

FW: 8.4 Actions Related to Grant Agreements for a Targeted Outreach and Engagement Program Serving Unsheltered Individuals in San José

City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

Tue 3/26/2024 7:44 AM

To:Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

From: Kathryn Hedges [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, March 25, 2024 9:29 PM

To: District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; District2 <District2@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>; City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>; The Office of Mayor Matt Mahan <mayor@sanjoseca.gov>; citymanager@sanjoseca.gov; cityattorney@sanjoseca.gov

Subject: 8.4 Actions Related to Grant Agreements for a Targeted Outreach and Engagement Program Serving Unsheltered Individuals in San José

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Honorable Mayor, Vice-Mayor, and Councilmembers:

I am a resident of D3 and I strongly disapprove of future contracts with the contractor HomeFirst. They have not performed well on previous contracts, they are being sued for racial discrimination/harassment and wage theft, and this Council has previously expressed its concerns the last time their contract was extended in 2023. They have withdrawn their shelter bid from Sunnyvale over these concerns and may do so here as well. Other cities have terminated or failed to renew their outreach contracts because they are not performing well at outreach compared to other organizations.

Please do not issue further contracts to HomeFirst.

Kind regards,
Kathryn Hedges

[REDACTED]
San Jose, CA 95112

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FW: Item 8.4

City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

Tue 3/26/2024 3:48 PM

To: Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

From: iq4rent sc [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 3:45 PM

To: City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

Subject: Item 8.4

[External Email]

Hello All,

My apologies if I've spoken to you previously regarding 8.4, I didn't realize WeHope had applied.

We are asking for the RFP to be reopened to give other applicants the chance to apply and for those that already applied, a chance to improve their application. We feel it is critically important to break up the near monopoly HomeFirst has on unhoused services in Santa Clara County and San Jose in particular. They operate the tiny homes, OWLs, largest low barrier shelter (BRC) and more. When they ban a client from all their sites, as they frequently do, that leaves them with almost nowhere to go except back to the streets. HomeFirst is not where homelessness ends, it's where homelessness repeats itself.

HomeFirst, as has been documented, has an issue with racism. This issue is not just at the Sunnyvale shelter, at least three sites have written complaints regarding it, here are some quotes from different employees:

"Homefirst as a whole has made me feel excluded, unworthy, small, meaningless and as if I don't deserve to be treated like everyone else of lighter skinned color. This situation happening was unfortunate for many reasons but the way that it was handled was egregious and disgusting. If someone had of made a derogatory comment towards the gay community they would have been walked off the job instantly if someone says something about Asians or Hispanics you are out but if you talk about blacks that's fine. This can not happen in this day and age my ancestors are screaming for me to do what I know is right."

"I have anxiety and this has been giving me flare ups to the point that I don't even want to come to work. I can't afford to quit my job, so I feel like I'm stuck working for a racist company because I don't currently have any other options. This company has done absolutely nothing to protect us... It seems like when it's a black issue, nobody cares. This all came shortly after they asked us to attend the City Council meeting in support of HomeFirst in the midst of the racist allegations made by previous employees. While at this meeting I was able to see how performative this company is. I would think that with tensions regarding race being so high, that they would have handled this much better, but they have shown blatant indifference when it comes to this issue."

Is there an inherent, institutional bias towards HomeFirst because they can afford to have a professional grant writer and because many of the staff in the Housing Department came from HomeFirst? That's a valid question.

Reopening the RFP for two or three months will not harm the clients, the unhoused people of San Jose. In fact, reopening the RFP, may lead to finding new bidders, which can only help the unhoused people in San Jose who feel so grossly under represented now.

It will also show that you take the words of the employees to heart and want to take time to hear what they have to say. No employee anywhere should work for a company where they feel racism is rampant and that is so toxic it

negatively affects their mental health. Certainly not a company that is the preferred vendor of the City of San Jose, a reflection of you.

Please support reopening the RFP for 3 months, it's in the best interest of the clients being served, the staff at HomeFirst and city of San Jose who says it doesn't tolerate wage theft or hate speech—that should apply to its vendors as well.

Regards,
Shaunn Cartwright

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