

What You Can Do

- The single most important thing that you can do as a staff member of a nonprofit health and human service agency is **vote** in all local elections. Next election: General Election—**Tuesday, November 8, 2016**.
- Don't know enough about the issues? In most election years, HSN takes positions on ballot measures related to poverty, housing, social services and the nonprofit sector.
- When appropriate, encourage your clients to register and vote. Let them know what issues are at stake, especially those that directly affect them and your organization's ability to serve them.
- Legislators do take the opinions of their constituents seriously. Remember, you are responsible for electing them into office! Call, write, e-mail, speak at a public hearing: any way you do it, make your voice heard.
- Before any proposal can become a law, the Board of Supervisors holds a public hearing, where members of the public have the opportunity to comment. This is a great opportunity to influence legislators. You are given only 2-3 minutes to speak. Don't worry about not having enough to say or not being able to say it well. As clearly and concisely as possible, state your case. The worst they could do is disregard your input; the best they could do is listen – and change things for the better.
- Educate yourself: visit www.sfgov.org. Thanks to the SF Sunshine Ordinance, info about public meetings and important documents are just a click away.

The San Francisco Human Services Network (HSN) is an association of about 80 community-based nonprofit agencies (including *yours*). Together we are dedicated to addressing issues critical to the health and human services sector of San Francisco and the people we serve. As a voice for nonprofits, HSN provides a unique contribution to the City by educating service providers, policymakers and the community on how policy decisions affect the health and human services safety net.

HSN was founded in 1997, when a group of nonprofit executive directors recognized that no forum existed to direct an organized nonprofit response to pressing public policy issues, or to rally the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor's Office to make decisions that support the health and human services community and those who use its services.

Since then, HSN has established a visible presence in the City, and has brought invaluable information to its member agencies and the community through its meetings, e-mail updates, and events. HSN continues to work towards its goal of creating a strong human services community in a supportive city.

UPCOMING ELECTION:

* General Election: 11/08/16
(Register to vote by 10/24/16)

SAN FRANCISCO 
HUMAN SERVICES NETWORK

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You—and the Nonprofit Health and Human Services Sector: Advocating for Our Agencies and Our Clients



**SAN FRANCISCO
HUMAN SERVICES NETWORK**

*A publication of the San Francisco
Human Services Network,
especially for staff of health and
human services nonprofit agencies
in San Francisco.*

The Nonprofit Human Services Sector

Working with the San Francisco Urban Institute at San Francisco State University, the San Francisco Human Services Network (HSN) published “*A Comprehensive Profile of San Francisco’s Nonprofit Human Services Providers*” in 2002. This survey and report enabled us to learn more about the magnitude of services we provide, and to educate the government, media, and residents of San Francisco about the collective work of our agencies.

We also learned a lot about *you*. Here are some of the stats:

- *You* are one of over 15,000 staff persons that work for the nonprofit human services sector in San Francisco.
- Together our agencies raise almost \$1 billion each year in order to operate and provide services to the community. For every \$1 we receive from the City, we raise \$1.50 more from other sources.
- We provide a variety of cost-effective, culturally-appropriate services in every neighborhood throughout the city, including health care, psychological counseling, HIV testing and counseling, shelter and intervention for the homeless, job training, child and senior care, after-school programs, immigrant assistance, and more.
- Collectively, our agencies provide almost a million client contacts a year, ranging from a crisis hotline call to a stay at a shelter to a job skills training program.
- Nonprofits reported that their greatest challenges are adequate funding, finding and retaining trained staff, and securing affordable facilities.

Making an Impact

Clearly, the nonprofit human services sector plays a significant role in the lives of many San Franciscans. Because we are community-based, we have an unparalleled awareness of the important issues affecting our communities and strong relationships with the people whom we serve every day.

However, until recently, policymakers often made major decisions without seeking input from our sector. We now have a collective voice through HSN. As members of a workforce 15,000 strong, *you* and your peers represent a tremendous untapped resource that could advocate and vote for the issues that affect you, your agency, and your clients.

You provide essential services that some San Franciscans literally could not live without – and you are not alone. Effective unified communication by San Francisco nonprofits, through the electoral process and other strategies, can send a powerful message to the politicians and people of San Francisco: “We’re here for you. And we need you to be here for us, too.”

What’s at Stake

In a city that has struggled through financial ups and downs, HSN is committed to monitoring budget and legislative proposals that affect our sector; to educating you, your organization, and San Francisco’s residents about what is at stake; and to advocate on behalf of our 80 member organizations, their employees (like *you*), and, most importantly, the people you serve.

Here is a brief overview of a few current issues and HSN activities:

- Our 2002 survey found that City and County of San Francisco funding accounted for roughly 40% of the aggregate budgets of San Francisco’s health and human services nonprofits. Thus, changes in the City’s budget have a profound effect on the ability of many nonprofits to operate effectively. Since 2003, HSN along with hundreds of nonprofit staff and clients have successfully opposed millions of dollars in proposed budget cuts to essential services.
- HSN fights for the City to provide annual increases in nonprofit contracts for staff raises and rising operational costs.
- HSN has led the fight for City support to protect nonprofits from displacement in our changing City. Thanks to our efforts, the City has allocated over \$10 million to help nonprofits with higher rents and relocation expenses. Efforts are now under way to develop longer-term solutions.
- The City contracting system for nonprofits is burdensome and inefficient. HSN spearheaded legislation that created the Nonprofit Contracting Task Force to improve this process. The Task Force’s recommendations enable both the City and nonprofits to target more resources to serving people, rather than to dealing with bureaucracy and paperwork.
- In election years, HSN publishes our positions on ballot initiatives that affect nonprofits’ ability to provide high quality, effective services.