

MEETING SUMMARY

REDMOND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

Monday, February 9, 2026 - 6:30 pm

1. Call to Order

Commissioners present: Michaelene Fowler, David Poe, Kathleen Reynolds, Ted Thornhill, Vartika Gupta

Staff present: Brooke Buckingham, Alaric Bien

2. Items From the Audience:

Marc Vermouth from the Sophia Way spoke about the program and 2025 highlights.

3. January 12 Meeting Summary

Summary approved by acclamation.

4. Ice Breaker

David asked commissioners to share one hidden gem in our community.

Responses included Ferral-McWhirter, Juel, and Idylwood Parks, the bike park behind Hartman Park, Downtown Restaurant Row, and **Jawhara Café** inside MAPS. Next month Kathleen will lead the activity.

5. Fund Balance Update

Staff reported that the Human Services Fund Balance currently stands at approximately \$60K.

6. Primary Prevention

Kathleen noted that during the 2024 study session with Council, there was interest expressed in prevention programs. Highlighting [the report](#) on primary prevention, she explained that human services programs often focus on supporting people in crisis. In contrast, prevention programs aim to reduce risk factors and promote protective factors—strengthening families and communities.

These programs address root causes such as poverty, racism, and ableism, and often include initiatives like job training, education, community-building, and cultural engagement. They help create connections and opportunities that foster resilience.

Family support, youth decision-making and school success, and mental health care for parents are examples of strategies that can mitigate the effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). This is an important perspective to keep in mind as we review funding applications.

7. Wage & Benefit Survey

Staff reviewed the 2025 King County [Wage & Benefits Survey](#) noting that high turnover rates (18% for full-time staff, 20% for part-time staff over the past year), uneven access to benefits, and lack of financial reserves to weather changes in funding priorities remain significant challenges to the sector. Nonprofits cannot meet community needs without retaining and supporting the individuals who deliver the essential services to our community. They urge funders to expand flexible, multiyear funding, and to reduce structural barriers to funding such as delayed reimbursements and overly burdensome compliance requirements.

8. Funding Priorities

Staff highlighted the amended language based on last month's discussion. Commissioners agreed to adopt the changes and add a third value: Recognition of the long-term benefits of preventive programs.

9. Practice Application Review

Staff walked commissioners through an application from the previous cycle using the review tool. Continuing commissioners shared their own experience with the review process. Request to view another less comprehensive application that also received funding which staff will share. Staff noted that as in the previous cycle, not late additional information will be considered, all comments and notes are considered public records (be mindful of what you write), and that hard copies of application are available upon request.

10. Youth Advisors

Discussed the benefits to youth: learning about human services issues in Redmond, learning how city government works, giving youth voice in commission discussions, and noting participation on college applications. Benefit to the commission is to get the youth perspective on topics of discussion.

We will solicit 2 high school youth advisors each spring who live or attend school in Redmond. Terms will run from September through June with 1 unexcused absence allowed. They will be invited to attend one meeting before final approval by the commission. Michaelene volunteered to act as commission liaison to the youth

11. Commissioner & Staff Updates

- Ted, Kathleen, and Michelene shared their impressions from the visit to Open Kitchen. Interest in perhaps participating in a bingo night on the first Wednesday of the month.
- Michaelene will be presenting commission priorities to Council on 2/10.
- The state is auditing human services ARPA expenditures from 2024 as part of their normal monitoring. There should be no issues as staff track and document all expenses paid.
- Reminder that a joint commission equity training will be held at Redmond City Hall on Saturday, March 14 from 8:30 am to noon. Pework will be sent out by the end of the month in preparation for the training.

12. Adjourned at 8:34.