



Administrative Report

N.1., File # 25-1224

Meeting Date: 9/2/2025

To: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

From: JOY A. FORD, CITY ATTORNEY

TITLE

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE CITY'S EFFORTS TO UTILIZE GRANT FUNDING TO PROCURE A MENTAL HEALTH CLINICIAN TO PROVIDE A TARGETED RESPONSE TO MENTAL HEALTH-RELATED INCIDENTS IN THE CITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On April 29, 2025, the Mayor and City Council held a Strategic Planning Session and discussed strengthening the City's Mental Health Response and Community Support Systems (Goal 2.2.) A report was requested on the City's efforts to utilize grant funding to procure a mental health clinician to provide a targeted response to mental health-related incidents in the City (No. 21). The City Attorney's Office looked at several options in developing an Alternative Crisis Response (ACR) program, including reaching out to Clear Recovery Center (Clear). Clear has agreed to provide an ACR team, and the City Attorney's Office is currently finalizing terms of an agreement with Clear.

BACKGROUND

An Alternative Crisis Response (ACR) is designed to approach non-violent, mental and behavioral health service calls by offering trauma-informed care, crisis de-escalation, in person intervention and transport to immediate behavioral health services. Physical health, behavioral health, and substance use professionals can provide intensive whole-person healthcare services in episodes of crisis, with goals of reducing the amount of hospital and emergency room visits as well as fire and police department involvement.

The City Council approved a Mental Health Clinician as part of the FY 2023-2024 budget adoption process on the condition that grants were identified for funding. On April 9, 2024 the Mayor and City Council approved an agreement with Health Net to accept grant funds for an ACR program. Since then, the City has taken many steps towards developing our ACR program and have been met with several obstacles. The City Attorney's Office had a number of meetings with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to contract for a dedicated mental health clinician for the City of Redondo Beach. After several months of meetings and an exchange of emails back and forth, DMH ultimately informed us that they did not have the personnel to fill this position and declined partnering with the City. There were also discussions with the Beach Cities Health District (BCHD), which resulted in grant funds for the City's homeless response program. Those funds were not enough for a licensed clinician, and were only funded by BCHD for two years. The City considered contracting with a third-

party service provider such as the Los Angeles Centers for Alcohol & Drug Abuse (L.A. CADA), who is contracted by the City of Hermosa Beach for their ACR team. However, such service providers are also having difficulty hiring mental health clinicians, and L.A. CADA stopped communicating with the City Attorney's Office after meeting and a number of emails. The City Attorney's Office evaluated the feasibility of retaining a clinician as a city employee with the assistance of outside legal counsel with expertise in this field. That included reviewing factors such as potential police accompaniment, adequate insurance and malpractice coverage, potential healthcare regulatory oversight, compliance with privacy laws and situational awareness training, which all complicates the option of employing a mental health clinician. In addition, the Health Net grant is only one-time funding, so it would be impossible to hire a clinician for only one year when they are in such high demand. The City Attorney's Office reached out to Clear because Clear has provided mental health and substance abuse services to participants in Homeless Court since 2019.

Clear is a South Bay based mental health and substance abuse treatment provider that provides a full continuum of care. Their treatment is individualized, evidence-based and age specific in order to give their clients the best possible chance at long term recovery. They pride themselves on their expert clinical team who is highly skilled in the latest in evidence-based treatments and therapies.

For the past five years, the City Attorney's Office has partnered with Clear for mental health and substance abuse services for participants in Homeless Court. Ron White provides one-on-one and group therapy for individualized client-centered need and goals as well as individual care management for life skill training. The City Attorney's Office thought expanding this partnership to develop an ACR would benefit the City given the great work Clear has provided in the past.

Councilmember Paige Kaluderovic set up a meeting with one of Clear's board members, Martha Koo, and staff members on July 30. Clear has agreed to put together an ACR team and provide a licensed therapist, a counselor and Project Director. Clear is finalizing the scope of work for the agreement within the grant parameters and the City Attorney's Office hopes to bring an agreement for approval to the Mayor and City Council at the next City Council meeting.

Councilmember Kaluderovic and Fire Division Chief Issac Yang also met with BCHD who is offering office space for the ACR team.

During the Strategic Planning Session, the Mayor and City Council also discussed exploring a partnership with Hermosa Beach (No. 22). Hermosa Beach's ACR team will be expiring on September 30. The Hermosa Beach Interim City Manager and his staff has agreed to partnering with Redondo Beach in a joint ACR team. This partnership will be an example to other cities on how an ACR team can work throughout multiple cities, which is something the South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG) prioritizes.

The City Attorney's Office is in discussion with the SBCCOG about funding to expand and continue the ACR team after the Health Net grant expires. The SBCCOG is in the process of awarding contracts with new Measure A Local Solution Funds. The SBCCOG indicated that additional funding for an ACR program would be much more attainable through the use of Measure A funding if both cities worked collaboratively on this project. The County would be more inclined to fund a program that covers two cities instead of one.

COORDINATION

The City Attorney's Office coordinated with Clear and the SBCCOG in connection with the preparation of this report.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funding is available from the Health Net grant.

Submitted by:

Joy A. Ford, City Attorney