



Board of County Commissioners
1820 Jefferson Street
PO Box 1220
Port Townsend, WA 98368

Kate Dean, District 1 Heidi Eisenhour, District 2 Greg Brotherton, District 3

April 8, 2024

Bret Black, Fire Chief
East Jefferson Fire Rescue 24 Seton Road
Port Townsend, WA 98368

Dear Chief Black,

The Jefferson County Commissioners are writing to endorse EJFR's FIRE CARES Program as it seeks additional AWC funding for sustainability into its second year of service, 2023 through 2024 serving East Jefferson County. Based on the response to this co-responder pilot program thus far, there is notable demand for expanded capacity to successfully perform its impactful work. A rural, remote, and services sparse area, Jefferson County has critical need for access to and delivery of healthcare for our older population who often rely on our 911 system for non-emergent needs. The gaps being filled by FIRE CARES include direct in-home support, linkages to mental health and substance use services, as well as medical/mobility equipment resources, to name a few. Reducing non-emergent demand on our 911 system serves everyone.

FIRE CARES has built an exemplary team of care providers in a very short time. They have amplified their unique service throughout our community with effective media presence, participating in community discussions about safety, and partnering with local agencies across a broad spectrum of service provisions. This effort has rooted the FIRE CARES program within our community in a meaningful and reliable way.

Jefferson County's mission is to protect and improve the wellbeing of all Jefferson County residents by promoting safe, healthy communities and environments. We do this by centering access and equity in the provision of healthcare services countywide. We are better able to fulfill our public health mission through strong collaboration with our community partners.

We support EJFR's request for continued funding of the FIRE CARES program. EJFR is a trusted partner for our county's health and safety needs, and uniquely attuned to our large aging population.

Sincerely,

Kate Dean, Chair, Dist. No. 1

Heidi Eisenhour, Dist. No. 2

Greg Brotherton, Dist. No. 3