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Emergency Cold Weather Shelter 3rd Party Oversight

Weekly Report for Week 9

Project Name: 3rd Party Emergency Shelter Oversight

Submitted to: Anchorage Assembly, Anchorage Mayor's Office, Anchorage Health Dept., and Shelter Operators (Henning, Inc. and The Alaska Hotel Group)

Date: Reporting period January 15 - 21, 2024

Date Submitted: January 24, 2024

Submitted by: Cathleen McLaughlin, JD/MBA

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A. Background

As required under Contract #2023003145, fully executed on November 17, 2023, RRS submits its Weekly report for Week 9. This report is for the period January 15 - 21, 2024.

B. Actions and Events During this Reporting Period

1. RRS continues to focus on operations at the 3 Emergency Cold Weather Shelter sites – The Cold Weather Shelter (CWS) at 1111 E. 56th, The Alex Hotel, and The Aviator.

2. Key topics:

A. Overdoses: During this reporting period, there were 4 overdoses for which Narcan was administered (2 at CWS, 1 at Aviator, 1 at Alex). All overdoses resulted in clients being resuscitated.

B. 1 death – Client was found outside the Aviator on 1/18/2024. An investigation surrounding this death is being conducted by APD. RRS and AHD were timely notified of the incident with incident reports submitted to RRS and AHD. This investigation is an active investigation by APD at this time. Aviator staff also met with RRS on 1/19/2024 to review the incident and to discuss options to enhance processes around curfew, bed checks, and room assignments.

C. Movement of clients into and between Cold Weather Emergency Shelter Sites. A process has been developed to move clients to the CWES site that best fits their need and capacity. This fluidity, and open conversations as to why clients are being offered opportunities to move has, and will, stabilize each site. Examples include:

1. 8 – 10 individuals moved from CWS to Aviator or Alex because they were in a place where they were able to live in a hotel room with a roommate.

2. 8 - 10 individuals moved from the Aviator or Alex because they were not able to comply with house rules and needed to exit a non-congregate bed. These individuals were offered a cot at CWS or they could make their own shelter arrangements. An example of this process is when a client at Aviator violated multiple rules, needed to 're-set', and after a meeting with Aviator staff and RRS, agreed to go to CWS, return to the Aviator when he is more able to comply with house rules.

3. For individuals needing shelter who are on the streets, a process has been created via text, phone, and e-mail for programs to contact shelter operators before sending clients to any of the 3 sites to ensure there is a space available. This process has become very important (especially with temperatures drifting below 0) so that clients do not arrive at any of the 3 sites unannounced and at risk of being turned away.

D. Auditing beds at the non-congregate sites (Alex and Aviator) to ensure all beds are being used. With 373 rooms being paid for, RRS has actively encouraged the Shelter Operators to actively determine whether beds are being used. RRS calls this the "head in the bed" guideline. Congregate settings are easier to assess since the cots are in an open setting. Non-congregate beds are more difficult to measure for nightly use. During the townhalls, and through conversations between RRS and shelter staff, it was discovered that some clients were not using their beds on a regular basis. Shelter staff is pro-actively working with RRS to audit and fill any beds that are not being utilized.

E. Client Transportation – In RRS's 8 Week Report, RRS stated it's concerns about the lack of transportation options for clients, particularly after the People Mover buses are not running. RRS learned, for the first time, on January 17, 2024, that there is \$200,000 allocated by the Assembly to AHD for client transportation.

RRS and Henning, Inc. met and make the following joint recommendation:

1. Daily, weekly and monthly bus passes be made available at all 3 locations, to be distributed to clients based on need and purpose. Type and amount to be determined by Shelter Operators.
2. A Lyft account be created for each location so timely transport can be made available to clients for legitimate purposes (Note: One client, when asked by RRS, who her primary care physician was, stated she did not have one because she only used AFD Emergency

services/Ambulance to get to medical services. This emergency service may be minimized if the client had another way to be transported for medical services)

3. A Shuttle, to be operated by the Shelter operators, that would run during the hours when curfew is in place. A reality of shelters is that clients leave, for a variety of reasons, 24/7. Those who exit at night, or cannot access shelters, are at the highest risk of harm. A pilot project could be created to provide shuttle service between ECWS shelters and/or other 24/7 emergency locations so at minimum, the at-risk individual can be warm.

C. Report from Shelter Operators

As noted in prior reports, RRS and Henning, Inc. leadership agreed to Henning, Inc. would begin providing RRS a brief weekly report of successes and challenges. Henning, Inc.'s first weekly report is attached and incorporated in RRS's report by reference.

1. Alex Hotel

"Next Step" pilot program at Alex Hotel has begun with the following report from Alex staff at the weekly townhall:

4 clients have received housing and are leaving the Alex this week

1 EHV vouchered client at the Alex is currently shopping for housing and expected to exit the Alex in the next few days.

4 clients (2 couples) are currently shopping for housing under Next Step pilot

4 clients were discharged for house rule violations

New clients were timely accepted to fill the bed vacancies.

All beds are being used.

2. CWS – Congregate Shelter

CWS continues to operate at or near capacity. As noted in last 2 reports, clients who are using, have mental health issues, or other substance misuse, cause CWS to be less stable than the other sites. RRS and Shelter Operator are working focusing on staff training and re-training around de-escalation. Henning, Inc. leadership and RRS has discussed enhancing training of staff on all shifts in order to have more consistency in applying house rules. RRS has also requested CWS staff, through Henning, Inc. leadership monitor the number of individuals who

exit CWS after 10 p.m. to determine level of need for other warming options and potential use of a shuttle system.

3. Aviator – Non-congregate CWS.

As notes above, The Aviator staff is currently continuing to audit room usage. This has not been fully completed. RRS expects this process to be embedded into the Aviator moving forward. RRS hopes this challenge will be completely systematized by next report.

F. Recommendations, Conclusions and Summary

RRS's work under the Contract will be done with the goal of providing open channels of communication, a willingness to openly address challenges and opportunities, and to work with all individuals involved in Cold Weather Shelter Services. RRS is also open to and encourages constructive comments and criticism so it can perform as best as possible under this Contract.

Any questions, please contact RRS through phone, text, or email at any time.

Respectfully,
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