

Treasury Emergency Rent Assistance Monitoring Report 2021-2022

Response by Community Action Council of Lewis, Mason & Thurston Counties

3020 Willamette Dr. NE
Lacey, WA 98516
360-438-1100

Attention: Brandon Weber, CIA, CGAP
Thurston County Auditor
360-490-4211

February 14, 2022

Brandon Weber
Thurston County Public Health & Social Services
412 Lilly Road NE
Olympia, WA 98506

Re: Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance Programs (TRAP) 1 & 2

Dear Mr. Weber:

Thank you for the recent monitoring of our TRAP 1 & 2 Programs. For context, Community Action Council's housing team (to include Kirsten York (CEO), Katrina Kahler-Wilson (Director of Housing), Ali Tope (Housing Program Manager)) have attended weekly rental assistance meetings with Tom Webster, Thurston County (TC) Program Manager and other County staff since 2020. These meetings are facilitated by the County staff – and the agenda includes TRAP client case staffing, policy and protocol discussions, as well as review of policies changes from the federal, state and county level, and their impacts on service delivery dissemination for CAC and Community Youth Services (CYS). Tom Webster provides our organization with guidance and expectations in following and interpreting policies and procedures. Any protocol and processes established for this program are approved by the County before implementation and execution.

Each recommendation as outlined in your letter is contradictory to the continued, consistent guidance/interpretation and technical assistance CAC has received from TC County staff up to this point. They are also based upon an interpretation that does not align with the County Program Manager, who has been, and continues to be, our approval contact for dissemination of this program. Responding to each recommendation with a plan for implementation unfortunately puts CAC in a difficult position of being mis-aligned with our contract oversight. Therefore, we request all required policy changes be agreed upon at the County level and then placed in writing in a contract amendment to which CAC will agree to. Explicit and clear understanding of expectations, policies, regulations and processes in our contracts sets CAC for success in meeting the outcome requirements as set by our funders.

In addition, some details of these recommendations do not align with our understanding of reducing barriers for clients accessing these services and as indicated as critical by the Department of Commerce in delivering this service to the community. In addition, it falls outside our alignment as an agency toward trusting client's documentation as required and provided without subjective decision making on behalf of staff or biases toward low-income clients requesting these services. Clarification from Commerce is requested as to how these recommendations align with best practices in order to ensure CAC is in compliance with all levels of funding oversight for this program.

Sincerely,

Kirsten York
Chief Executive Officer