

UPDATE OF HEART PILOT PROGRAM- City Manager Report Out.

Background:

In 2024, the City initiated discussions with the County to explore the feasibility of a Pilot Program to assign on a short term basis a dedicated County outreach worker to Sebastopol. These discussions have resulted in the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The City has been preparing to launch the HEART (Homeless Engagement, Assistance, and Response Team) Pilot Program as part of our ongoing efforts to enhance coordinated outreach and support for individuals experiencing homelessness. The program is designed to provide a compassionate, service-based approach by connecting individuals to resources while improving coordination among City departments, service providers, and law enforcement.

Current Status:

The implementation of the HEART Pilot Program has been delayed due to creation of the MOU and review by City Attorney as well as County counsel.

On August 12th the city received notification that the County approved a HEART pilot program for the City of Sebastopol but the County needed to work out some of the details for the assignment.

On September 24th the County sent a copy of the DRAFT MOU for City review with a follow up to staff on October 6th. At that time, the MOU was routed to City staff for comments/edits. On October 22nd, staff provided request for specific trainings/fingerprinting to be completed as the HEART personnel was to be located in the police department building. City staff relayed this information to the County at the October 23rd Mayors and Councilmembers Meeting and then followed up with an email on Sunday October 26th with the proposed language. The proposed language protects the City from liability.

On Tuesday City staff followed up on status of agenda item and MOU with the County who indicated that County Counsel was reviewing.

On Thursday City staff followed up again with the County who asked for another copy of the MOU which City staff sent again.

On Thursday County informed the City that the County received confirmation that County Counsel will be reviewing, and a rough ETA is approximately 2-weeks.

City staff has been in contact with the County on the MOU and anticipates approval of the MOU to be on the Nov 18th City Council Meeting.