



City Council Report

Date: 9/12/2022
To: City Council
Through: Natalie Lewis, Deputy City Manager
From: Amanda Freeman, Special Projects Administrator
Lindsey Balinkie, Deputy Director, Community Services
Subject: City wide Public Health Fellow

Purpose and Recommendation

Maricopa County Public Health office has created a Public Health Fellowship designed to aide cities in identifying strategies for reducing substance abuse, enhance communities by building an infrastructure that allows bold ideas, utilize best practices, and develop evidence-based interventions to fit the specific needs of the community.

Mesa has been invited to participate in the 2-year fellowship. It is staff recommendation that we enter into this agreement and use the Public Health Fellow to be a point person for recommendations on how to proactively use the opioid settlement, as well as identify and break silos that exist which potentially make it more challenging for residents to use the numerous programs already available.

The Mesa Public Health Fellow would be one of six Fellows in the county program. Phoenix, Scottsdale, Tempe, Glendale, and Correctional Health Services have also been invited to participate.

Background

The opioid epidemic hit an all-time high of overdoses and deaths in 2020 seeing a 30% increase from the previous year. The issues that already existed among the vulnerable population were magnified and multiplied because of circumstances related to COVID-19.

In August of 2021 the Attorney General announced a statewide framework to be used to uniformly and proactively spend the opioid settlement that each city and town will receive. The state is asking counties to help with the distribution of this money. As the process and timing for fund distribution is still being determined, Maricopa County is initiating this program as part of the use of the county's settlement funds.

Maricopa County has embarked on some local and national best practice research in partnership with the ASU MPA program 2022 graduates, and the strategic plan created from that can be used as a framework for future decisions. Mesa's portion of the settlement is approximately \$9M that will be distributed over 18 years.

Discussion

Maricopa County will provide and fund a Public Health Fellow for two years to Mesa to research, identify inventory, understand needs, design a program, implement the program, and evaluate the program related to Opioid Use Disorder.

The county will provide training, feedback, and guidance to the fellow throughout the program. The city will provide education and training on Mesa's current experience regarding Opioid Use Disorder as well as the programs in place. The fellow will be imbedded with Mesa staff and work as Mesa employee with Community Services, Police, Fire and Medical, Parks and all related departments and programs.

The fellow will be a county employee, assigned to Mesa. They will split their time between the County and the City.

Alternatives

The alternative would be to not participate in the county program and to use existing staff to determine how to best use the city's opioid settlement.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact as the fellow is being funded by the county.

Coordinated With

City Manager's Office, City Attorney's Office, Office of Management and Budget.