance – Therapeutic Courts - $155,300
   Funding provided under this contract will expand services for 78 new Tacoma individuals participating in Pierce County’s Drug Court Program providing mental health therapeutic services for individuals who are dually diagnosed with mental health and chemical dependency disorders. This program will ensure treatment plans are adhered to increasing the likelihood that individuals will be more successful as they work to reduce behaviors that often lead to excessive use of costly interventions**.

4. TeamChild – Wellness Project - $88,390
   Funding provided under this contract will ensure 53 new Tacoma youth struggling with mental illness will have legal advocacy navigating the juvenile justice system. Youth and their families will be directly connected to services provided through funded partners Community Counseling Institute and Consejo Counseling & Referral Service ensuring a full continuum of care.

JAIL AND HOSPITAL DIVERSION FUNDING
Programs/Names and Descriptions – Direct Funding

   Funding provided under this contract will ensure nearly 1000 Tacoma individuals incarcerated at SCORE will have assessments and evaluations along with jail transition planning to ensure individuals with mental illness spend the least amount of time incarcerated and are connected to services that work to ensure the highest probability of being successfully reintegrated into the community.

6. City of Tacoma – Tacoma FD CARES Project - $100,000/yr
   Funding provided under this contract will support the efforts of Tacoma Fire Department (FD) CARES to address the non-emergent healthcare needs of Tacoma citizens. The Tacoma FD CARES program provides intermediate case management services until long-term solutions can be established. The goal of the program is to increase the health literacy and self-sufficiency of the citizens related to their healthcare.

7. City of Tacoma – Tacoma Police Department Co-Responder Program (currently under development).