



## **SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND:**

The need for a local sobering center was initially identified as part of the Mid-Willamette Homeless Initiative Taskforce. The purpose of a sobering center is to provide a safe, clean, and supervised environment for acutely intoxicated individuals to become sober and eligible for further treatment and other services, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The proposal recognizes the growing cost to our communities of chronically homeless who exhibit signs of substance abuse. The model relies on partnerships with local health providers, law enforcement, and government. In Salem, the City, Marion County, and Salem Health have come together to develop a framework for a sobering center in Salem.

- Local law enforcement report as many as 20 cases a day of persons too intoxicated to be safe to themselves or others if left on the street. Officers are not able to directly place these individuals in addiction recovery programs. Without a facility dedicated to sobering, individuals are either: (a) admitted to area emergency rooms (via ambulance at their expense, if they volunteer) for sobering purposes, or, (b) if a crime has been committed, to the already over-crowded jail facility, at a cost to the facility and at an opportunity cost to the community.
- Salem Hospital reports processing as many as 300 cases of public intoxication through their emergency room for sobering purposes every month. Persons admitted to the hospital for alcohol intoxication generally stay for up to four hours or more, twice the length of time of a typical emergency room patient. In other Oregon communities, sobering facilities are a viable strategy to reduce public cost, crime, over utilization of high cost emergency resources, the impact on limited police resources, space used within the jail, and officer time lost due to processing non-criminal offenders. Salem City Council has received testimony from Salem Health emergency room physicians on the need for a sobering center.

## **FACTS AND FINDINGS:**

The MOU articulates the intent of the City of Salem and the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency to provide an eight to ten bed sobering center in Salem at the ARCHES program to be operated by a third party, potentially Bridgeway. During the 2017 Legislative Session, the State of Oregon committed to fund the sobering center construction on the first floor at the Mid-Valley Community Action Agency's ARCHES program, through the Oregon Health Authority and the Governor's Budget.

The MOU also articulates the intent of the partners to provide for a 24 hours a day facility, operated by a third party. The parties identified Bridgeway Recovery Services as a potential operator. Bridgeway is a non-profit addiction treatment provider, and include offices for discharge planning with individuals, in proximity to other treatment providers to ease connections to other services such as detoxification, out-patient, or residential recovery facility.

The annual operating budget for the facility would include contributions from Marion County, the City of Salem, and Salem Health to fund the majority of the annual operating cost. To close the operating

gap, the partners anticipate a grant from the local Coordinated Care Organization, Willamette Valley Community Health.

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**Attachments:**

1. Memorandum of Understanding-City of Salem and MWCAA