



Equity Advisory Committee

June 2026

Setting Small Culturally Specific/ new and emerging orgs for Success

Helping small Culturally Specific orgs build a foundation for success to serve our BIPOC communities

Agenda

- **Purpose**
- **Who EAC is**
- **Key Definitions**
- **Process Overview**
- **Why Small CS providers**
- **Problem**
- **Supporting data**
- **Barriers and Solutions**

Objective:

- **Share and report on EAC's Work**
- **Share solution ideas**

Purpose



The Equity Advisory Committee (EAC)

The Committee provides guidance and recommendations on racial disparities in the HSD work of ending homelessness. The advisory recommendations from this committee will be provided to the HSD Director, Deputy Director and Equity Manager.

Summer 2025

EAC members led a process to identify the root causes of racial disparities within our HSD services, which led our members to our key topic of providers needing to be set up for success in order to successfully serve our CS/BIPOC communities they serve.

Who Are the EAC Membership

The EAC is composed of members with lived experience and CS provider expertise :

- 8 current members
- Most identify as Black, Latine, Pacific Islander, and White
- All have expertise or lived experiences of homelessness, and have gone on to become either; Founder, Executive Director, or Direct Services Providers

Key Definitions

Culturally specific (CS) organization

- Provides services in a culturally focused environment
- Recognized by the community as culturally and linguistically responsive
- Has record of successful community engagement with community being served

Small organizations

- No dedicated fiscal or other infrastructures.
- Executive Director (or CEO depending on their business model) often wear multiple hats (HR, Fiscal, grants, case management etc).
- Definition not formalized, but described as such throughout this project.

New provider

A provider that has qualified through a Tri-County or HSD procurement* but has not yet contracted with HSD.

Emerging provider

A provider that has qualified through a Tri-County or HSD procurement* **AND** has been contracted with HSD for 0-3 years.

Process Overview



Education:

Relationship Building



Planning:

Research and Voting



Draft:

Narrow & Draft
Recommendations



Presentation:

Share Recommendations

Summer 2025

- **Organizational Learning:**
Explored HSD Structure & Funding sources
- **Leadership Engagement:**
Invited Interim Director Anna Plumb

Fall 2025

- EAC identified key challenges:
- Client Access & Outreach
 - Setting Providers Up for Success

EAC voted to **prioritize Setting Providers Up for Success** topic

Winter 2025

- Re-engaged with leadership to discuss funding providers
- Used advice as springboard for solution generating

★ **We Are Here**

April 2026

EAC presents to the Interim Director Anna Plumb and Emily Nelson, Equity Manager

Why Small CS providers Matter?

- CS providers contribute significantly to communities who are often left out of services
- Reach communities larger, non CS providers often do not
- Led by individuals with shared lived experiences, language, cultural knowledge, and trauma
- Build trust and improve service outcomes



The problem

Context of Challenge

- Small CS providers lack dedicated financial structures (fiscal management, HR, grants etc)
- Face significant barriers to HSD contractings
- Without support, CS providers lose or leave the HSD systems

Consequences

- BIPOC clients lose effective pathways to housing stability
- Clients are re-routed to non CS providers with hindered outcomes

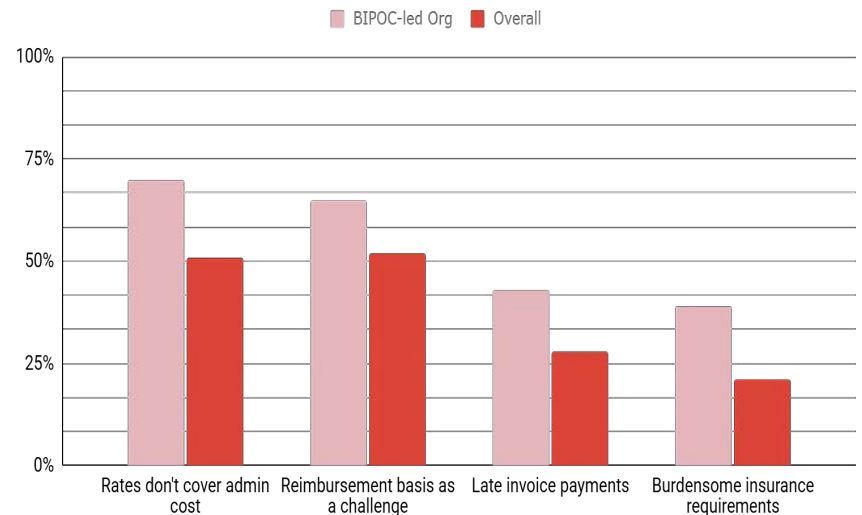


Supporting Data (Washington State Survey, March 2022):

Washington State Non-Profits Report

A March 2022 survey of 109 Washington State Non Profits found that most prevalent contracting challenges fall into 2 categories:

1. **Complex processes** for example, difficult applications, burdensome reporting, restrictive invoicing) and;
2. **Financial constraints** such as rates not rising with costs, reimbursement basis, rates not covering administrative costs.



4 Barriers Overview

If HSD continues using a 1 size fits all contracting approach, more CS providers will exit the system, and racial disparities will worsen - EAC member consensus, June 2025-April 2026 work sessions



Outdated Reimbursement Model:

The current reimbursement model overburdens small, new and emerging, and CS providers, impairing their ability to operate efficiently



Sustaining Funding Crisis:

Awarded contracts usually do not cover the true costs that include admin, staffing, cost of living etc; leading to instability in staffing cuts and reduced services to BIPOC communities we aim to serve.



Equity Provider Gap:

Funding favors larger, established organizations, leaving small CS & new and emerging providers under resourced or unable to compete.



Intentional contract onboarding:

Small CS providers & new and emerging,, enter our HSD system, there is a need for intentional contract onboarding and ongoing professional development to help build their organizations



Setting Small, New & Emerging, Culturally Specific Orgs Up for Success!

Mural Link [here](#)

1. Setting Small, New & Emerging, and CS Providers Up for Success

Problem

Outdated Reimbursement Model

Definition

The current reimbursement model overburdens small, new and emerging, and CS providers, impairing their ability to operate efficiently

Recommended Solutions

- 1 Explore and implement grant-to-contract models
- 2 Develop a policy to upfront fund disbursement
- 3 Integrate flexible funds within contracts
- 4 Create clear guidance for organizations on what they can and can't do
- 5 Establish dedicated grant category for indirect costs
- 6 Encourage larger orgs to subcontract with small CS orgs
- 7 Explore alternative reimbursement models

2. Setting Small, New & Emerging, and CS Providers Up for Success

Problem

Sustaining the Funding Crisis

Definition

Awarded contracts usually do not cover the true costs that include admin, staffing, cost of living etc; leading to instability in staffing cuts and reduced services to BIPOC communities we aim to serve.

Ideas

- 1 Develop contingency plans and external funding backup strategies
- 2 Create dedicated emergency support funds for small CS providers
- 3 Offer contracts of varying sizes designed to sustain small providers (less than \$500,000 or what fits for providers size)

3. Setting Small, New & Emerging, and CS Providers Up for Success

Problem

Equity Provider Gap

Definition

Funding favors larger, established organizations, leaving small CS & new and emerging providers under resourced or unable to compete.

Ideas

- 1** Provide a 3 year partnership /mentorship between large/established orgs and small and new and emerging orgs
- 2** Dedicated capacity building funds in all small CS contracts
- 3** Prioritize small, new and emerging, nonprofits in all competitive funding opportunities
- 4** Implement and track a system for lost or exited contracts, including analysis of root causes and use findings to improve system design and retentions strategies

4. Setting Small, New & Emerging, and CS Providers Up for Success

Problem

Intentional Contract Onboarding

Definition

When small CS, new, and emerging providers, enter HSD, there is a need for intentional contract onboarding and ongoing professional development to help build small CS, new and emerging organizations

Ideas

1

Establish a dedicated small CS and new and emerging HSD Education Boot Camp for new contractors and those unfamiliar with government systems

2

Provide dedicated consultant support for newly contracted HSD providers

Next steps

- April 2026 EAC members presented to HSD Interim Director, Equity Manager, Finance and Procurement
- May 2026, HSD staff met for a debrief of EAC member's presentation for next steps
- June 2026 Memo and Recommendation have been submitted to HSD Director, Deputy Director, Equity Manager, and HSD Leadership.
- August/September hoping to hear back from HSD staff
- Continue sharing EAC's memo and recommendations

Questions