



CITY OF SURPRISE
Veterans, Disability, and Human Services Commission
16000 N. Civic Center Plaza
Surprise, AZ 85374
Wednesday, June 12, 2024 @ 6:00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

- A. Call To Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Pledge of Allegiance
- D. Current Events and Reports
- E. Staff Reports
- F. Veterans, Disability and Human Services Commission

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

INSTRUCTIONS: In order to address the Board\Commission, you will need to fill out a Call to the Public Form available at the front counter, and then turn it in to the Secretary before the meeting begins.

Note: A.R.S. 38-431.01(H) - During this time members of the public may address the Board\Commission only on issues within the jurisdiction of the Board\Commission which are not an item on the agenda. At the conclusion of the open call, the Board\Commission may respond to criticism, may ask staff to review the matter or may ask that the matter be put on a future agenda. No discussion or action shall take place on any item raised.

CONSENT AGENDA:

REGULAR AGENDA ITEM - PUBLIC HEARING:

REGULAR AGENDA ITEM - NON-PUBLIC HEARING:

- | | | | |
|----|--|--|------------------------------|
| 1. | Citywide | Consideration and action pertaining to the May 8, 2024 Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting minutes. | Human Svcs and Comm Vitality |
| 2. | Citywide | Presentation and discussion pertaining to U.S. Vets. | Human Svcs and Comm Vitality |
| 3. | Citywide | Update and discussion pertaining to the Asante Library Resource Satellite Hub. | Human Svcs and Comm Vitality |
| 4. | Citywide | Consideration and action pertaining to the VDHS Strategic Plan. | Human Svcs and Comm Vitality |
| G. | Other Business and Future Agenda Items | | |
| H. | Executive Session | | |

For information purposes: Upon a public majority vote of a quorum ("Commission"), the Commission may hold an executive session, which will not be open to the public, but for only the following purposes: discussion or consideration of records exempt by law from public inspection (A.R.S. §38-431.03(A)(2));

or discussion or consultation for legal advice with the attorney or attorneys of the public body (A.R.S. §38-431.03(A)(3)).

Confidentiality Requirements: Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.03(C)(D), any person receiving executive session information pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.02 shall not disclose that information except to the Attorney General or County Attorney or by agreement of the Commission, or as otherwise ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction.

The Commission may vote to hold an executive session for the purpose of obtaining legal advice from the Commission's attorney on any matter listed on the agenda pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3).

I. Adjournment

KRISTI PASSARELLI, CITY CLERK

POSTED: Wednesday June 5, 2024 @ 12:30 pm

SPECIAL NOTE: PERSONS WITH SPECIAL ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS, INCLUDING LARGE PRINT MATERIALS OR INTERPRETER, SHOULD CONTACT THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE @ 623.222.1200 OR TTY 623.222.1002, BY NO LATER THAN 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THE REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING TIME.



CITY OF SURPRISE
Veterans, Disability, and Human Services
Commission

Council Meeting Date: June 12, 2024 Contact Person:
Submitting Department: Human Svcs and Comm District: Citywide
Vitality
Staff Recommendations:

Consent: No Regular: Yes Public Hearing: No Report/Discussion: No

Agenda Wording:

Consideration and action pertaining to the May 8, 2024 Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting minutes.

Motion:

I move to approve the May 8, 2024 Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting minutes.

Background:

N/A

Objective Analysis:

N/A

Policy Compliant:

This item is in compliance with federal requirements and City and Council Policy.

Financial Impact:

None

Budget Impact:

None

FTE Impact:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 5.8.24 VDHS Commission Minutes - DRAFT
-

**CITY OF SURPRISE
VETERANS, DISABILITY, AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**May 8, 2024 | 6:00 PM
City Council Chambers
16000 N. Civic Center Plaza
Surprise, AZ 85374**

CALL TO ORDER.

Chair Billcheck called the Veterans, Disability, and Human Services Commission meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. at Surprise City Hall, 16000 North Civic Center Plaza, Surprise, Arizona 85374, on May 8, 2024.

ROLL CALL

In attendance were Chair Billcheck, Commissioners Phillip Lair, Shawna Daigle, Gwen Maxfield, Olivia Fryer, and Hasan Reed.

Absences: Commissioner Julie Kent-Partridge (excused).

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

STAFF PRESENT:

Community Initiatives Supervisor Danielle Osborne, Administrative Specialist Athba Arnold.

CURRENT EVENTS REPORT

Chair Billcheck reported on the following upcoming events:

- Community Legend Awards Program
 - Nominate individuals and groups making a difference in the City of Surprise
 - Applications being accepted through June 28th
 - Information can be found at surpriseaz.gov/CommunityLegend
- Surprise Day of Service
 - Wednesday, May 15th at St. Mary's Food Bank
 - Looking for volunteers to assist with sorting bulk food items, creating food baskets, and loading food into vehicles
 - Visit surpriseaz.gov/DayofService for more information
- Surprise Safety Splash
 - Saturday, May 18th at Surprise Aquatic Center
 - Free event promoting water and summer safety with demos, games, raffles, and prizes
 - Visit surpriseaz.gov/Aquatics to learn more
- New Commissioners: Olivia Fryer and Hasan Reed

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

- Commissioner Maxfield was part of National Day of Prayer. It was a very powerful and unifying event.
- Commissioner Lair attended the Roundtable on Disabilities. Event was well-attended and growing. Discussed at this meeting was the idea to have a section at G.A.I.N Night, more details forthcoming. Greatest takeaway was speaking of transportation issues in the City of Surprise.
- Commissioner Daigle attended both events. National Day of Prayer brings unity amongst all the churches. The Roundtable continues to grow and there was an amazing discussion with good insights and collaboration. Looking forward to next Roundtable on July 17th.
- Commissioner Fryer introduced herself. She is the Executive Director at Autism Society of Greater Phoenix and was also a part of the Roundtable on Disabilities.
- Commissioner Reed introduced himself. He is a retired Army veteran and is currently the Global Transportation Manager for Uncial Aviation in Litchfield Park.

STAFF REPORT

- Danielle Osborne discussed:
 - The City of Surprise is partnering with Vitalant Blood Donation to host several blood drives this summer. There are five dates planned throughout May, June, and July at various locations in Surprise. Find more information at donors.vitalant.org.
 - The Surprise Senior Center will be closed Thursday, May 9th, and will reopen at 8am on Friday, May 10th. In-person meal program will not be available during the closure; however, members may take advantage of other food options through Banner Olive Branch Senior Center. Contact the Senior Center at 623-222-1500 for more information.
 - Thank you to all Commissioners who attended the Roundtable on Disabilities. There was a great discussion about transportation options and some resource fairs that are hosted by our partners throughout the year.
 - The commission is invited to the next Mayor's Veterans Roundtable on May 22nd.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

None.

CONSENT AGENDA:

None.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS - PUBLIC HEARING:

None.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS - NON-PUBLIC HEARING:

Item 1 – Citywide – Discussion and action pertaining to the selection of the Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission Vice-Chair.

Process review for election of Vice-Chair:

- Chair will open floor to nominations
 - Nominees can self-nominate and can decline nomination
- Chair will then close floor to nominations
- If there is only 1 nominee, there will be an open vote
- If there is a ballot vote, results will be read out loud
- Majority vote of 3 votes will be needed to open a motion
- After majority decides on a selection, a motion will be needed
- Commission meeting cannot recess or adjourn until election is made

Chair Billcheck opened floor to nominations.

Commissioner Daigle self-nominated. Commissioner Maxfield self-nominated. Chair Billcheck nominated Commissioner Lair.

Seeing no other nominees, Chair Billcheck closed floor to nominations.

The Commissioners submitted their votes. Commissioner Daigle received 1 vote (Daigle). Commissioner Maxfield received 1 vote (Maxfield). Commissioner Lair received 4 votes (Billcheck, Fryer, Lair, Reed).

Commissioner Daigle moved to accept Commissioner Lair as Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission Vice-Chair. Commissioner Maxfield seconded the motion. The motion passed with 6 Yes votes, 1 Absent (Kent-Partridge).

Item 2 – Citywide – Consideration and action pertaining to the April 10, 2024 Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting minutes.

Vice-Chair Lair moved to approve the April 10, 2024 Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Daigle seconded the motion. The motion passed with 6 Yes votes, 1 Absent (Kent-Partridge).

Item 3 – Citywide – Consideration and action pertaining to the FY2025 Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting calendar.

Vice-Chair Lair moved to approve the FY2025 Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission meeting calendar. Commissioner Daigle seconded the motion. The motion passed with 6 Yes votes, 1 Absent (Kent-Partridge).

Item 4 – Citywide – Presentation and discussion pertaining to the VDHS Strategic Plan.

Danielle Osborne led discussion regarding the VDHS Strategic Plan. The commission discussed the current strategic plan, what they would like to keep, and what they would like to change. Vice-Chair Lair suggested having a retreat to specifically discuss Transit to be well-prepared for a presentation to Council. For the upcoming Action Plan, they asked to update dates for VDHS events. Chair Billcheck would like to gather more clarification at a retreat before taking action on Strategic Plan. Ms. Osborne suggested an alternative method of submitting suggested revisions to her. The commission agreed for Ms. Osborne to clean up the copy of the Strategic Plan and send it out to all Commissioners before the next agenda goes out.

Item 5 – Citywide – Consideration and action pertaining to the addition of a Resource Satellite Hub at the Asante Library.

Adding a Satellite Hub was brought up during Budget discussion at the last Commission meeting. Ms. Osborne's recommendation is to use television at Asante Library lobby to display all relevant resources and information. Having a table at the Asanta Library is not recommended due to space and staffing issues. Commissioner Daigle inquired about the SOS (Servants of Surprise) program. Ms. Osborne stated this program will be discussed in further detail at a future meeting.

Vice-Chair Lair moved to approve the addition of a Resource Satellite Hub at the Asante Library at a cost not to exceed \$1,500.00. Commissioner Maxfield seconded the motion. The motion passed with 6 Yes votes, 1 Absent (Kent-Partridge).

Item 6 – Citywide – Presentation and discussion pertaining to the FY2025 Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission budget.

Ms. Osborne led the discussion regarding the Commission budget. Commissioner Maxfield suggested utilizing Challenge Coin funds towards Everyone Needs Campaign. Vice-Chair Lair agreed with this statement and suggested raising GAIN Night funds to \$2,500. SOS Training Sessions funding covers the cost of food for volunteers.

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Commissioner Daigle would like to coordinate a tour of the One Step Beyond facility and would like to see if other facilities are open for tours. Vice-Chair Lair suggested new Commissioners visited West Valley Housing Assistance Center and Resource Center.
- Vice-Chair Lair explained Challenge Coins to new Commissioners; they should be given to those who go above and beyond in Surprise. Ensure recipient knows the coin is coming from the VDHS Commission.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Daigle moved to adjourn the meeting of the Veterans, Disability & Human

Services Commission on May 8, 2024 at 6:51p.m. Commissioner Maxfield seconded the motion. The motion passed with 6 Yes votes, 1 Absent (Kent-Partridge)

Danielle Osborne
Community Initiatives Supervisor

John Billcheck
Veterans, Disability and Human Services Commission Chair

The foregoing instrument is a full, true, and correct copy of the original document on file in the office of the City Clerk, City of Surprise, Arizona.

ATTEST BY: _____
Athba Arnold
Administrative Specialist

DATE: _____



CITY OF SURPRISE
Veterans, Disability, and Human Services
Commission

Council Meeting Date: June 12, 2024 Contact Person:
Submitting Department: Human Svcs and Comm District: Citywide
Vitality
Staff Recommendations:

Consent: No Regular: Yes Public Hearing: No Report/Discussion: No

Agenda Wording:

Presentation and discussion pertaining to U.S. Vets.

Motion:

Presentation and discussion only.

Background:

Outreach Specialist Alex Alexander, will provide an overview of US Vets and their SSVF Program.

Objective Analysis:

To receive an overview of the services offered by US Vets.

Policy Compliant:

This item is in compliance with federal requirements and City and Council Policy.

Financial Impact:

None

Budget Impact:

None

FTE Impact:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

1. U.S. Vets- SSVF Program
-

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR VETERAN FAMILY

SSVF - 101



Overview

1.

SSVF PROGRAM GOAL

2.

SSVF STAFFING

3.

PROGRAM DATA

4.

HOUSING FIRST

5.

ELIGIBILITY AND DOCUMENTATION

6.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

7.

ADDITIONAL SSVF SERVICES

1

SSVF PROGRAM GOAL

PROGRAM GOAL

The SSVF Program aims to promote housing stability among very low-income Veteran families who reside in or are transitioning to permanent housing.



2 SSVF STAFFING

SSVF STAFFING

1 Program Coordinator	
2 Team Leads	8 Case Managers
2 Intake Specialist	2 Program Assistants
1 Healthcare Navigator	2 Housing Specialist
2 Income and Benefits Specialist	1 Peer Support Navigator 1 Outreach Specialist

3 PROGRAM DATA

#%

Description

#

Description

#

Description

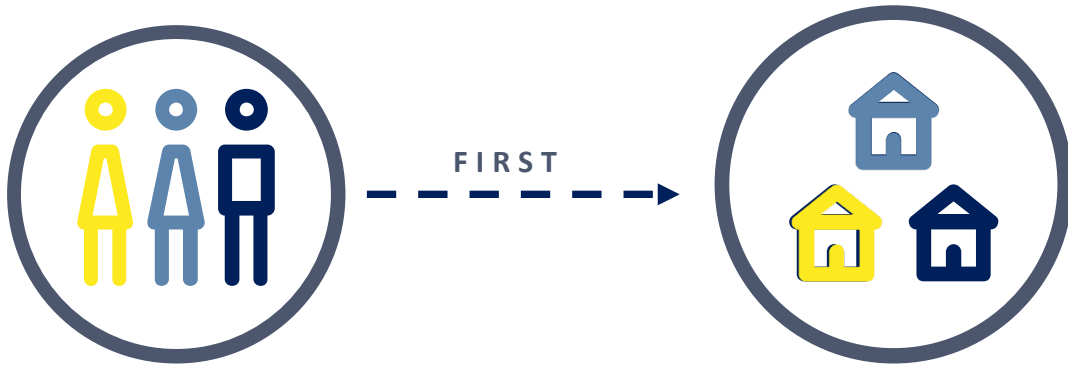
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Description

4 HOUSING FIRST

HOUSING FIRST APPROACH

SSVF supports Housing First Approach in addressing and ending homelessness!



Quickly and **Successfully** connect individuals and their families who are experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry.

Common Preconditions and Barriers:

Sobriety, Treatment, Service Participation Requirements

SSVF Staff places particular emphasis on assisting our program participants to meet their responsibilities as tenants, including paying rent and complying with a standard lease agreement.



Supportive services are offered to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness as opposed to addressing predetermined treatment goals prior to permanent housing entry.

5 ELIGIBILITY AND DOCUMENTATION

ELIGIBILITY

Veteran

- ELIGIBLE:
 - Active Military, Naval or Air Service (regardless of length of service), and has been discharged or released with a status other than dishonorable.
 - If Bad Conduct Discharge from Special Court-Martial
- INELGIBLE:
 - Received a dishonorable discharge or was discharged/dismissed from the Armed Forces by reason of General Court-Martial sentencing
 - If Bad Conduct Discharge from General Court-Martial

Very Low-Income

- Household Gross Income does not exceed 80% of area median income
- For the most up to date Income Limits visit:
<http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il.html>

Occupying Permanent Housing

- Cat I – Homeless Prevention
 - In permanent housing and at risk of becoming literally homeless. The Homeless Prevention Scoring Tool is used to determine eligibility.
- Cat II – Rapid Rehousing
 - Literally Homeless for > 90 days and at risk to remain homeless
- Cat III –Rapid Rehousing
 - Literally Homeless for < 90 days

DOCUMENTATION FOR ENROLLMENT

1. Proof of Veteran Status

- DD 214
- Service Letter
- Squares
- HINQ

3. Proof of Income

- Current Year Award Letter
- Four Current Paystubs
- Three Months of Pay Card Activity
- Three Months of Bank Statements
(Checking and Savings)

2. Proof of Housing Status

- Housing Referral Form from GDP or referring agency
- Coordinated Entry Referral
- Shelter Residency Letter

4. Identification

- Photo ID (Driver's License, State ID, or VA Card)
- Social Security Card

6 SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Outreach

Case Management

Housing Search Assistance

Connection to VA Benefits and Programs

Connection to Public Benefits and Mainstream Community Resources

Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) and Limits

TFA Limits

Rental Assistance

Max:

10 Months in 2-year period

06 Months in 1-year period

For ELI (30% AMI) Max:

12 Months in 2-year period

09 Months in 1-year period

Utility-Fee Payment Assistance

Max:

10 Months in 2-year period

06 Months in 1-year period

For ELI (30% AMI) Max:

12 Months in 2-year period

09 Months in 1-year period

Deposits

Security or Utility Deposits

Max:

ONE TIME in a 2-year period

Moving Cost

Truck rental, hiring a moving company, short-term storage (max of 3 months or until the veteran is in permanent housing)

Max:

ONE TIME in a 2-year period

TFA Limits...continued

Transportation

General public transportation cost or while vehicle is pending repairs

Offered:

-Tokens, Bus Passes, etc.

Max:

No time limit

Emergency Housing Assistance

Max- Veterans with spouses and/or dependents:
45 Days (ONE TIME) in a 2-year period

Max- Single Veterans:

72 Hours (ONE TIME) in a 2-year period

*Note: Extensions for up to 45 Days

General Housing Stability Assistance

Four Classes of Housing Stability Assistance Expenses

All can be authorized a max of \$1,800 in a 2-year period

1. Expenses associated with gaining or keeping employment: Eligible items include but are not limited to uniforms, tools, driver's license fees, license/certification costs required for employment, documentation acquisition fees such as for Social Security Number or birth certificate, document court filing fees, and short-term training leading to employment where other funding is not available.
2. Expenses associated with moving into permanent housing: Eligible items include but are not limited to furniture delivery costs, furniture bank fees, bed frames, conventional mattresses, air mattresses, box springs, basic kitchen utensils, and cleaning supplies.
3. Expenses necessary for securing appropriate permanent housing: Eligible items include but are not limited to fees for rent applications, background checks, housing inspections, credit score checks, credit counseling, financial literacy class, document court filing fees, and documentation acquisition such as for Social Security Number or birth certificates.
4. Items necessary for life or safety provided on a temporary basis to address an emergency. Eligible items include food, baby formula, diapers, and winter clothing. These items are allowable up to \$500 per participant household in a 2-year period

7

ADDITIONAL SSVF SERVICES

Returning Home

Rapid Resolution

Shallow Subsidy Initiative

Emergency Housing Assistance

RETURNING HOME

Returning Home Initiative offers homeless Veteran households the option of returning to their community of origin or to a community where they have available supports to facilitate housing placement. The initiative provides the Veteran family reunification opportunities and affordable permanent housing with the family or other social support in their community of origin.



RAPID RESOLUTION

Rapid Resolution (Diversion) is an intervention designed to assist Veterans upon contact with the crisis response system to attempt to avoid a homeless episode, or immediately after entry into the emergency shelter system with the goal of rapidly exiting the Veteran from homelessness.



SHALLOW SUBSIDY INITIATIVE

The SSVF Shallow Subsidy initiative provides rental assistance to very low-income and extremely low-income Veteran households who are enrolled in SSVF's Rapid Rehousing services or SSVF's Homeless Prevention services.

Under the SSVF Shallow Subsidy Initiative, designated SSVF grantees will provide rental assistance payments directly to landlords on behalf of the Veteran household for up to two years without the need for the program recertification.

Shallow Subsidy participation is determined by provider and based off clients SSVF history and ability to pay their portion of the rent.



EMERGENCY HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA) is a category of assistance that allows SSVF Programs to provide temporary housing for eligible literally homeless participants who are awaiting permanent housing if no other shelter is available.



EHA LIMITATIONS

1. Placement for a single Vet may not exceed 72 hours unless the grantee can certify that shelter beds and transitional housing are still unavailable at the end of the 72 hours. Extensions beyond 72 hours may not exceed 45 days.
2. Placement for a Vet and their spouse with dependent(s) may not exceed 45 days.
3. A participant may be placed in emergency housing only once during a two-year period, beginning on the day the grantee first pays for emergency housing
4. The cost of emergency housing must be reasonable in relation to the costs charged for other available emergency housing considering the location, quality, size, and type.
5. At least one viable option for permanent housing unit must be identified for the participant who is temporarily receiving emergency housing assistance

***NOTE: Since the COVID Pandemic, these limitations have temporarily been waived. Providers are able to place vulnerable Vets in Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA) for a longer period of time, based on need and housing plan.**

QUESTIONS?

SSVF – 101

THANK YOU





CITY OF SURPRISE
Veterans, Disability, and Human Services
Commission

Council Meeting Date: June 12, 2024 Contact Person:
Submitting Department: Human Svcs and Comm District: Citywide
Vitality
Staff Recommendations:

Consent: No Regular: Yes Public Hearing: No Report/Discussion: No

Agenda Wording:

Update and discussion pertaining to the Asante Library Resource Satellite Hub.

Motion:

Update and discussion only.

Background:

At the May 8th meeting, the VDHS Commission approved the addition of a Resource Satellite Hub at the Asante Library at a cost not to exceed \$1,500.00. This item has been placed on the agenda to provide a status update.

Objective Analysis:

To promote quality of life, accessibility, and equity for all Surprise residents, including those who are veterans or who experience disabilities, through cooperation with Surprise residents and any veterans, disability and human service organizations that serve the residents of Surprise.

Policy Compliant:

This item is in compliance with federal requirements and City and Council Policy.

Financial Impact:

None

Budget Impact:

None

FTE Impact:

None

ATTACHMENTS:



CITY OF SURPRISE
Veterans, Disability, and Human Services
Commission

Council Meeting Date: June 12, 2024 Contact Person:
Submitting Department: Human Svcs and Comm District: Citywide
Vitality
Staff Recommendations:

Consent: No Regular: Yes Public Hearing: No Report/Discussion: No

Agenda Wording:

Consideration and action pertaining to the VDHS Strategic Plan.

Motion:

I move to recommend approval of the VHDS Strategic Plan to the Surprise City Counsel for adoption.

Background:

At the May 8th meeting, the commission proposed revisions to the Strategic Plan. Staff revised the plan accordingly and shared it with the commission for final review. This item was placed on the agenda to seek approval of the updated VDHS Strategic Plan, and recommend it to City Council for adoption.

Objective Analysis:

To promote quality of life, accessibility and equity for all residents of Surprise, including those who are veterans or who experience disabilities, through cooperation with Surprise residents and any veterans, disability and human service organizations that serve the residents of Surprise.

Policy Compliant:

This item is in compliance with federal requirements and City and Council Policy.

Financial Impact:

None

Budget Impact:

None

FTE Impact:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

1. DRAFT VDHS Strategic Plan - 2024 Amendment
-

Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission Strategic Plan

Surprise Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission

~~Karissa Perry~~John Billcheck, Chair
~~Andrew Witzel~~Phillip Lair, Vice Chair
~~George Van de Langeryt~~Shawna Daigle
Olivia Fryer
Dr. Gwen Maxfield
Julie Kent-Partridge
Hasan Reed~~Bruce Hertzog~~
~~Dan Moore~~
~~Shawna Daigle~~
~~Steffen Hanzel~~
~~Julie Kent-Partridge~~
~~Jason Cooper~~
~~Harry~~Louis Rodriguez

Surprise City Council

Skip Hall, Mayor
~~Roland F. Winters, Jr~~Nick Haney, Vice Mayor, District 1
Aly Cline, -District 2
Patrick Duffy, ~~Vice Mayor~~, District 3
Ken Remley, District 4
Jack Hastings, District 5
Chris Judd, District 6

Surprise City Staff

~~Deb Perry, Financial Analyst – Senior~~
Danielle Osborne, ~~Human Service & Community Vitality Administrator~~Community
Initiatives Supervisor
Deb Perry, Human Service & Community Vitality Assistant Director
Seth Dyson, Human Service & Community Vitality Director

Consulting Firm
Anna Maria Maldonado
Strategic Partnerships
Phoenix International Consultants

Introduction

This strategic plan is the result of the organizational restructuring, progression of process, and inclusionary representation of perspective to the Veterans, Disability & Human Services (VDHS) Commission, strategically aligned with the City of Surprise's Human Service ~~and~~ & Community Vitality Department. The restructure commenced assessment and engagement exercises to take inventory of overall community needs and human service delivery to vulnerable residents in the City of Surprise.



The results generated the commissioning and publishing of the *Human Services & Community Vitality in Surprise – A Community That Cares.....A Community Needs Assessment* report, and the development of an aligned strategic plan. The Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission Strategic Plan will provide initial recommendations to the Surprise City Council for prioritization of enhanced service delivery infrastructure within the City based on the expertise of the Commission, as well as the data and highlighted needs outlined in the assessment.

Background

In December 2018, the Surprise City Council voted to disband the Disability Advisory Commission and expand it into a new holistic and multi-dimensional Commission. The newly formed authority – the Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission – is charged with assisting the development and expansion of City human service programming related to veterans; people with special needs; and those experiencing socioeconomic vulnerability and in need of general guidance and supportive services, workforce development, and overall care.

The Commission is comprised of volunteer members representing veterans, their family members or someone representing a veteran service organization, members representing those with disabilities and/or programs that support our special needs communities, and those representing the social and human services sectors. The new Commission assembled for the first time in February 2019. ~~A total of 18 regular Commission meetings have been held to-date, along with various trainings specific to social service delivery and entitled benefits.~~

In preparation for their work ahead and while finalizing the needs assessment and subsequent strategic plan, the Commission hosted and participated in countless meetings, surveys, interviews, focus groups, and community forums. Two community forums with information seeking, followed by information and data sharing were held with 230 participants in attendance. This coincided with the new five-year HUD Consolidated Plan, which was reviewed by the Commission and adopted by the City Council. The Commission also established a new annual event, the Care & Share Expo, which serves as a resource fair for all residents and continues with an ongoing workgroup meeting of the Care & Share Planning Committee. The Care & Share event is made possible through the VDHS budget as authorized by the Surprise City Council and as supported through in-kind sponsors. The in-person Care & Share Expo for 2020 was canceled due to the pandemic, albeit with some discussion around hosting virtually. The Commission has adjusted their discussion and vision to respond to the ever-changing needs of the community, resulting in new events such as the 2024 Vet Fest, and expansive virtual resource campaigns. ~~The Commission's preparation, training, activities, and accomplishments to-date are broken out in the following summary.~~

As a result of changes to Commission composition, and in response to the resumption of services post-pandemic, and the re-launch of Commission efforts, the VDHS Commission held a retreat over two days in 2023 to revisit their original strategic plan, and to determine whether to set new goals. The effort resulted in the one-page action plan found in this amended version of the strategic plan. The Commission's preparation, training, activities, and accomplishments to-

date leading up to the creation of the original strategic plan are broken out in the following summary.

VDHS Commission Summary: February 2019 – October 2020

Special Needs/Disability/Accessibility Topics/Trainings/Discussions

Voting Accessibility	October 14, 2020
Sounds of Autism Presentation & Discussion	September 9, 2020
Blue Mountain Developmental Programs Presentation & Discussion	March 11, 2020
Arizona Industries for the Blind Presentation & Discussion	February 12, 2020
Raising Special Kids Presentation & Discussion	October 9, 2019
City of Surprise Adaptive Recreation Programs Presentation & Discussion	September 11, 2019
The Arc of Arizona Presentation & Discussion	August 14, 2019
Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGEN) Presentation & Discussion	August 14, 2019
One-Step Beyond Presentation & Discussion	June 12, 2019
Social Security Income and Social Security Disability Income Benefits Presentation & Discussion, Slepian & Smith Law Firm	April 10, 2019

Veteran Topics/Discussions/Trainings/Presentations

VDHS Commissioner Veteran Appreciation	October 14, 2020
Vetlink Foundation Presentation & Discussion	November 13, 2019
West Valley Vet Center Presentation & Discussion	October 9, 2019
Be Connected, Arizona Coalition for Military Families Presentation & Discussion	September 11, 2019
American Patriot Service Corporation Presentation & Discussion	June 12, 2019
West Valley Veteran Success Center Presentation & Discussion	May 8, 2019
Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Presentation & Discussion	May 8, 2019

Human Service Topics/Discussions/Presentations

Community Legal Services Presentation & Discussion	March 11, 2020
Cancer Support Community of Arizona Presentation & Discussion	February 12, 2020
NW Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Program (I-HELP) Presentation & Discussion	January 8, 2020
Arizona@Work Maricopa County Employment & Training Services Presentation & Discussion	January 8, 2020
Surprise Public Safety Response to Behavioral & Mental Health Calls – Surprise Police Crisis Intervention Team	December 11, 2019
Surprise Public Safety Response to Behavioral & Mental Health Calls – Surprise Fire-Medical Department	November 13, 2019
WHAM Overview, Presentation & Discussion about programs	October 9, 2019
City of Surprise Transit Options Presentation & Discussion	October 9, 2019
Surprise Resource Center Offerings Presentation & Discussion	March 13, 2019

HUD CDBG & HOME Trainings/Plans/Items/Discussions

Annual HUD Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER)	September 11, 2019 September 9, 2020
2020-2024 HUD Consolidated Plan & Annual Action Plan	February 12, 2020 March 11, 2020
HUD HOME Consortium Action Plan Amendment	December 11, 2019
HUD CDBG & HOME Funding Training	August 7, 2019

Other

Care & Share Working Group (Virtual Resource Campaign)	September 8, 2020 September 23, 2020 October 14, 2020
Care & Share Commission Discussion	March 13, 2019 June 12, 2019 August 14, 2019 September 11, 2019 October 9, 2019 August 12, 2020 September 9, 2020
Strategic Plan Items	August 12, 2020 October 14, 2020
Commissioner Trainings	February 13, 2019 August 12, 2020
Community Needs Assessment	March 13, 2019 April 10, 2019 June 12, 2019 August 14, 2019 November 13, 2019 March 11, 2020

VDHS Community Events

Care & Share Expo	October 2019
Resource Media Campaign	November 2020
Community Needs Forums	September 27, 2019 February 28, 2020

Annual Budget - \$10,000 Past Uses (2019 – 2020)

Care & Share Expo	\$5,000
Care & Share Virtual Resource Campaign	\$1,250
Strategic Planning Support	\$5,000
VDHS Table Cover for Future Events	\$150

The VDHS Commission established five initial areas of priority as part of their original strategic plan. These areas of importance are:

1. Transit
2. Resource Satellite Hubs
3. Master of Social Work Volunteer Coordinator Project
4. Job Readiness Employment & Training
5. Communications – promotion (Education & Awareness of Resources)

The VDHS Commission requested to revisit the plan and these areas to evaluate if updates and/or changes were needed.

During the first session, Commissioners shared their ideas on the current areas of importance and generally it was concluded that all areas remain important with the exception of the Job Readiness Employment & Training priority.

The Commission then discussed synthesizing the existing areas of focus into three categories by priority: (RAE)

1. Resources
2. Accessibility
3. Education

Objectives were discussed within each priority:

1. Resources
 - a. Identify Need
 - b. Secure Need
2. Accessibility
 - a. Transit
 - b. Usability
3. Education
 - a. Awareness
 - b. Training

A 2024-2025 Working Group/Action Plan was then started that aligned with the objectives.

Organizational Structure

The ~~11~~7-member¹ Commission is comprised of volunteer members representing veterans, their family members or someone representing a veteran service organization, members representing those with disabilities and/or programs that support our special needs communities, and those representing the social and human services sectors.

Membership includes the initial existing members of the original Disability Advisory Commission for the remainder of their respective terms, along with four new, additional members. The latest members appointed thereafter shall be limited to (i) service members, veterans, and relatives of either; (ii) individuals with disabilities and disability service organizations; and (iii) human service representatives and organizations.

The following definitions apply:

Service member means an active member of the United States Armed Forces; Army or Air National Guard; and any other category of persons designated by the President in time of war or national emergency

Veteran means a person who served as a service member and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable

Relative means spouse, child, parent, or sibling

Disability means a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities

Human services means services provided to individuals to stabilize their life and find self-sufficiency through guidance, counseling, treatment and the provision of basic needs, including but not limited to times of crisis.

The Commission is governed by City of Surprise City Code Article VIII Sec. 2-298 - Veterans, Disability and Human Services Commission.

¹ The Commission composition was reduced to 7 members from 11 members by the City Council on April 4, 2023.

Values

The Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission promotes quality of life, accessibility, and equity for all residents of Surprise, including those who are veterans, those who experience disabilities and/or vulnerability through cooperation with Surprise residents, and any veterans, disability and human service organizations that serve the vulnerable residents of the City of Surprise.

Vision

The Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission's vision and purpose is to provide guidance and recommendations to the City Council for allocation of resources aligned with data-driven needs and opportunities for community service enhancements to measurably improve the lives of vulnerable Surprise residents.

The Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission's mission and guiding principle – as an extension of the Human Service & Community Vitality Department – is to strengthen community, non-profit, and government partnerships to better serve Surprise residents and strive to be “a community that cares;” committed to linking residents to programs that offer the support needed for a fuller, safer, more community-oriented lifestyle which promotes quality of life, accessibility and equity for all residents of Surprise.

Mission

The Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission advises the Surprise City Council and Staff on veteran, disability and human service issues by providing a common forum for service providers and residents to discuss, coordinate activities, and develop solutions for challenges faced by Surprise residents including, but not limited to accessibility to veterans, disability and human services.

The Commission reviews and makes recommendations on connecting residents who are seeking assistance to existing City and third-party and private strategic partners and resources in areas including but not limited to; human service, education, mentoring, workforce support, housing, transit, and health & wellness. In addition, the Commission discusses, reviews, and makes recommendations to increase community awareness, education, and outreach on similar issues advocating for compliance with local, state, and federal laws as they pertain to service members, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and anyone experiencing vulnerability.

The Commission also publicly recognizes the efforts of the Community, inclusive of employers, businesses, schools, organizations, individuals, and others, including who have developed or support outstanding assistance programs, or those who have proactively achieved success in

accessibility, employment, communications, and services for veterans, residents with disabilities, and communities in need at-large.

Strategic Plan Framework

The newly reorganized Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission's first call to action, in cooperation with Human Service & Vitality Department staff, was to commission the first ever City of Surprise Community Needs Assessment in preparation for the development of this aligned inaugural strategic plan.

The Community Needs Assessment collected data and information from residents, service providers, community leaders, the U.S. Census Bureau and other data sources. The exercise was awarded, lead, and published by I & E Consulting. The assessed areas include: veterans, youth, seniors/aging, disability/special needs, low-to-moderate income families, poverty, homelessness, all types of violence against individuals, and any other discovered areas of need that appeared through the appraisal investigation.

As part of the assessment, a request for community feedback through community forums based on the preliminary results of the needs assessment was incorporated into the discussion, and became a crucial piece of the assessments' findings. The forums identified gaps, trends, and new ideas as part of the Community Needs Assessment. Discussions were framed and centered on solutions to meet the discovered needs. Forum participants were community leaders comprised of both public and elected officials, business leaders, faith community leaders, faith community members, social service agency representatives, organizational representatives who provide human services in the geographical area, and anyone providing services for Surprise residents in need or experiencing vulnerability at any point in time. This exercise served to inform the City of Surprise Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission and stakeholders at-large with community input, data, and feedback to assist in the creation of a strategic plan to support prioritization, initiatives, and programs to meet the growing and/or unmet human service needs throughout the City. The final published needs assessment, the *Human Services & Community Vitality in Surprise – A Community That Cares.....A Community Needs Assessment* was finalized and published in November 2019, and can be found in PDF form on the City of Surprise's Human Service & Community Vitality web page.

In preparation for the November strategic planning sessions, the Commission re-examined and studied the needs assessment in late October. The Commission convened to begin their deliberation and tactical discussion around the initial framework of the inaugural strategic plan framework. The strategy sessions took place over two four-hour evening discussions based on the opportunities published in the needs assessment.

The Commission established five initial areas of priority. These areas of importance are:

1. Transit
2. Resource Satellite Hubs
3. Master of Social Work Volunteer Coordinator Project
4. Job Readiness Employment & Training
5. Communications – promotion (Education & Awareness of Resources)

Goals

Each workgroup will explore and document, as a vital part of the strategic plan, long-term and short-term measurable objectives. These goals will be documented and added to this strategic plan and updated as each initiative or category is built out. The goals will include sub-goals, timelines, key measures and potential costs.

Evaluation

Each workgroup will create, fine-tune and timeline key measures, as well as update and add reporting outcomes and key notes to the key measures or evaluation portion of the strategic plan.

Areas of Priority

Transit

The Commission quickly highlighted and initiated robust discussion centered on the need for stronger and more supportive practical transit infrastructure for connectivity and mobility, specifically for self-sufficient accessibility to activities of daily living and work and education in and outside of the city boundaries. A transit workgroup was created to explore the present state, funding streams, data and innovative solutions specific to the City's transit needs. The working group initially slated engaging with Staff and subject area experts for education and orientation. The working group ~~will build out the transit goals, sub-goals, timeline specific to recommendations, and measures specific to building an innovative needs-based transit infrastructure for all Surprise visitors, students, employees, and residents~~ set the following goals:

1. Ensure that disabled residents are able to access City transit options
2. Research and recommend resources for disabled riders who cannot access current transit options

3. Identify potential transit riding barriers for our disabled riders
4. Provide training and outreach on how to utilize transit options for disabled riders

Resource Satellite Hubs

The priority of establishing Resource Satellite Hubs throughout the City, duplicating the resource center model, promptly surfaced early on during the Commission’s strategy discussion. The Commission recognized through the evaluation of transit-mobility needs and due to the pandemic that the Surprise Resource Center needed to establish electronic-telephonic-virtual hubs throughout the City for accessibility to more residents. The Hubs will be easily accessible points of entry to human service navigational support. The Commission discussed developing a community-based social services navigation training, or “train the trainer” program through supportive strategic partners, such as social work interns or faith-based strategic partners, to pilot the virtual Hubs. Phones and computers will be strategically placed in high need accessible areas such as public libraries, grocery stores and faith-based communities. A Hub working group was established. The workgroup will build out the Hub goals, sub-goals, timeline specific to Council recommendations and potential costs specific to building host and intern partnerships and outlining key measures for the pilot’s success.

MSW and LCSW Volunteer Coordinator

The Commission recommends building an Internship program or teaching model with an in-house Master of Social Work (MSW) and Licensed Clinical Social Work (LCSW) supervising and supporting post-graduate MSW and LCSW interns to build a community-based wrap around human service program for residents needing more intensive navigational support, and offering practical experience to newly-graduated professionals needing professional support for licensure. This teaching model will not only enhance the self-sufficiency of our most vulnerable neighbors, but also will directly and proactively support innovative public safety needs centered on behavioral health needs. A workgroup was established to move the recommended initiative forward. The workgroup will build out the MSW and LCSW Volunteer Coordinator initiative goals, sub-goals, timelines specific to Council recommendations, costs specific to building the program, and key measures associated with the initiative.

Job Readiness

In addition to transit, healthier wrap around services, and easy access to those services, the Commission prioritized enhancing and supporting training programs strategically aligned with regional future job growth needs. A workgroup was established. The workgroup will engage in a cross-disciplinary approach to explore regional current job readiness needs, future needs, and inventory existing training assets and future asset opportunities with the Surprise Economic Development Department and similar regional economic development strategic partners. The work group will leverage existing programs and funding streams and make recommendations around potential investment opportunities. The workgroup will build out the initiative goals, sub-goals, timelines, key measures and potential costs.

Communications

To bring the strategy discussion priorities full circle, the Commission concluded with the establishment of a communications workgroup to communicate, direct and promote the great work the Human Service & Community Vitality Department – in partnership with the Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission and City’s strategic partners – are doing to support the vulnerable residents of the Surprise community. The Communications working group will review the existing communications strategy (both internal communications and external communications) and recommend, help build, and support an effective and measured communications plan specific to the Department’s, Commission’s and affiliated community based Strategic Partners’ services and successes. The workgroup, with Staff, will explore resource needs for enhancements and added tools to support successful communications, such as a smart phone application for virtual connections to human services – a Hub, social service events, and volunteer opportunities. The workgroup, in partnership with Communications Staff, will build out the initiative goals, sub-goals, timelines, key measures and potential costs.

Strategic Plan Summary

This strategic plan, and subsequent annual action plans –will guide and organize the Veterans, Disability & Human Services Commission to succinctly initiate, agree on, and maintain momentum specific to recommendations for the Surprise City Council and prioritize improved service delivery infrastructure within the City.

This strategic plan will focus the Commission’s work towards their mission of providing a common forum for Staff, service providers, and residents to discuss, prioritize, and coordinate activities, and will guide the development of solutions for challenges faced by Surprise residents, including accessibility to veterans, disability, and human services. In addition, this plan will frame Commission discussions and reviews, and will lend support towards the increase of community awareness, education, and outreach efforts that publicly recognize the accomplishments of community and strategic partnerships supporting their mission.



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