



COMMUNITY SERVICES ADMINISTRATION



Justin Elicker
Mayor

Dr. Mehul Dalal
Administrator

Wednesday, July 28, 2021

Alder Tyisha Walker
President, Board of Alders
23rd Ward
Board of Alders
165 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510

RE: Department of Community Resilience (1) Creations, (2) Budget Transfer, and (3) Use of American Rescue Plan Act Funding

Dear Honorable President Walker-Myers:

As the Community Services Administrator, I am submitting for your consideration the creation of a new Department within the Community Services Administration. This package to establish a new *Department of Community Resilience* contains three parts.

1. Order amending the City General Code of Ordinances Under Chapter 16 ½ (Human Services) to Establish a Department of Community Resilience

The Department of Community Resilience will be established by ordinance within the Community Services Administration. A new Department Head position will be established and appointed by the Mayor and serve a 4-year term as specified in the City Charter.

2. Order transferring specific general fund budget lines to the new Department.

Funds from the Community Services Administration's Homeless Services Division (\$1,395,000), Crisis Response (\$625,000) and related personnel (\$157,995) to be transferred to the corresponding division within the Department of Community Resilience.

3. A request to use American Rescue Plan Act funding to support positions and programs within the Department of Community Resilience.

A request to draw down \$8,000,000 over four years (details provided below) to support the Departments mission including but not limited to effort to combat violence, coordinate community mental health initiatives, and provide long-term sheltering and housing solutions.

Included as part of this letter is a supplement describing the background, rationale, and high-level budget details. I thank the Board for their consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely

Mehul Dalal
Community Services Administrator

SUPPLEMENT TO LETTER REGARDING CREATION OF THE DEPT OF COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

This submission proposes the creation of a new Department of Community Resilience within the Community Services Administration to coordinate and enhance services and policies pertaining to populations historically at highest need for services and highest risk for poor outcomes in New Haven. The COVID19 pandemic has exposed long-standing and interrelated sets of needs in populations experiencing homelessness, housing insecurity, those involved with the justice system, people with mental health disorders, people who use drugs, victims and perpetrators of violence, survivors of trauma, and those at-risk of trauma. **The problems facing these populations are complex and interrelated and will require sustained effort over many years.** Establishing a focal point of leadership and coordination within the City of New Haven will codify New Haven's long-term commitment to addressing these issues with a service-oriented mindset.

The new Department would fold in existing personnel, programs, and budgets from Reentry, Community Crisis Response, Office of Homelessness, and Harm Reduction. It would expand programming to include an Office of Violence Prevention and an Office of Community Mental Health. The Department would be supported by a new Data Manager to support cross-cutting data and reporting.

KEY BENEFITS

Violence Prevention: To create an Office of Violence Prevention that will provide leadership and oversight to ensure long-term sustainability of city-wide violence prevention efforts.

Community Crisis Response Team: Establishes an organizational home and deeper leadership structure to facilitate long term oversight and sustainability of the non-police responses by a mental health first response team.

Homelessness Services: Establishes a deeper leadership structure and enables the enactment of the transformative 5-year homelessness plan through strategic oversight, additional stakeholder efforts, and better integration of state and federal resources to serve the needs of people experiencing homelessness in New Haven.

Mental Health: Establishes an Office of Community Mental Health to assess mental health needs, plan initiatives, and coordinate services in close collaboration with existing service providers.

Coordination and Efficiency: Improves the City's ability to coordinate among existing contractors and service providers serving similar populations with similar needs to minimize duplication. Prevention and diversion initiatives may reduce law-enforcement and healthcare related expenses.

Data and Accountability: The office will be supported by a data manager to support programs in data-based problem analysis and identifying and tracking key performance metrics that can be reported to the administration, Board of Alders, and the public.

Funding: Facilitates the ability to actively manage existing funds across agencies and populations to improve coordination and outcomes. Will improve the City's capability to capitalize on new funding such as the American Rescue Plan, the proposed Biden federal budget and Medicaid reimbursement

DATA AND TRENDS

Among the populations proposed to be served under this new Department there is already substantial overlap. Aggregate CT Department of Corrections data from 2016, 2017 and 2018 shows that 80 percent of ex-offenders discharged in the city has a substance use disorder history; 25 percent required mental health care; 64 percent did not have a high school degree or GED. Additionally, administrative data collected at the Project Fresh Start Office in 2019 shows that 71% are unemployed, and 36% are homeless.

From a mental health perspective, data from CT Department of Public Health from 2018 indicate that 60% of CT adults report Adverse Childhood Experiences (a strong predictor of health and economic outcomes) and 20% of adults have experienced three or more. Experts now recognize that such trauma is cyclical and is passed on through generations leading to a continuation of poor outcomes. Fortunately, experts also recognize that a pro-active, community-oriented approach to mental health and substance use is critical to supporting resiliency and recovery.

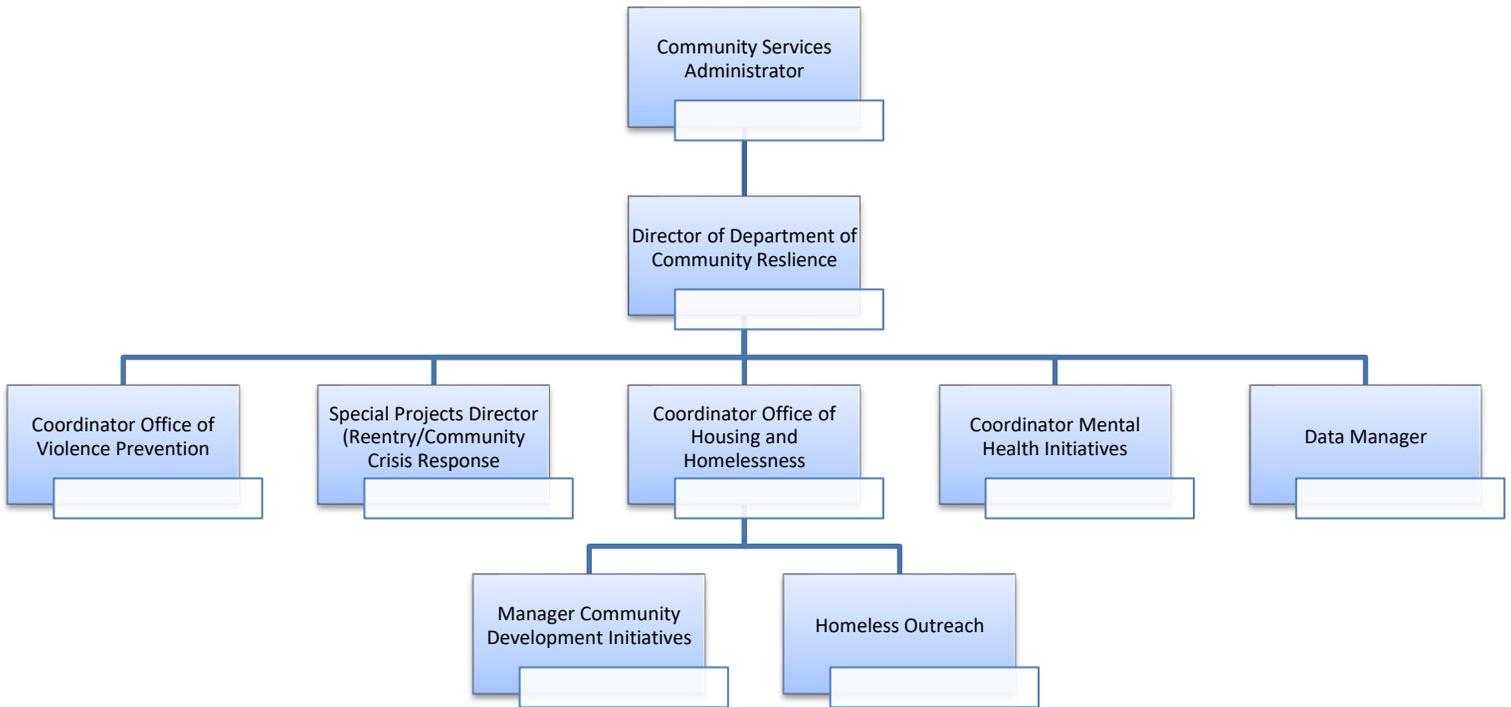
ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Over the past 18 months, the Community Service Administration has substantially increased its scope of activities to address both longstanding and pressing human services needs in New Haven. New and/or substantially expanded initiatives include:

- Launching of a Community Crisis Team planning initiative to provide alternative responses to emergencies related to mental health, homelessness and substance use.
- Opening of a Reentry Welcome Center to serve as the single point of drop off for Dept of Corrections releases for returning residents.
- Establishment of a Harm Reduction Coalition coordinating city-wide services and activities to support the health and safety of people who use drugs.
- Establishment of a Coordinated Gun Violence Prevention initiative
- A strategic plan to transform homelessness services by reducing reliance on congregate shelters, expanding low barrier homeless service hubs, while emphasizing a housing first approach
- Planned expansion of Community Mental Health and Trauma-informed Care initiatives

Expanded leadership capabilities is key to ensuring the success, sustainability, and effectiveness of these programs. Single program staff responsible for overseeing any of these mentioned vital human services programs creates risk of a “single point of failure” that could compromise program outcomes. In addition, with the anticipated ongoing investments in violence prevention, homeless services, and crisis response from the American Rescue Plan and new state and federal funds – it is vital that the city creates the capability to apply for, access, and coordinate these new resources. Creating a Department Head position allows the City to search for a leader with necessary experience to lead these initiatives.

PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



BUDGET

The estimated total budget of the Department will be \$6,000,000 per year. Annually, approximately \$2,200,000 will draw from existing approved general funds (part #2 of this package), \$1,900,000 from existing special funds (ESG, HOPWA, CDBG), and \$2,000,000 from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) based on the current request in this package (part #3 of this package).

Over 4 years at total of \$8,000,000 would be drawn down from the ARP funds as follows:

MUNIS Codes	Description	Total Cost	Total Additional Detail
50110, 50199, 51809,51813,58852,59933	Salary + Benefits of four new positions	\$2,197,711	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Department Head 2. Coordinator, Office of Violence Prevention 3. Coordinator, Community Mental Health Office 4. Data Manager/Analyst
54411	New equipment, materials, and supplies for the new Office	\$80,000	
55520, 56615	General Office, Materials, and other supplies and services as needed	\$140,000	
56623	Maintenance and utility cost reimbursed to General Fund	\$47,044	
56694	Expanded street outreach and VP grants (Violence Prevention Summer Reset)	\$1,248,000	<p>Sustain the doubling of street outreach capacity started under the 2021 “Summer Reset” program. Maintain manageable case loads for violence interrupters and violence prevention professionals. Provide funding for community-based violence prevention groups.</p>

MUNIS Codes	Description	Total Cost	Total Additional Detail
56694	Additional support and management for Prison Re-Entry Services	\$500,000	Sustain the collaborative case management model started under the 2021 “Summer Reset” program. Enhance case management capacity and pre-release engagement in collaboration with Dept of Corrections
56694	Housing Support Services	\$2,080,000	Enhance services to individuals experiencing homelessness, with an emphasis on supporting permanent housing. Improved wages for frontline homeless services staff.
56694	Comm. Mental Health Initiatives	\$1,248,000	Sustain community mental health teams as begun under “Summer Reset” program to provide immediate mental health services and referrals in the context of community trauma.
56694	Other Support Services and Contracts as needed	\$385,131	Supplement Department Initiatives as needs arise