



August 18, 2020

Bob Menicocci, Director
County of Santa Clara – Social Services Agency
353 West Julian Street
San José, CA 95110

Dear Director Menicocci:

We were disappointed to see the proposed terminations of and reductions to nonprofit contracts within the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS). It was likewise disappointing to learn that agency leadership had not contacted the affected nonprofits about the potential changes to their contracts, and only learned of them via budget memoranda attached to the August 19 Board of Supervisors agenda or through notification from SVCN. We were also perplexed that the transmittal memo (102302) that listed the proposed terminations and reductions lacked any information whatsoever about potential child impacts and senior impacts; the Board of Supervisors and the public need information about the impacts of safety net cuts on our community to make the best decisions possible.

Attached is a letter that SVCN sent to the Board of Supervisors last week to outline some of the budgeting principles that SVCN supports. One of the key principles is that it's important that the County bring to the table nonprofits as partners and engage them in a conversation about how to handle the enormous budget shortfall, how to preserve critical safety net services to our communities in need, and how to get meaningful input from the community about budget priorities. We regret that this conversation didn't occur in advance of the August budget hearings, so we would like to schedule a meeting between a number of nonprofit leaders and you and SSA's contracting director to begin such a dialogue in advance of the November budget hearings.

As the County's partners in so many of the programs and services that improve the lives of County residents, including our safety net, we stand ready to bring our expertise and passion to the table to strategize together about how to preserve our safety net so that we can continue to protect and enhance the lives and well-being of folks in disadvantaged communities.

Further, I respectfully request that budget-related communications be issued to nonprofit organizations in a timely and transparent manner so that organizations can plan adequately and ensure continuity of services. I have attached a letter from SVCN's CEO to Miguel Marquez and Jeff Smith reflecting the same request and requesting certain documents and information that will contribute to that transparency and meaningful engagement.



SVCN and its nonprofit members and partners understand the challenges of having to do more with less in these unprecedented times and want to work with County leaders to find creative solutions to this challenge. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyra Kazantzis".

Kyra Kazantzis
CEO

cc:

Daniel Little, Acting Director, DFCS
Jorge Montes, Program Manager
Behavioral Health Contractors Association
Community Health Partnership

Encl.

August 12, 2020 SVCN Letter to Board of Supervisors on Budget Priority Setting Session
August 18, 2020, SVCN Letter to Jeff Smith and Miguel Marquez



August 12, 2020

Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Clara
70 W. Hedding Street – 10th Floor, East Wing
San Jose, CA 95110

Re: Budget Priorities Setting Session

Dear President Chavez and Members of the Board of Supervisors:

As you continue deliberations on the County budget, the Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits (SVCN) urges you to adopt the following considerations to guide your discussions:

- 1. Preserve and prioritize the local safety net and services for people and communities that are most disadvantaged** – Given the current and likely sustained economic downturn, the County should avoid cuts and even make needed strategic investments to the safety net, including those that assist community members in need to more easily access and navigate systems of care and services. A number of nonprofit and community leaders have recommending public safety-related strategies that could result in budgetary savings in policing and corrections that could be reinvested in community-based poverty prevention programs; these strategies should be considered and no ideas should be off the table.
- 2. Apply a robust race equity lens to the current budget process** – The County has already indicated its commitment to adopting the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) framework and tools to advance racial equity. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated long-standing inequities in our community, the County must prioritize deepening its commitment to advancing racial equity in its budget and policy decisions.
- 3. Ensure that the County Executive’s Office and departments work with CBO partners at the table to craft shared strategies and solutions throughout the course of the budget process** – As the County’s partners in so many of the programs and services that improve the lives of County residents, including our human services safety net, we stand ready to bring our expertise and passion to the table to co-create and reimagine County services to best serve disadvantaged communities.
- 4. Issue budget-related communications with CBOs in a timely manner so that County budget decisions are known with sufficient time to allow for adequate planning and continuity of services.**



- 5. Create opportunities for meaningful public engagement on the budget, using time-tested as well as creative strategies, including technology, to center community voices**
– SVCN strongly urges the Board of Supervisors to be intentional in its community engagement efforts regarding the County budget, particularly as decisions on core safety net programs and services will be at the forefront of the County’s quarterly budget reviews. The County should use its network of community-based organization partners to outreach to impacted communities, at a minimum. Direct outreach to other elected officials, neighborhood associations, schools, chambers of commerce, and the media should also be included in the County’s community engagement plans. Translation and interpretation services should also be made available, and approaches that are sensitive to both the digital divide and shelter-in-place should be explored.
- 6. Be transparent with the community about the relevant details of the budget, historical revenue and expense trends, and the choices to be made** – It is difficult for the community to engage in the budget conversations without relevant data. Over time, the County’s public budget documents have become increasingly more opaque and inaccessible. Clear, easy-to-understand budget documents that are in a centralized repository will make the budget process more accessible to everyone.

SVCN and its nonprofit members and partners understand the challenges of having to do more with less and want to work with County leaders to find creative solutions to the resource challenges we face together. We look forward to working with you, as we have been, through this difficult time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy L. Ho".

Wendy L. Ho

Chief Strategy and Policy Officer



August 18, 2020

Jeff Smith and Miguel Marquez
County of Santa Clara
70 W. Hedding Street, 11th Floor, East Wing
San José, CA 95110

Dear Jeff and Miguel,

Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits (SVCN) fully recognizes that COVID-19 has had and will have unprecedented negative impacts to Santa Clara County's budget; we also realize that in an environment where County programs and staff will experience cut-backs, nonprofit organizations with County funding will not emerge unscathed. We also realize that the current federal and state funding landscape is fluid and unpredictable, which makes County budget planning challenging.

However, we would like to express our disappointment in seeing a number of reductions and eliminations proposed in the Social Services Administration (SSA) and Behavioral Health budgets without advance notice to the nonprofits affected, without consultation with SVCN or other nonprofit representatives, without meaningful transparency into the Administration's rationale behind its budget reduction strategies, and without meaningful input from the community about budget priorities, including whether and to what degree safety-net services should be prioritized for preservation.

It was particularly disappointing that some nonprofit leaders saw that their organizations were slated for cuts for the first time in a budget document on Friday (without the proposed cut amounts even being provided). As we have expressed to SSA in a separate letter, we were also perplexed that the transmittal memo (102302) that listed the proposed terminations and reductions lacked any information whatsoever about potential child impacts and senior impacts; the Board of Supervisors and the public need information about the impacts of safety net cuts on our community to make the best decisions possible.

On behalf of SVCN member organizations and our local nonprofit sector, we again reiterate our requests for transparency and input into the County's budget processes and decisions. We again request that nonprofits, as your partners providing essentials services to our communities in need, are brought to the table to provide input on service priorities, revenue and reduction strategies, and how to engage the community, in a timely manner before the budget reductions that we all understand will occur in November.



So that nonprofits can participate in these conversations in the most meaningful way, we request to be provided with relevant information, including:

- any documents that reflect the Administration's instructions for reductions to the departments as well as the reduction proposals from departments that were and will be submitted to the Office of Budget and Analysis,
- the full list of the nonprofits that are contracted with each department, including contract amounts, General Fund obligation, and any pass-through sources and amounts, by contractor,
- contract utilization review reports prepared by departments for nonprofit contracts, and feedback provided by the Executive Team on such reports, and
- the AB109 Spending Plan for FY20 and FY21.

We acknowledge that the team at the County Office of the Executive is working under trying and difficult circumstances. We know that you are all working hard to serve the community, save jobs, and protect the County fisc. SVCN stands ready as always to work together on these goals.

Lastly, we see that a number of nonprofits will be delivering much needed services to our community because of the Board inventory items that the COE supports, as well as several new or augmented contracts; SVCN is grateful for this support of nonprofits, their staff, and the communities they serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyra Kazantzis".

Kyra Kazantzis
CEO

cc:
Behavioral Health Contractors Association
Community Health Partnership