



STEELE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION AGENDA

Administration Center - 630 Florence Avenue – Owatonna, MN 55060

*Steele County's Mission:
Driven to deliver quality services in a respectful and fiscally responsible way.*

TUESDAY, December 16, 2025 at 4:00 PM
County Boardroom, Steele County Administration Center

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Owatonna Public Library
Mark Blando, Owatonna Public Library Director
Tony Martens, Blooming Prairie City Administrator
Bethany Anderson, Branch Librarian
3. Opioid Response Initiative Award application/recommendations (10 min)
4. Local Homeless Prevention Aid report on 2025 aid (10 min)
5. PTO Updates
6. Final 2026 Budget Discussion
7. Other Business

Adjourn

Disclaimer: This agenda has been prepared to provide information regarding an upcoming meeting of the Steele County Board of Commissioners. This document does not claim to be complete and is subject to change.

Notice: Steele County Commissioners may, at any time, participate by interactive technology per Minn. Stat. 13D.02 subs. 1 & 2.



Steele County Agenda Item

Request for Board Action

Subject: 2026 Opioid Response Initiative Award Recommendations

Department: Public Health

Committee: Choose an item.

Committee Meeting Date: Enter a date.

Work Session Date: December 16, 2025

Board Meeting Date: December 16, 2025

Consent Agenda: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Resolution: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Policy Committee Recommendation:

N/A

Recommendation:

Approve Public Health to award Opioid Response Initiative Funding as listed below:

- Spero – Prevention: **up to \$14,500**
- Spero – Treatment: **up to \$34,000**
- Steele-Waseca Drug Court – Treatment: **\$0**
- United Way of Steele County – Prevention: **up to \$45,500**

Total Recommendation: **up to \$94,000**

Background (*Including Budget Impact*):

In response to the opioid epidemic, Steele County will receive approximately \$1.5 million over 18 years as part of multi-state settlement agreements with pharmaceutical entities. Steele County currently has approximately \$517,318 in Opioid funds available. To ensure effective utilization of these funds, Steele County is launching a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to identify qualified organizations to respond to the opioid crisis through opioid epidemic response strategies, including prevention, treatment and recovery, harm reduction, and criminal justice.

Attachments:

Summary of 2026 Opioid Response Initiative Award Recommendations

Applicant: Spero

Recommendation – Prevention Activities:

- ~~Staffing, mileage, & supplies for Sticker Shock at four retailers (\$3,200)~~
- Staffing & mileage for “Teen Intervene” and “What Teens Need to Know” presentations to at least 400 Steele County students (\$4,050)
- Food for positive reinforcement during presentations in schools (\$500)
- Educational supplies related to overdose prevention for school and community presentations/events, including Breaking the Stigma (\$5,200)
- Staffing & mileage for the Breaking the Stigma event (\$2,500)
- ~~Design of a data tracking system for unintentional opioid overdose events and naloxone administration for clients in Steele County (\$2,500)~~
- ~~Staff time for harm reduction lunch & learns for Spero staff (\$1,650)~~
- ~~Speaker and promotional items related to harm reduction (\$700)~~
- Indirect Costs – 15% of Direct Costs (\$1,837.50)

Total: \$14,087.50 (\$12,250 direct costs)

Funding Recommendation: up to \$14,500

Recommendation – Treatment Activities:

- ~~Staff time & training costs to implement Harm Reduction Treatment (\$19,375)~~
- Car repairs, gas cards, & bus tokens for clients (\$8,150)
- ~~100 treatment services during Behavioral Health Funding changes (\$30,000)~~
- 20 Comprehensive Mental Health Evaluations or therapy sessions (\$6,000)
- ~~Equipment for a client computer station (\$5,392)~~
- ~~Office wall for Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (\$8,000)~~
- Staffing, supplies, & promotion for monthly sober events (\$8,560)
- ~~Staffing & supplies for an alumni group (\$3,817.54)~~
- ~~Staffing & mileage for Youngdahl Group facilitation (\$3,675)~~
- ~~Staff time for training on and implementation of SBIRT (\$6,750)~~
- ~~Staffing & mileage for CPRS outreach in community (\$2,650)~~
- Staffing for substance use and mental health consultation at Drug Court (\$6,750)
- Indirect Costs – 15% of Direct Costs (\$4,419)

Total: \$33,879 (\$29,460 direct costs)

Funding Recommendation: up to \$34,000

Applicant: Steele Waseca Drug Court

Recommendation – Treatment Activities:

This application was withdrawn due to the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs (OJP) Community Justice Reinvestment Grant being extended for an additional year.

Funding Recommendation: \$0

Applicant: United Way Steele County

Recommendation – Prevention Activities:

- Training for at least 100 new youth-serving staff in Steele County school districts and community members in Youth Mental Health First Aid (\$10,000)
- Training for at least one youth group or grade level in each Steele County high school (estimated 150 students) in Teen Mental Health First Aid (\$11,250)
- Training for a Spanish YMHFA and TMHFA Facilitator (\$5,300)
- Staffing for Teen Center every Saturday for 4 hours (\$10,400)
- Supplies for 10 monthly Teen Activity Nights (\$2,500)
- *Indirect Costs – up to 15% of Direct Costs (\$5,917.50)*

Total: \$45,367.50 (\$39,450 direct)

Funding Recommendation: up to \$45,500

Total Funding Recommendation: up to \$94,000



Steele County Agenda Item

Informational

Subject: Local Homeless Prevention Aid Report

Department: Public Health

Committee: Choose an item.

Committee Meeting Date: Enter a date.

Work Session Date: December 16, 2025

Board Meeting Date: Enter a date.

Purpose:

To provide a summary of the 2025 Local Homeless Prevention Aid Awards

Background:

Local Homeless Prevention Aid (LHPA) was created to help local governments ensure no child is homeless. Counties must use this aid to fund new or existing family homeless prevention and assistance projects or programs. Steele County received \$127,697 of aid in 2024, which is required to be spent by December 31, 2025. The County also received \$147,902 in 2025 to be spend by the end of 2026 and is slated to receive an additional \$145,647 in 2026.

At the June 24, 2025, Board Meeting, the Board allocated \$128,000 of this aid to the following organizations with the corresponding award amount, distributed on a reimbursement basis:

- The Lighthouse of Southern Minnesota: up to \$38,000
- Semcac: up to \$44,000
- Steele County Transitional Housing: up to \$46,000

All recipients were required to submit proof of expenses for reimbursement and complete a Year-End report by November 21, 2025. Steele County Public Health staff compiled this information in the attached report. While SCPH staff will present this information, at least one member from each organization is present and available to answer questions.

Financial Impacts:

These awards spent down Steele County's 2024 Local Homeless Prevention Aid allocation.

Attachments:

Local Homeless Prevention Aid Report (2024 Aid)
Steele County Housing Assistance Update – Semcac
Narrative of Current Trends – Steele County Transitional Housing

Local Homeless Prevention Aid Report (2024 Aid)

Summary Report

The Lighthouse of Southern Minnesota

Funding Awarded: up to \$38,000

Use of Funds: Expanding and sustaining the Women and Children's Program; Investing in relationship-building in the community; Supporting operating expenses of the shelter

The Lighthouse of Southern Minnesota provided trauma-informed shelter, case management, and stabilization services to families experiencing homelessness. Families were connected to safe housing, individualized support, and pathways towards self-sufficiency.

Funds supported the salary & fringe of the guest advocates, housing managers, program director, and executive director, who directly served these families and built relationships with agencies providing services to guests (\$35,604.14); household needs such as cleaning supplies, groceries, and personal health items (\$796.12); gas cards for transportation to appointments (\$336); and utilities for the shelter site (\$1,263.74).

Workplan Objective #1: Provide tailored programming, case management, and shelter to at least 7 guests consisting of mothers and their children.

Reported Metrics: The Lighthouse's Women and Children's Program served 13 guests (5 women and 8 children). Of those served, 7 guests have successfully transitioned into permanent housing and received continued case management and stabilization follow-up after placement.

Workplan Objective #2: Build working relationships between the Lighthouse and at least 5 new agencies that can provide support and services to guests.

Reported Metrics: The Lighthouse built partnerships with Steele County Community Corrections, Mayo Clinic's pre-natal providers group, Spero, Community Pathways, Owatonna Public Schools, Health Finders Collaborative, and Crisis Response Services. These partners refer families and support stabilization planning, helping meet needs related to childcare, healthcare, employment, benefits enrollment, transportation, mental health, school access, and treatment support.

Next Steps: The Lighthouse of Southern MN will continue to provide trauma-informed shelter, case management, and individualized programming to mothers and their children, while building the infrastructure needed to serve more families in the coming year.

In 2026, the Lighthouse will be relocating the Women and Children's Program and launching the new Family Program at Oak Hill Community Connections which will ensure families no longer need to separate to receive shelter. They also plan to continue strengthening local partnerships, increasing access to services for guests, and strengthening their follow-up processes to support long-term stability for families transitioning out of the programs into permanent housing.

Semcac

Funding Awarded: up to \$44,000

Use of Funds: Expanding and sustaining the housing assistance program

Semcac provided families at risk of homelessness with direct housing assistance, case management, information, and referrals to other resources.

Funds supported the salary & fringe of case managers who served these families (\$5,770.44) and housing assistance, including back rent, deposits, and mortgage assistance (\$37,000).

Workplan Objective: Provide 72 individuals in 18 households with direct housing assistance and case management to ensure stable and safe housing.

Reported Metrics: Semcac provided 48 individuals in 15 households with direct housing assistance, case management, information, and referrals.

The housing crisis was resolved for each household. The amount needed per household was higher than anticipated, with average direct assistance per household at \$2,466.67.

Next Steps: Ongoing case management and follow-up services are being provided as needed to households that received aid.

Other Materials: see Steele County Housing Assistance Update – Semcac

Steele County Transitional Housing

Funding Awarded: up to \$46,000

Use of Funds: Expanding homelessness prevention efforts targeting families and children

SCTH provided one-time financial assistance to households facing an eviction due to a temporary inability to pay rent, helping to prevent eviction and homelessness in Steele County. SCTH also provided one-time financial assistance to cover damage deposits, removing a barrier to housing stability for households transitioning out of homelessness.

Funds supported the salary & fringe of a case manager who served these families (\$1,799.20), budget books and calendars for clients (\$122.80), and rental assistance, including rent subsidies, damage deposits, and eviction prevention (\$44,078).

Workplan Objective: Provide 176 individuals (56 adults and 120 children) with rental assistance and case management.

Reported Metrics: SCTH provided 163 individuals (54 adults and 109 children) with rental assistance and case management services.

The agency also connected families with the social services necessary to maintain the families' stability in their homes, including housing navigation and family outreach.

Next Steps: SCTH will continue to serve people who have become homeless by helping them to locate affordable rental housing and by providing the first months' rents and damage deposits. If needed, the agency will continue to support these participants through monthly rental subsidies based on 25-30% of their gross annual income. SCTH will also provide case management on a regular basis. The waiting list for our program helps to define the needs. This year, the agency received over 500 phone calls and visits from families needing housing assistance.

Other Materials: see Narrative of Current Trends – Steele County Transitional Housing

Year-End Report Questions

1. Please provide a **brief summary** of the program(s)/service(s) that were supported by this funding.
2. Which of the following best describe(s) how your Local Homeless Prevention Aid Award supported your program(s)/service(s)? Select all that apply.
 - ☐ To **create** a new program/service
 - ☐ To **expand** an existing program/service
 - ☐ To **sustain** an existing program/service
 - ☐ To invest in **capacity-building** (e.g., staff training, technology, equipment, infrastructure)
 - ☐ To invest in **relationship-building** (e.g., community engagement, partner development, networking)
 - ☐ To support **operating expenses** (e.g., salaries & wages for admin/support staff, rent & utilities, office supplies, printing)
 - ☐ Other:
3. What **metrics/measures** can you share about the impact of your program(s)/service(s) in Steele County?

At a minimum, please provide data related to your **workplan objective(s)**, but feel free to share any supplemental data that further demonstrates the impact of the program(s)/service(s) supported by this funding and how they address identified community needs.

4. What are the **next steps** for the service(s)/program(s) supported by this funding?

Semcac Steele County Housing Assistance Update

Steele County currently has nine households on a waiting list for housing assistance. Due to recent changes in our application process, we are unable to determine how many of these households would qualify for Steele County funding if it were available.

As of October 1st, Semcac Steele County has \$3,255 in housing prevention funding available each quarter. Based on current information, most agencies in Steele County will not have additional funding available until January 1st.

All Steele County Aid funds administered by Semcac have been fully expended. Staff began accepting applications in early July, and within two months, more than two dozen households had applied. Because Semcac already had programming in place, staff were able to efficiently gather necessary verifications and begin approving applications. By the end of July, eight applications had been processed and approved, utilizing just over half of the available grant funds.

Examples of households assisted include:

- A single mother needing help with a deposit to move from a one-bedroom apartment, which was no longer adequate after the birth of her child. Staff helped her transition directly into a two-bedroom unit with a Housing Choice Voucher already in place.
- Two single-parent households, both working and attending college. With assistance, these parents were able to focus on completing their education.
- Another single mother, a student in her final semester and employed, needed rent assistance after falling behind due to a child's mental health hospitalization. Semcac's support helped her catch up on rent and complete her schooling.
- A student working with the Workforce Center received collaborative support from both agencies to stabilize housing, resolve past-due rent, and stay on track with final classes.
- A single father recently released from an institution received assistance after his landlord agreed to hold his apartment. Semcac collaborated with other support services to stabilize his housing and help him secure employment.

Semcac also operates a Transitional Housing Program designed to move eligible doubled-up or homeless households into permanent, stable housing. To qualify, households must come off the Coordinated Entry list, and most are considered hard to house.

Additionally, Semcac offers a motel voucher program for households with a permanent housing plan in place. However, many of these households are single adults and do not qualify for Steele County funds.

Narrative of Current Trends

Transitional Housing of Steele County

Transitional Housing of Steele County continues to experience a high volume of calls from families who are either homeless or are facing eviction. During the month of October, 2025, 72 households called the Transitional Housing office seeking housing assistance. In October, Transitional Housing provided housing subsidies and case management for 21 families in the two-year transitional housing program. Sixteen households received eviction prevention, one-time assistance. In October, 11 households were placed on a waiting list for eviction prevention as funds have been spent down.

There are currently over 40 households on the waiting list for the two-year transitional housing program. (This program includes case management.) The waiting list for the two-year transitional housing program is six months to one year long. Callers are told to contact the Transitional Housing office every month to let the staff know they continue to need assistance and wish to remain on the waiting list.

Thanks to the ongoing support of Steele County, the LHPA funds, and other local donors, we have a robust eviction prevention program in place for one-time eviction prevention assistance. In the past, the eviction prevention program has not had a waiting list as our agency was able to keep up with the demand for services. This successful program is now backlogged. The need outweighs the available resources.

The costs of rent continues to rise. Many working families are unable to make ends meet and many are unable to pay their full rent amounts. Once they become evicted, homeless families and individuals languish in their cars, in the outdoors, or in other uninhabitable spaces. Others continue to stay with family members. In some cases, those families are also in danger of eviction as they are now housing loved ones who are not listed on the lease. In other cases, people are forced to stay with relatives who are using chemicals or are abusive to them or their children. There are limited options for housing or emergency shelter.

We will never waiver in our commitment to housing, advocacy, and case management for those experiencing homelessness. We are deeply grateful to Steele County and the LHPA program for extraordinary support. Hundreds of families with children remain safely housed because of this program and funding from LHPA. These families extend their deepest gratitude.



Steele County Agenda Item

Request for Board Action

Subject: Personnel Policy Update: PTO

Department: Administration & Human Resources

Committee: Internal Central Services

Committee Meeting Date:

Work Session Date: December 16, 2025

Board Meeting Date: 12/16/2025

Consent Agenda: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Resolution: ☐ Yes ☒ No

Policy Committee Recommendation:

Include staff recommendation (or list as “Discussion Only” or “Information Only”).

Recommendation:

Update section 7.2.15 of the Steele County Personnel Rules and Policies to modify the accrual rate table by removing the 0-3 years category, reduce the PTO accrual maximum from 800 hours to 600 hours, and allow employees that currently have PTO accrual banks at or near 600 hours to do a one-time cashout.

Background (*Including Budget Impact*):

Starting in 2026 several union groups will convert from sick and vacation accruals to PTO. Modifying the accrual rate table and PTO maximum carryover in personnel policy will align policy with union contracts so employees countywide will have the same time benefits and rules.

Accrual Rate Table:

Delete the 0-3 years of service category and change the 4-6 years category to 0-6 years.

PTO Maximum Carryover:

The current PTO maximum carryover for non-union employees is 800 hours. Reduce the PTO maximum carryover to 600 hours. Nine employees have been identified who are at or over 600 hours of PTO in their accrual bank. These employees will receive a one-time payout for their PTO

hours in excess of 600. Furthermore, these employees may make a one-time election to reduce their PTO banks to 500 hours. These PTO payouts are payable with 2025 funds.

Attachments:

- Amended policy section.

7.2.15 STEELE COUNTY PAID TIME OFF POLICY - Non-Union

Accrual

Each eligible employee shall be granted PTO for actual service rendered on the following basis:

Beginning on ~~April 1, 2008~~ **December 17, 2025**, PTO Accrual will be as follows:

Years of Service	Hours/Pay Period	Hours Per/Yr	Yearly
			Required Usage
0-3 years	5.847	152.04 (19 days)	40 hrs.
0-6 years	6.461	168.00 (21 days)	40 hrs.
7-9 years	7.384	192.00 (24 days)	60 hrs.
10-12 years	8.307	216.00 (27 days)	60 hrs.
13-19 years	8.923	232.00 (29 days)	60 hrs.
20-24 years	9.540	248.04 (31 days)	80 hrs.
over 25 years	10.463	272.04 (34 days)	80 hrs.

Use of PTO

The above schedule is for full-time employees. PTO must be used in increments of at least 15 minutes.

When the employee's length of service reaches the next higher rate of accrual, accrual at the new rate shall begin on the first day of the pay period following the date of eligibility.

~~This policy shall be effective on April 1, 2008.~~

Use of PTO, which is not requested in advance ("emergency use") may require documentation of the emergency. If usage is more than three days, FMLA documentation and a doctor's slip may be requested to be completed before employee can return to work. Non-scheduled PTO requests may be denied.

Probationary employees may use no more than 24 hours of PTO during the first six months of employment. PTO does not vest until the employee has reached six months of full-time equivalent work (1,040 paid hours). After completion of the first six months of the probationary period, PTO shall be vested and may be utilized according to these policies.

Maximum carry-over of PTO from one year to the next is 800 hours. Any PTO in an employee's account that exceeds ~~800~~ **600** hours as of December 31st of each year shall be

forfeited. During the calendar year PTO can exceed ~~800~~ 600 hours but as of December 31st amount must be less than ~~800~~ 600 hours.

Part-time employees will accrue PTO in increments directly proportionate to the number of hours paid each pay period. For example, a half-time employee who works forty (40) hours in a pay period will earn 40/80ths of the amount earned by a full-time employee.