

Art Therapy Program Report

July 30, 2024



King County

Table of Contents

I.	Proviso Text.....	3
II.	Executive Summary	3
III.	Background.....	4
IV.	Report Requirements.....	5
	A. Solicitation Process and Provider Selection.....	6
	B. Evaluation and 2023 Outcomes	8
V.	Conclusion	9

I. Proviso Text

Ordinance 19546, Section 71, Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Fund, Proviso P1 states:¹

Of this appropriation, \$200,000 shall not be expended or encumbered until the executive transmits an art therapy program report and a motion that should acknowledge receipt of the report and a motion acknowledging receipt of the report is passed by the council. The motion should reference the subject matter, the proviso's ordinance number, ordinance section and proviso number in both the title and body of the motion.

The report shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A. Information about the solicitation process including how the solicitation was advertised, a description of any community engagement conducted to ensure organizations serving cultural or ethnic communities were aware of the funding opportunity, names of organizations that applied for grant funding, which organization was selected and reasons for the final award; and
- B. Performance measurements used to evaluate the efficacy of the program and selected organization and program utilization statistics, including how many individuals were served by the program, and further to meet the reporting requirements for inclusion in the annual mental illness and drug dependency evaluation summary report in accordance with K.C.C. 4A.500.309.D.1.

The executive should electronically file the report and motion required by this proviso no later than July 31, 2024, with the clerk of the council, who shall retain an electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff for the law, justice, health and human services committee or its successor.

II. Executive Summary

This Art Therapy Program Report summarizes first year implementation of a \$200,000 a MIDD-funded art therapy pilot project, as directed by Ordinance 19546, Section 71, Expenditure Restriction ER1.^{2, 3} Consistent with the expenditure restriction, the grant-based art therapy pilot program incorporates culturally appropriate, trauma-informed behavioral health services for cultural and ethnic communities, consistent with the requirements of MIDD initiative SI-01: Community-Driven Behavioral Health Grants.^{4, 5}

This report responds to and fulfills the reporting requirements for King County Council Ordinance 19546, Section 71, Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Fund, Expenditure Restriction 1, Proviso P1.⁶

¹ King County Ordinance 19546, Section 71, Proviso P1. [\[LINK\]](#)

² MIDD behavioral health sales tax, typically referred to as MIDD and also referred to as the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency fund.

³ King County Ordinance 19546, Section 71, Expenditure Restriction ER1. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁴ King County Ordinance 18406 [\[LINK\]](#)

⁵ King County Ordinance 15093 [\[LINK\]](#)

⁶ King County Ordinance 19546 [\[LINK\]](#)

Ordinance 19546, Section 71, ER1, P1 requires the report to include information about the solicitation and award selection process, as well as the performance and evaluation of the art therapy pilot project.

The art therapy program pilot funding was included as part of the procurement process of the 2023-2024 MIDD initiative SI-01: Community-Driven Behavioral Health grants. The procurement occurred during the first half of 2023. The solicitation was shared with agencies who subscribe to the King County’s Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) listserv and with other community networks. In addition, DCHS staff researched all known non-profit art therapy organizations and reached out to inform them of this funding opportunity. Two agencies applied for the art therapy pilot funding: Unified Outreach and Path with Art. A diverse review panel, including staff representing two councilmember offices, served as nonvoting participants, reviewed and discussed the applications. The panel recommended and DCHS selected Unified Outreach to receive the funding based on the alignment of its application with the requirements of the appropriation. Upon contract execution, the funded organization and DCHS evaluators partnered to develop performance measures and reporting requirements to measure the efficacy of the program.

2023 data and performance outcomes for Unified Outreach are included in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: 2023 Data and Performance Outcomes

Total number of individuals served	62
Age range of participants	11-19 years old
Percent identifying as a person of color	97%
Percent reporting improved skill in externalizing emotions and ideas constructively	96%
Percent reporting increased sense of community belonging	83%

Information on the selection of Unified Outreach as the program operator of the art therapy program, and the program’s first year results was also included in the 2023 MIDD Annual Summary Report.

III. Background

Department Overview

King County’s Department of Community and Human Services’ (DCHS) mission is to provide equitable opportunities for people to be healthy, happy, and connected to community.⁷ DCHS envisions a welcoming community that is racially just, where the field of human services exists to undo and mitigate unjust structures that historically and currently allocate benefit and burden in ways that favor some people and disfavor others. The Department, along with a network of community providers and partners, plays a leading role in creating and coordinating the region’s human services infrastructure. DCHS stewards the revenue from the Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL), Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Levy, the MIDD behavioral health sales tax fund (MIDD), the Crisis Care Centers (CCC) Levy,

⁷ Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS). [[LINK](#)]

the Health Through Housing sales tax, and the Puget Sound Taxpayer Accountability Account (PSTAA), along with other state and federally-directed revenues.^{8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14}

DCHS' Behavioral Health and Recovery Division (BHRD) brings behavioral health services and treatment to people in crisis and low-income King County residents, including people enrolled in Medicaid. BHRD serves approximately 60,000 people annually. BHRD supports funding of more than 100 community behavioral health agencies, with services ranging from mental health (MH) and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment, detoxification (withdrawal management) services, specialty team-based care, residential treatment, medication for opioid use disorders (MOUD), inpatient care, crisis services, mobile crisis response, and involuntary commitment-related services and supports. BHRD seeks to make health services available that meet people where they are and serve the whole person by integrating behavioral health, social services, and medical care to meet an individual's needs.

Historical Legislative Context

The 2023-2024 biennial budget allocated \$200,000 toward an art therapy pilot project.¹⁵ As directed by Ordinance 19546, Section 71, Expenditure Restriction ER1, the goal of the pilot project is to support an art therapy program that improves cognitive functioning, fosters self-esteem and self-awareness, cultivates emotional resilience, promotes insight, enhances social skills, reduces and resolves conflicts and distress, and supports recovery.¹⁶ This funding supports culturally appropriate, trauma-informed behavioral health services for cultural and ethnic communities, consistent with the requirements of MIDD initiative SI-01: Community-Driven Behavioral Health Grants, as described in Appendix H to the MIDD 2 Service Improvement Plan adopted by Ordinance 18406 and in the MIDD 2 Implementation Plan approved by Motion 15093.^{17, 18}

Report Methodology

DCHS staff assembled this report with input from the art therapy pilot program provider and DCCHS evaluators. Data for this report are sourced from provider data and narrative submissions, including client-level demographic information and performance outcomes submitted through the DCCHS Client Outcomes Reporting Engine (CORE) submitted quarterly, and aggregate data submitted monthly.

IV. Report Requirements

Consistent with requirements of Ordinance 19546, Section 71, Proviso P1, this report describes the following:¹⁹

⁸ Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy. [\[LINK\]](#)

⁹ Best Starts for Kids Levy. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁰ MIDD behavioral health sales tax fund, also referred to as the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency fund. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹¹ Crisis Care Centers (CCC) Levy. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹² Health Through Housing sales tax. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹³ Puget Sound Taxpayer Accountability Account. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁴ Crisis Care Centers (CCC) Levy. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁵ King County Ordinance 19546, Section 71, Expenditure Restriction ER1. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁶ King County Ordinance 19546, Section 71, Expenditure Restriction ER1. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁷ King County Ordinance 18406. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁸ King County Ordinance 15093. [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁹ King County Ordinance 19546, Section 71, Proviso P1. [\[LINK\]](#)

- community engagement and information about the solicitation process, the selection process and how the funded agency was selected, and
- performance measurements used to evaluate the efficacy of the program and utilization statistics.

The responses contained in the sections below align with each of the proviso requirements.

A. A. Information about the solicitation process including how the solicitation was advertised, a description of any community engagement conducted to ensure organizations serving cultural or ethnic communities were aware of the funding opportunity, names of organizations that applied for grant funding, which organization was selected and reasons for the final award;

DCHS integrated the art therapy pilot program into a competitive procurement process through the 2023-2024 MIDD initiative SI-01: Community-Driven Behavioral Health Grants Request for Proposal. Request for proposal (RFP) development began in the late winter of 2022, in anticipation of approval of the of the budget allocation by the King County Council. DCHS released the procurement on January 10, 2023. It closed on February 22, 2023. DCHS notified applicants of the award decision on March 31, 2023. Contracts were executed effective May 1, 2023. The contract period runs from May 1, 2023, through December 31, 2024. A more detailed timeline is below.

RFP Development, Launch, Outreach, and Engagement (December 2022-January 2023)

Before drafting the RFP, DCHS staff consulted with Council staff to better understand the intent for this project. Staff with the sponsoring councilmember’s office shared two primary goals: directing funding towards programs where the therapeutic intent is central, not tangential, to the art programming; and awarding funding through a competitive process. Additionally, DCHS staff reached out to six art therapy programs in King County known to MIDD contract managers for insight into art therapy practices and introductions to other art therapy programs.²⁰ These organizations provided feedback that eligible programming should be as flexible as possible while still retaining the Council’s intent that programming should have a therapeutic component. Upon public release of the procurement, DCHS shared the announcement with all County Council member office and requested further sharing with their respective networks. DCHS staff also shared the procurement with the known art therapy organizations in King County and asked that the organizations share within their communities. Finally, DCHS staff disseminated it to all agencies subscribed to the DCHS email listserv and with other community networks. Like all DCHS RFP processes, small agencies could request grant writing technical assistance to submit a competitive application.

Provider Selection (March 2023)

DCHS received 34 applications for the SI-01: Community-Driven Behavioral Health Grants RFP. Of these, two agencies applied for the art therapy pilot funding: Unified Outreach and Path with Art. Twenty-two individuals participated in the RFP review panel. Panel members represented a range of individuals with expertise and racial and ethnic identities. Review panel members included staff from King County and City of Seattle, community-driven behavioral health agencies who did not submit an application to this

²⁰ Art therapy organizations originally consulted during development of the RFP: Art with Heart; First Aid Arts; Hugo House; Path with Art; Pongo Teen Writing; Restorative Resources Training & Consulting.

RFP and so had no conflict of interest under this procurement, and Council staff members from Council Districts 3 and 9, who served as nonvoting members.

The review panelists attended two two-hour meetings to discuss scores, comments, and provide recommendations. Three panel members were assigned to read and rate the art therapy pilot applications. In addition to scores, the review panel also considered populations served and geographic diversity.

Unified Outreach proposed to support youth participants through art projects and participation in behavioral health activities with peers and a therapist to improve mental health and well-being. Project deliverables include creating, publishing, and distributing six to 10 full color magazines with art products created by the program's youth. Finally, Unified Outreach specifically centered its proposal on services that incorporate culturally appropriate, trauma-informed behavioral health services for cultural and ethnic communities, which aligned with the requirements of the MIDD initiative SI-01: Community-Driven Behavioral Health Grants RFP.

After the panel discussions, DCHS conducted an anonymous poll among panel members to vote for the top applications, to recommend the single top applicant for the art therapy pilot program. Based on the results of panel scores, discussions, and poll, Unified Outreach was recommended for the art therapy pilot funding, with the agency's full requested amount of \$172,221 for the 2023-2024 biennium. After consultation with a team of department leaders, the DCHS Director approved the selection of Unified Outreach. The remaining \$27,779 has been retained in the SI-01: Community Driven Behavioral Health initiative for incorporation into a future competitive procurement.

Before notifying the recommended agency, DCHS' BHRD leadership shared the results with the Councilmember who had initiated the allocation of funding toward an art therapy pilot program.

B. Performance measurements used to evaluate the efficacy of the program and selected organization and program utilization statistics, including how many individuals were served by the program, and further to meet the reporting requirements for inclusion in the annual mental illness and drug dependency evaluation summary report in accordance with K.C.C. 4A.500.309.D.1

Like all MIDD-funded contracts, Unified Outreach’s art therapy pilot program is evaluated through partnership between DCHS evaluators and the contracted provider. Upon contract execution, Unified Outreach met with DCHS evaluators and MIDD staff to negotiate contract deliverables, reporting requirements and performance measures, further described in the following paragraphs, to meet the reporting requirements for MIDD programs, as reported annually in accordance with K.C.C. 4A.500.309.D.1, as well as requirements from Ordinance 19546, Section 71, Proviso P1.^{21, 22}

Unified Outreach’s primary deliverable under MIDD SI-01 initiative is to publish a culturally focused magazine reflecting the voices of Black youth reporting on items important to Black youth. Supporting deliverables include:

1. Provide a safe and healthy work environment for students to interact with BIPOC teachers, mentors, and industry professionals.
2. Provide dual-role workshops, focused on art therapy and personal experiences, to inspire artistic expression for both healing and commercial success.
3. Produce a bi-monthly (or quarterly) print magazine with content provided by students of the program.

Unified Outreach tracks performance outcomes among youth contributors to the magazine to assess and determine the success of the program for participants upon exiting the program and submits both aggregate data to King County monthly and client-level data on a quarterly basis. Data elements include age, race, preferred language, gender identity, residence, session attendance, and participant self-report of skill gain and sense of belonging.

In 2023, Unified Outreach served a total of 62 unique participants. Of these 62 individuals, over half identify as female, ages ranged from 11 to 19 years old, and 97 percent identify as a person of color. All participants’ preferred language is English, so they did not require interpretation services. The program reported a 77 percent completion rate, and individuals that completed the program attended an average of 13 group art therapy sessions. Additionally, the agency conducted 24 community partner outreach meetings and met with 28 individuals to raise awareness about the program and identify participants.



²¹ K.C.C. 4A.500.309.D.1. [\[LINK\]](#)

²² King County Ordinance 19546, Section 71, Proviso P1. [\[LINK\]](#)

Results of the self-report post-participation survey of the 48 participants who completed the program in 2023 indicated 96 percent reported improved skill in externalizing emotions and ideas constructively through artistic mediums. Eighty-three percent reported an increase in their sense of community belonging, through participation in group art projects, engaging in healing circle dialogues, and providing peer reviews to other artists in the program.

V. Conclusion

Based on data and outcomes reported by Unified Outreach, in 2023 the art therapy pilot program increased 62 participants' ability to use art as a means to express emotions and increased their sense of belonging. While the program reached a relatively small group of participants, 97 percent of those served were youth of color. The pilot program is continuing in 2024, with 2024 results to be included in the 2024 MIDD Annual Summary Report.²³

²³ King County Ordinance 19546, Section 71, Proviso P1. [\[LINK\]](#)