



# City Council Report

**Date:** July 3, 2023  
**To:** City Council  
**Through:** Natalie N. Lewis, Deputy City Manager  
**From:** Lindsey Balinkie, Deputy Director Community Services  
**Subject:** Proposed Heat Relief Services in collaboration with City of Chandler and Maricopa County, Human Services  
**(Citywide)**

## Purpose and Recommendation

Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Mesa and City of Chandler in order to provide heat relief services in both cities for the summer of 2023. Both city programs will receive full funding contributions from Maricopa County's American Rescue Plan Act funds.

## Background

Comprehensive Heat Relief Services will be offered in Mesa by Resurrection Street Ministries (RSM) including:

- One Day Respite Center 7 days/week with respite and wrap-around services within RSM facilities at 1135 E Main Street (including a/c, water, rest areas, meals, navigation services, medical care, showers, laundry and more). RSM has existed in this location for many years with large scale food distribution, Veteran support services and free housing supply distribution for people experiencing homelessness through their thrift store/donation warehouse.
- Support services for up to 10 Cooling Centers (air-conditioned space with access to water) in Mesa. Cooling Center locations will be spread out to provide better access citywide.
- Mobile Outreach on extreme heat advisory days.

Services in the City of Mesa will be reimbursed by City of Chandler through an IGA using ARPA funds from Maricopa County, Human Services through a collaborative effort to enhance heat relief services in both Mesa and Chandler. A soft launch of the day respite center occurred in May 2023 in consideration of public health and safety. All services will open more broadly in June and be available through the end of September 2023.

## **Discussion**

Heat-related illnesses are frequent during Arizona summers and can result in death. Last summer was the deadliest on record for heat-associated fatalities in Maricopa County amid a growing wave of homelessness. Public health data released by the county found 425 heat-related deaths so far in their investigation for 2022, a 25% increase from the prior year.

Providing Day Respite Centers, Cooling Centers and Mobile Heat Relief services are a best practice in reducing sunlight and heat exposure and related health risks to unsheltered individuals and other vulnerable populations. The proposed activities make services more accessible and robust in Mesa beyond what has been provided in previous years.

The purpose of the joint effort with City of Chandler is to develop a comprehensive strategy to meet the varied needs of unsheltered individuals and other vulnerable populations in both Mesa and Chandler; to create operational standards and consistency in service delivery; and to create cost efficiencies by engaging community-based organizations that can duplicate services in multiple geographic locations.

## **Alternatives**

Without this collaboration, there would be no Day Respite Center in Mesa, and limited cooling center services with limited hours and locations will be available enhancing the likelihood of heat related public safety challenges.

## **Fiscal Impact**

There will be no fiscal impact to the City's General Fund.

## **Coordinated With**

Community Services in collaboration with the Police Department have met with and assessed the RSM's location for the Day Respite Center to address safety and security concerns that were obstacles to service last year at The Salvation Army Day Respite Center. Based on long standing existing services at RSM, experience of the organization's staff in running heat relief services, and the security services already incorporated by the organization, both departments feel comfortable with this location. Funding for off-duty police is included in the contract and will be incorporated in the beginning stages of the program in consideration of public safety. Clear communication channels for nearby business and residents will be available to connect with RSM and Community Services with questions/concerns.