

# MEMORANDUM



Bellevue Parks &  
Community Services

DATE: June 21, 2023

TO: Human Services Commission Members

FROM: Christy Stangland, Human Services Planner  
Parks & Community Services

SUBJECT: Panel Conversation: Trends and Challenges for Human Services Agencies  
Recruiting and Retaining Staff

## Background

Human Services agencies have reported an increase in the cost of operation expenses and staffing costs as well as increased service demand. In addition, agencies have stated that they are experiencing staffing shortage due to their inability to pay a livable wage. With the cost of living in East King County, there is an extra challenge in maintaining staff since many cannot afford to live here.

Human Services staff have assembled a panel of organizations that provide services across many sectors to discuss their agencies experience, steps they have taken to overcome their barriers, and to provide feedback on how funders could support them.

Representatives from the following agencies will be joining the panel:

- Kailey Fiedler-Gohlke: CEO, Hero House NW
- Meghan Altimore: VP, Community Services, Hopelink
- Paul Lwali: CEO, Friend of Youth

[Hero House NW](#): HERO House is a clubhouse that is accredited by Clubhouse International and provides psychiatric rehabilitation services to adults living with mental illness. The mission of HERO House is to provide rehabilitation and employment programs for adults living with mental illness. These services facilitate their recovery through increased Hope, greater Empowerment, meaningful Relationships, and abundant Opportunities. At HERO House, we welcome members who are recovering from mental illness such as depression, anxiety, bipolar and schizophrenia – and help them rejoin their communities. We help people reclaim their lives through: Education, Advocacy, Pre-vocational skill building, Socialization, Employment Placement & Retention, and Work Ordered Days.

[Hopelink](#): Hopelink serves homeless and low-income families, children, seniors and people with disabilities in north and east King County; providing stability and helping people gain the skills and knowledge they need to exit poverty for good. Hopelink also provides transportation services throughout King and Snohomish Counties. With service centers in Redmond, Bellevue, Kirkland, Shoreline and Carnation, Hopelink is the largest nonprofit organization in the area. Programs and services focus on nine categories of assistance: Adult Education, Emergency Financial Help, Employment Services, Energy Assistance, Family Development, Financial Capabilities, Food Assistance, Housing and Transportation.

[Friends of Youth \(FOY\)](#): Friends of Youth provides and advocates for services for children, youth, and families in North and East King County. For seventy years, Friends of Youth has partnered with marginalized young people facing difficult circumstances, including homelessness, foster care, and behavioral health challenges to provide the relationships, resources, and skills they need to attain personal growth and success. They serve children, youth, young adults, and their families ages 0-25 across 24 program sites in 18 cities. Friends of Youth's services are designed to support youth through: Homeless Youth Services, Immigrant and Refugee Services, Youth and Family Services and Residential Treatment Services.

Panel members will be asked to answer the following questions:

1. Provide a brief (2-3m) overview of your program and the services provided.
2. What are the biggest challenges your agency is experiencing and what steps have you taken to address these challenges?
3. Have you made changes to your agencies pay structure? (Ex. Do you have a minimum salary? If so, how did your agency account for this increased cost?)
4. Are there other challenges your agency is experiencing that the Commission should be aware of?
5. What can funders do better support you?