



## COMMUNITY RESOURCE COORDINATOR PROGRAM – FUNDING REQUEST

### OVERVIEW

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The Anchorage Public Library seeks assistance from the Municipality of Anchorage to assume funding of the Community Resource Coordinator (CRC) program beginning January 1, 2021. The program is currently in the final year of a two-year, privately funded pilot program and will go away at the end of this year without a permanent commitment for funding. The program has been incredibly successful – providing one-on-one meetings with over 500 people, locating housing for some of Anchorage’s most vulnerable people (18 people confirmed housed, 76 coordinated entry assessments and 295 one-on-one meetings about housing), providing support for Library staff and security, and gathering wide-spread support from a broad network of community partners.

### BUDGET

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These are the costs to run the program in 2021. Staff salaries and benefits subject to change with annual step increases, AMEA contract changes and updates to the MOA benefits program. IGCs have not been included in this budget.

Item	Amount/Yr
Community Resource Coordinator, Non-Rep 14	\$110,000
Asst. Community Resource Coordinator, AMEA 12	\$95,000
Communications (cell phones, MiFis)	\$1,500
Program supplies	\$3,000
Bus passes for customers	\$3,000
<b>TOTAL program cost/year</b>	<b>\$212,500</b>

### PROGRAM

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Over one fourth of Loussac Library patrons are experiencing alcohol/substance abuse, mental and behavioral health challenges, homelessness, and/or poverty. This puts an incredible demand on the Library, which seeks to provide equity in access to resources to serve our patrons to help them improve their quality of life.

The need has grown in recent years as a result of state budget cuts, reductions to mental health and housing services, and dismantling of homeless camps (on August 22, 2019 a Parks and Recreation employee counted 38 tents in the woods around Loussac Library and Cuddy Park. Around this time, the Library also experienced an increase in people trespassed for violence, intoxication and disruptive behavior– from 4 in July to 10 in August).

The Community Resource Coordinator program helps the Library's vulnerable patrons utilize services they qualify for such as housing, healthcare, behavioral health supports and job opportunities. In summer 2019, the Library became a Coordinated Entry access point – one of the only fully functioning points over the summer as the others limited their hours after state budget cuts. By bringing access to services into the Library, the Library enhances its service to customers so they can access help in a place where they are already comfortable. This is done through direct outreach, innovative programs, community events, and collaborations with community partners. The CRC also works with Library staff and security to identify and engage with vulnerable library patrons.

The CRC currently serves only the Loussac Library. When the Library re-opens post COVID-19, a grant-funded assistant position will extend services to the smaller, but just as intense, vulnerable populations at Muldoon and Mountain View Libraries, and help provide better data about the needs in those communities. Private funding will also enable the launch of a year-long pilot peer navigator workplace training program later this year.

## METRICS

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### 2019 Accomplishments:

- **510** one-on-one meetings with patrons experiencing vulnerabilities including homelessness, poverty, mental and behavioral health challenges. Roughly 65% men, 45% women; 22 people age 55+, 12 of those experiencing homelessness
- Housing: **295** one-on-one consultations with APL patrons about housing needs
  - **76** Coordinated Entry Assessments completed (beginning in June 2019); **18** individuals confirmed to have found housing; **3** additional individuals housed outside of Coordinated Entry Assessments
  - **4** evictions prevented by referral to emergency rental assistance
  - **290** attendees in weekly Housing Labs, weekly, free open-house workshops for housing questions, specifically related to homelessness and evictions
- Food and utilities assistance: **67** assisted with SNAP and food pantry resources
- Mental health referrals: **85** Individuals assisted with mental health concerns, including de-escalation and crisis resolution, or finding a counselor and connecting with low cost mental health supports
- Substance misuse referrals: **4** individuals referred directly to SUD recovery services
- Job search assistance: **44** individuals with resumes & job applications and **9** referrals to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Seniors: **40+** referrals to the Health Department's Aging and Disability Resource Center; **7** completed Senior Benefits applications

### Anecdotal stories:

- Max had been staying “around” for years, his disabilities making it impossible to work, and his addiction absorbing his Social Security income, making it impossible to afford housing. As he aged, staying in vans and camping became impossible. Through the CRC

he was able to access a Coordinated Entry assessment, qualify for permanent supportive housing and meet regularly with a transition coordinator from the Coalition to End Homelessness to complete the paperwork to obtain permanent supportive housing. The CRC also helped him with his SSI and renew his SNAP benefits. Using a library computer, he independently found his own apartment. Having a contact at the Library meant that he did not fall off the radar during the long process of getting housing, and remaining motivated to work through the emotional challenges of waiting for services.

- Eliza was camping and surviving one domestic violence situation as she fled from another, worse one. She was able to connect with the CRC and share her story and receive a Coordinated Entry assessment, which resulted in a rapid rehousing referral. She regularly used methamphetamine and opioids to soothe her trauma and anxiety. She was able to work with the CRC to develop some simple coping mechanisms, and stay in touch with the housing providers until she received services.
- A pilot program in March 2020 demonstrated that there is interest and engagement among vulnerable regulars at the Library to discuss substance use and safety, and to connect with resources. Adam Ward, MSW student intern, facilitated a successful group with 7 highly vulnerable individuals participating, all of whom either had previously or were currently experiencing substance use disorder and homelessness. In a low-barrier, no-judgement environment, the individuals engaged in discussion of the stigma they felt as a substance user, and experiencing homelessness, and the importance of trust, good information and hope to their recovery journeys. Adam conducted a survey of libraries across the country and provided recommendations on how APL can increase access to substance misuse resources for its patrons from all walks of life.

## **COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

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A two-year pilot project was launched in September 2018 and funded by the Alaska Mental Health Trust, Alaska Community Foundation – Social Justice Fund, Recover Alaska, and Rasmuson Foundation. The UAA School of Social Work has provided an incredible in-kind donation through its master’s internship program, providing 1-2 interns a year who each work 20-hours a week.

The program would not be possible without the following additional community partners:

- Anchorage Health Department
- Anchorage Library Foundation
- Municipal Mobile Intervention Team
- Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families (Catholic Social Services)
- SNAP Outreach
- Cooperative Extension Service - SNAP Education program
- Cook Inlet Housing Authority
- Recover Alaska
- Alaska Mental Health Consumer Web
- Covenant House Alaska
- The Vet Center