

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: **FY 2026/27 CITY ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
EVALUATION TEAM PRIORITIES**

BACKGROUND:

The Analysis of Social Services Evaluation Team (ASSET) funding process for FY 2026/27 will begin in August 2025. As part of the ASSET process, each of the four ASSET Funders (City of Ames, Story County, United Way of Story County and Iowa State University Student Government) establishes a list of their human services funding priorities for the subsequent funding cycle. The priorities amongst Funders may overlap but may also differ. **These funder priorities serve as an important guiding document for ASSET volunteers as they develop recommendations for allocating each funder's allocation for the next fiscal year.**

The City priorities approved for FY 2025/26 are as follows:

Categories 1, 2, and 3 are in priority order, as are the lettered services in each category. An emphasis is placed on low to moderate income individuals and families in all categories and services.

1. Meet mental health and substance use disorder needs through:
 - A. Community-based and outpatient mental health services
 - B. Outpatient emergency access and crisis intervention services
 - C. Awareness and education about suicide prevention and services
 - D. Substance use prevention and treatment availability

2. Meet basic needs through:
 - A. Sheltering, including emergency shelter (length of stay in emergency shelter is dependent upon the population group being served)
 - B. Housing cost offset programs including utility assistance
 - C. Food cost offset programs to assist in providing nutritious perishables and staples
 - D. Quality childcare cost offset programs, including daycare and State of Iowa licensed in-home facilities
 - E. Medical and dental services
 - F. Financial literacy and education programs
 - G. Transportation cost offset programs
 - H. Legal assistance
 - I. Disaster response

3. Provide youth development services and activities through
 - A. Skill development and enhancement
 - B. Summer enrichment/prevention of loss of learning

Typically, in June, the City Council and other funders revisit their priorities and update them as needed for the following funding year. This year, however, ASSET funder staff recommended additional conversations amongst all the funding agencies to see if it was possible to develop some joint priority areas.

The purpose of these additional conversations is to further explore where there is alignment across all four founders regarding their priorities to try to maximize coordination and service impact. **ASSET Funder staff was not recommending establishing only one shared set of priorities. Rather, staff was proposing a set of shared priorities, where each funder may choose to identify other priorities as it chooses.**

There were three Joint Funders Meeting held between May and July 30, 2025. After those meetings, there was no consensus amongst the Funder Boards to establish a set of joint priorities. However, there was interest in establishing a small sub-group to work towards identify ASSET goals and priorities for FY 2026/27 and beyond and move to an outcomes-based framework. ASSET Funder Staff will begin assembling a small workgroup in September.

In the interim, the City still needs to establish its priorities for FY 2026/27 ASSET cycle. Staff has included for the Council's review an attachment reflecting no changes compared to the FY 2025/26 priorities (Attachment B) and an attachment that contains slight modifications from the FY 2025/26 priorities (Attachment A).

Attachment A changes the following: 1) It eliminates "disaster response" since less than 2% of City funds went towards this service, 2) Homelessness Prevention and Housing Stability is a separate category since this has been a significant community need, and 3) The descriptions under each category have been simplified so readers, volunteers, and staff can understand what services may fall under each description. The previous language was sometimes confusing for volunteers to understand if certain services fit under the category - this version attempts to clarify the confusion by simplifying the terms used. It should also be noted that the terminology used also mirrors what United Way of Story County has also used.

For the Council's reference, a third attachment contains the prospective joint priorities that were discussed amongst ASSET Funders in summer 2025 (Attachment 3). However, these joint priorities were not agreed to by the funders.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve a modified version of the FY 2025/26 priorities as the FY 2026/27 priorities (Attachment A).
2. Approve the City's ASSET priorities from FY 2025/26 as the FY 2026/27 priorities with no changes (Attachment B).
3. Refer this item to staff or the ASSET volunteers for further information.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Establishing the ASSET priorities is typically completed by July 30 of each year; however, this year the request has been delayed due to spending time with other Funder Boards trying to reach a joint funders priorities list. Since that effort to establish joint priorities was not successful, each funder must now approve its own priorities, which has been the practice in the past. The ASSET Board Funders have expressed a desire to establish a workgroup to revisit joint priorities and goals of ASSET for future years; this work will commence in September.

In the interim, the changes in Attachment A simplify the language used to describe services and removes disaster services, which has not been a significantly funded effort using ASSET funding. It is therefore the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as described above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Attachment A: Modified Goals Proposed FY 25-26.docx](#)

[Attachment B: No Changes from FY 25-26.docx](#)

[Attachment C: Joint Funders Priorities - DRAFT.docx](#)