



Cunningham Township

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Supervisor's Memo for November 29, 2021 Special Town Board Meeting

Health Insurance

The Cunningham Township plans to renew its existing health care policy, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois plan #B503PPO for full time employees in 2022. Enclosed is the rate sheet for 2022 based on age. If there are no changes in our roster, our health insurance line item will come under budget in this fiscal year, as planned. Please note that the last day to renew the health insurance policy is December 1, 2021.

Inclusive Emergency Winter Shelter

CTSO's Street Outreach team is currently working directly with 25 street homeless individuals who are at risk of freezing as winter wears on. We also work with another 20-30 individuals who are experiencing episodes of lack of shelter who are also at risk.

CU at Home operates congregate shelter for single men and women in Urbana-Champaign at 70 E. Washington Street (in the former TIMES Center). Over the past few years CU at Home has become the primary emergency shelter provider for single residents, consolidating with Austin's Place, long standing winter's shelter for women, and CU Men's Winter Emergency Shelter, a faith-based collaboration to fill the gap left by the closures of the TIMES Center and Salvation Army in 2016. CU at Home has become a close partner of CTSO, providing mail and check pick up service for CTSO participants, space for our staff to meet with participants, and hosting CTSO-initiated events to help connect residents to services.

In May of 2020, as COVID cases were spiking, CU at Home agreed to transition early to a year round shelter at the urging of the Continuum of Homeless Service Providers and CU Public Health. This move helped to save lives and prevent COVID transmission. A year later, in May of 2021, CU at Home greatly reduced its services due to safety and staffing issues. In August 2021, CU at Home reopened its shelter at 70 E. Washington Street (in the former TIMES Center) as a "dry shelter." That means to stay overnight there an individual must attend an intake appointment during the day, not have illegal drugs and alcohol in their system, and have been in the community for the past 30 days. The shelter also has been reconfigured to be more comfortable, but has a reduced capacity. This shift has increased the safety for residents and

staff at the shelter. The downside is that this move has caused the turn away of individuals who now sleep in parks, abandoned buildings, and under bridges.

To address the urgent need for winter shelter, CTSO has been working with the Continuum of Homeless Services Providers, who put out a call for proposals to operate shelter services. It is our understanding that several organizations responded, but only CU at Home had a proposal to meet the need in time for winter. CTSO will be meeting with other respondents about their long term planning to help fill gaps in services.

During their proposal writing, CU at Home approached CTSO as a partner in their proposed inclusive shelter. We jointly drafted the proposed MOU, which has been reviewed and given support by the CU at Home board. The proposal establishes two shelters - one for men and one for women - at locations close to CU at Home's current location. They will have at least one security personnel and one social worker at each location.

CTSO is requiring the following:

- Shared governance with a CTSO representation on the steering committee
- Intakes overnight (someone can knock at 3am and get an intake)
- Participation in the county-wide Coordinated Entry System for the Homeless so the homeless residents can access housing services
- Full inclusivity of LGBTQ individuals without discrimination and will respect for a person's self-identified gender
- Training in Housing First and Trauma Informed care by CU at Home staff.
- Screening, referral and arranging short term stays for literally families who present at the shelter with no other options.

This inclusive shelter system would be funded out of the line item called "Other Grants" from which you recently authorized partnerships with Sola Gratia and Channing Murray Foundation. CTSO would fund \$5,000 per month this inclusive shelter is open, up to 5 months total or \$25,000. CU at Home currently plans to keep this shelter open for 4 months from December 13, 2021 through April 15, 2022. If this happens payment would be \$20,000, but we have left open the possibility of an additional month of funding if the weather remains cold and CU at Home is able to continue the inclusive shelters.

CU at Home is seeking support from the cities, townships, county, RPC, CUPHD and others to make this proposal possible. Our funding would be on a reimbursement basis monthly after the shelter opens, which limits CTSO's liability in case the shelter were not able to open or open on time. CU at Home is on track for securing necessary funding, given CTSO's commitment.