



LOCAL 221

Service Employees International Union, CTW, CLC

October 13, 2009

Dianne Jacob, Chairwoman
San Diego County Board of Supervisors
1600 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92101

RE: Agenda Item 7 for October 13, 2009 (HHSO Outsourcing)

Dear Chairwoman Jacob:

Service Employees International Union Local 221 opposes the Board's recommendation to outsource Welfare-to-Work and Child Care Stage 1 employees.

There is little proof that outsourcing will "provide public services to the region's residents in the most efficient and economical manner." In fact, there is good evidence that outsourcing human services actually wastes taxpayer dollars and harms clients.

Across the country there have been numerous, well-documented problems with the outsourcing public human services.

- In Indiana, the promised cost savings of outsourcing human service positions did not materialize, error rates increased, and clients were wrongly denied benefits or had to wait longer to receive benefits.
- When Texas outsourced some of its human service programs, enrollment levels dropped because clients were not able to access services. This was because a large amount of cases were not being processed due to understaffing by the contractor.
- Wisconsin's non-partisan Legislative Audit Bureau found that outsourcing their human service programs did not improve service quality or delivery.

Although these are examples of state-run programs, the programs are very similar to those provided by the county and in many cases are provided by the same contractors that are likely to bid on the San Diego County HHSO contract. These are just a few of the many examples where outsourcing failed to produce a savings of taxpayer dollars or failed to deliver services to those in need.

At a time when more families are in need in San Diego County, we should ensure that they have an adequate safety net. It is our belief that outsourcing HHSO positions will negatively impact the San Diego community by failing to provide quality services in a timely manner. It is more likely that outsourcing will cause longer waits for clients to get services and will decrease client access to services.

San Diego ~ Imperial Counties

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When the county outsourced HHSA programs in the past, those contracts ended because the contractor failed to provide the services on which they had bid. The end result was that the county had to take back the contract and provide the services in-house. How can we be assured this will not happen again? The county is currently outsourcing Mental Health and IT services. I call on the Board to provide an independent, third party review of these services to determine if there has been adequate service delivery and client satisfaction before the county moves to outsource more services.

I strongly urge you to cease the outsourcing of HHSA programs. We will continue to monitor this situation and raise questions to ensure all stakeholders are protected. With this in mind, I have attached a list of questions the Board should answer prior to outsourcing any public service.

The public deserves high quality, efficient public services that are accessible to all of those in need. Outsourcing will not achieve this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sharon-Frances Moore".

Sharon-Frances Moore, President
SEIU Local 221

CC: Greg Cox, Supervisor, San Diego County
Bill Horn, Supervisor, San Diego County
Ron Roberts, Supervisor, San Diego County
Pam Slater-Price, Supervisor, San Diego County

Attachment

Questions on Outsourcing Public Services

Many questions arise about the outsourcing of public services, which are too numerous to list. However, the Board should consider the following questions prior to outsourcing any program.

- Can advocates, recipients, and other stakeholders have input and provide feedback on the content of the contract?
- Will the county establish a stakeholder group to oversee the contracting process and allow for continued oversight of the contract?
- Will an independent third party be reviewing the contract, goals, and standards set for outsourcing?
- Is the contract designed to meet service goals and how will success be measured? What will be the criteria for analyzing program quality and standards?
- Who will be responsible for handling the appeals of clients?
- Does the contract protect program recipients?
- Will the public have easy access to information?
- Does the contract require a transition plan that includes a contingency plan for problems at the start-up or later in the contract?
- What are the requirements for subcontracting?
- Does the RFP ask bidders to provide detail on how they will ensure the rights of recipients and applicants are protected?
- Does the contract include help for people with disabilities or limited English proficiency?
- If the cost of the contract increases, how will the county address this increase?
- Is there a thorough analysis of the current system to allow for cost comparisons between the proposals and the current system?
- Is the length of the contract reasonable? What are the criteria for renewing a contract?
- Has staff been trained to design the contract, monitor performance, and provide technical assistance to the contractor?
- Does the county have a back-up plan for dealing with problems or non-performance of a contractor?
- Is there any clause to end the contract if services are not adequately delivered as promised?
- What measure will the county take to bring services back in-house if the contract fails to provide the standards outlined in the contract?
- Does the contract define who is responsible for fines that may be assessed from a governmental body?