

## STAFF REPORT

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**Date:** October 23, 2024

**To:** Mayor and City Council

**Through:** Jackie Bryant, Interim City Manager

**Subject:** Staff Report (For Possible Action): Approval of Opioid Funding allocation, including an agreement with NewRocket for Phase 2 of the Direct Resource Outreach and Placement Service (DROPS) mobile application for unsheltered outreach, in an amount not to exceed \$250,000. (Opioid Funds)

**From:** Cynthia Esparza, Chief Equity and Community Relations Officer

**Department:** City Manager's Office

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**Summary:**

The City of Reno was selected to develop a prototype application to support outreach management, data collection, and communications with the unsheltered community in the fall of 2023. In collaboration with ServiceNow, NewRocket, City staff, and community experts, the mobile application DROPS (Direct Resource Outreach & Placement Service) was developed pro bono. Phase 1 of the application was launched in June 2024 and is currently used by Clean and Safe staff and contracted outreach workers. DROPS is transforming the way outreach workers engage with unsheltered individuals and provide resources in real-time. Phase 2 of the application will further elevate this tool, help make more informed decisions in the field, and create two-way communications. Staff recommends approval of an agreement to further develop this application and find real solutions to addressing this community challenge in an amount not to exceed \$250,000.

Consent Review	Yes	No
1. Is this item an annual or standard item that comes before Council for regular approval?		X
2. Is this item an agreement required based on an item previously approved by Council?		X
3. Is this item included in the current budget approved and adopted by Council?		X
<b>Other Considerations</b>		
What percent of the total City budget does this item represent?	0.02%	

**Alignment with Strategic Plan:**

Economic Opportunity, Homelessness, and Affordable Housing  
Arts, Parks, and Historical Resources  
Public Safety

**Previous Council Action:**

July 28, 2021 – Council approved the Nevada Agreement on the Allocation of Opioid Recoveries, related to an existing opioid litigation, and recovery proceeds to remediate the harms, impacts, and risks associated with the opioid epidemic.

**Background:**

The City of Reno was selected to develop a prototype application in the fall of 2023 in collaboration with ServiceNow, an organizational process and customer service platform, and NewRocket, an application developer. This project was pro bono and the ideation process included City staff, outreach contractors, community partners, and community members with lived experience. The group was charged with developing an outreach tool to help connect unsheltered individuals to services in real time, in the field through a mobile device.

In June 2024, the Clean and Safe outreach team launched Phase 1 of DROPS (Direct Resource Outreach & Placement Service), a mobile application designed to transform the way outreach workers assist unsheltered individuals by connecting them with the right service at the right time. To date, DROPS has assisted outreach workers by providing essential tools they need to effectively manage and support the unsheltered community, specifically those suffering from opioid usage, mental health, and co-occurring disorders. The application was designed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of outreach efforts and currently includes:

- **Profile Collection:** Mobile entry of valuable demographic data creates shared knowledge resulting in deeper insights. This feature enables outreach workers to quantify the impact of their efforts and better understand the needs of those they serve and the services needed.
- **Encounter and Journey Tracking:** Allows the outreach to capture a history of interactions with each unsheltered neighbor, creating a consolidated, digital case file. This feature provides real-time context and the ability to review the impact of early interventions.
- **Case & Task Management:** Workers can tap into a catalog of common actions and integrations with third-party services to deliver the right services at the right time.

Since its launch, a total of 122 unsheltered individual profiles have been created and outreach services have been rendered, including family reunifications, housing placements, and access to health and substance use resources and services. Currently, eight outreach workers are using this platform and the goal is to expand this further. During this process, gaps and opportunities have been identified to better conduct outreach, collect information, and integrate two-way

communication with the unsheltered community.

### **Discussion:**

Due to the growing impacts of opioids, the City of Reno joined the State of Nevada and other municipalities in litigation against pharmaceutical companies and distributors of opioids. Opioid addiction impacts all sectors of the community. Usage trends are found to be worse among those living in poverty and unemployed, both contributors to homelessness. Evidence indicates that opioid use disorders (OUD) and co-occurring disorders are known risk factors for homelessness, and data continues to show impacts of OUD and related overdoses disproportionately among the homeless community.

As the City of Reno continues to see local impacts, Phase 2 of the DROPS will strengthen the connection to services and rehabilitation opportunities, contributing to an overall healthier community. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, homeless community members suffering from OUD experience a higher level of barrier due to disaffiliation, social isolation, lack of mobility or transportation, a fragmented delivery system, and complex treatment needs including co-occurring conditions. DROPS will improve outreach and provide overdose prevention and education and augment access to information, real-time updates, and a case management platform with action items associated per person.

Phase 2 will support further improvements and data collection to develop a deeper understanding of the community and current needs, specifically those associated with OUD. In a continued partnership with ServiceNow and NewRocket, Phase 2 of DROPS will configure new abilities and implement changes to further connect with this community including, but not limited to:

- **Client Interface:** Introduce the application to unsheltered individuals on their personal devices. This will allow client/outreach worker communications (including notifications and alerts). Participants will connect directly with their outreach worker, provide updates, and expedite outreach delivery.
- **Reporting and Analytics:** Align data collection with regional needs. The solution can transform data collected by outreach workers into actionable insights, to support better decision-making, and trend analysis. This information helps the city quantify its impact on homelessness and identify areas where additional support and funding are needed.
- **Case & Task Management Improvements:** Adjust components of the application that outreach workers have identified as areas of improvement to maximize time, update profiles, and incorporate a digital client release of information, eliminating a current paper practice. This will also include the ability for Clean and Safe staff to assign outreach work task assignments, assign due dates, and activate alerts.

The \$250,000 allocation supports the Phase 2 NewRocket agreement totaling \$227,078.00 and

provides \$22,922 in reserves to cover possible additional expenses as the mobile application is updated and tested with outreach workers, including additional solution architect hours and technical support.

Under the One Nevada Agreement on Allocation of Opioid Recoveries, the City may spend funds recovered under the settlement for "Opioid Remediation" purposes. In review of qualifying expenses, the development of Phase 2 of DROPS is a qualifying expense. Core strategies and approved uses for opioid funding include:

- Expand warm hand-off services to transition to recovery services.
- Broaden scope of recovery services to include co-occurring SUD or mental health conditions.
- Provide comprehensive wrap-around services to individuals in recovery, including housing, transportation, job placement/training, and childcare.
- Provide the full continuum of care of treatment and recovery services for OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, including supportive housing, peer support services and counseling, community navigators, case management, and connections to community-based services.
- Provide counseling, peer-support, recovery case management and residential treatment with access to medications for those who need it to persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.
- Provide or support transportation to treatment or recovery programs or services for persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.
- Engage non-profits, faith-based communities, and community coalitions to support people in treatment and recovery and to support family members in their efforts to support the person with OUD in the family.
- Provide training and development of procedures for government staff to appropriately interact and provide social and other services to individuals with or in recovery from OUD, including reducing stigma.
- Invest in infrastructure or staffing at government or not-for-profit agencies to support collaborative, cross-system coordination with the purpose of preventing overprescribing, opioid misuse, or opioid overdoses, treating those with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, supporting them in treatment or recovery, connecting them to care, or implementing other strategies to abate the opioid epidemic described in this opioid abatement strategy list.
- Provide resources to staff government oversight and management of opioid abatement programs.

### **Financial Implications:**

Project funded via Opioid Funds. Future funding of projects using these funds will follow standard City purchasing and contracting policies and procedures.

### **Legal Implications:**

Legal review completed for compliance with City procedures and Nevada law.

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends Council approves the Opioid Funds allocation and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement with NewRocket in an amount not to exceed \$250,000.

**Proposed Motion:**

I move to approve staff recommendation.

**Attachments:**

City of Reno Phase 2 DROPS Agreement