

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee Members
FROM: Rickelle Williams, Interim City Manager
DATE: July 10, 2024
TITLE: DISCUSS THE OPTIONS FOR ESTABLISHING LIVE ASSISTANCE FOR HOMELESS OUTREACH SERVICES DURING AFTER HOURS

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends that the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee (PSNQLC) discuss the item and provide a recommendation.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

At the May 15, 2024 City Commission meeting, at the request of Commissioner Alex Fernandez, the Mayor and City Commission referred the item (C4 H) to the PSNQLC, requesting the Administration explore and provide options for establishing live 24/7 telephone coverage for homeless outreach assistance during after-hours.

ANALYSIS

The City's Office of Housing and Community Services-Homeless Outreach Services Team currently provides support through a walk-in center and community outreach, operating Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Additionally, the City funds an extended outreach team available Thursday through Sunday from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Outside these hours, our contracted provider, New Hope CORPS, offers specialized outreach services seven (7) days a week from 7:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m.

Despite these efforts, there is an identified need to improve phone coverage for the homeless services main line (305-604-4663) during evening off-hours to ensure continuous support for individuals in need.

In 2022, the Administration implemented Commissioner Fernandez's MBCARES signage suggestion in highly concentrated areas to promote accessibility to homeless services. These signs include information on the main telephone line for homeless outreach, the walk-in center location, and the website. This initiative has been instrumental in raising awareness and connecting individuals experiencing homelessness with necessary services.

However, the Homeless Outreach Services Team currently only responds to calls during regular working hours. The extended outreach team handles calls on Thursday and Friday evenings, as well as weekends. Outside of regular and extended office hours, concerns are often reported to the City's non-emergency number for assistance.

To ensure 24/7 support, the Administration is proposing to collaborate with the Information Technology Department and the Fire Department Public Safety Communications Division to explore the potential of rerouting calls from the homeless services main line to the City's non-emergency number after hours. This would involve the following steps:

Coordinate with the Information Technology (IT) Department:

- Work with the IT department to assess the technological requirements and feasibility of rerouting calls after regular working hours.
- Identify any potential technical or operational challenges during the rerouting process.

Coordination with the Public Safety Communications Division:

- Engage with the Public Safety Communications Division to ensure they have the capacity and resources to handle the increased volume of calls.
- Develop a protocol for dispatchers to efficiently manage and respond to homelessness-related calls during after-hours.

Potential Training and Resources Needed:

- Provide additional training for dispatchers to effectively handle calls related to homelessness.
- Ensure the Police-Homeless Resource Unit Sergeant and New Hope CORPS are prepared to assist when contacted through the Public Safety Communications Division.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Implement a system to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the rerouted calls.
- Collect data to inform further decision-making and potential adjustments to the process.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

No fiscal impact anticipated at this time.

Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate? (FOR ORDINANCES ONLY)

The Business Impact Estimate (BIE) was published on . See BIE at:
<https://www.miamibeachfl.gov/city-hall/city-clerk/meeting-notice/>

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

N/A

CONCLUSION

The Administration supports rerouting after-hours calls related to persons experiencing homelessness to the City's non-emergency number to ensure round-the clock outreach and assistance. By rerouting after-hours calls to the City's non-emergency number, we can ensure round-the-clock assistance for individuals experiencing homelessness, demonstrate our commitment to providing comprehensive support services, and gather data to further refine our approach.

Applicable Area

Citywide

Is this a "Residents Right to Know" item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-17?

No

Is this item related to a G.O. Bond Project?

No

Was this Agenda Item initially requested by a lobbyist which, as defined in Code Sec. 2-481, includes a principal engaged in lobbying? No

If so, specify the name of lobbyist(s) and principal(s):

Department

Housing and Community Services

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Alex Fernandez

Co-sponsor(s)

Condensed Title

Discuss Options for Live Assistance for Homeless Outreach Services