

## **CARING FOR VULNERABLE SAN FRANCISCANS: OUR SYSTEM OF CARE**

The City and County of San Francisco is at a critical juncture in its efforts to maintain a commitment to the delivery of responsive and effective health and human services to its residents, particularly those who live in poverty and who require long-term care and support. The confluence of multiple budget crises at the federal, state and local levels of government have placed safety-net services in more jeopardy than at any time in the last 40 years.

Each year, budget cuts eliminate more essential services for the citizens of San Francisco who can least afford to lose this support. Over the past 25 years, the private, non-profit sector in San Francisco has risen to the challenge of developing, funding and providing neighborhood-based, core services for individuals and families. These services value relevant and responsive services that are rooted in communities throughout the City. The non-profit agencies that have developed over the past three decades have led the way in responding to emerging health and human service challenges, including behavioral health services, programs for individuals living with HIV/AIDS, affordable housing in neighborhoods throughout the City, and a full range of support and treatment services for children and youth, seniors and families.

The non-profit service community in San Francisco must take the lead now in establishing a vision and a strategy for the strengthening and expansion of community-based health and human services for San Francisco's most vulnerable residents. This effort must focus on a specific commitment to implement a long-term planning process that addresses the need for a system of care and support services that reduces the reliance on institutional placements while delineating the necessary range of community services needed to realize this vision.

San Francisco needs a 10 year plan, with specific yearly goals for implementation, that brings together behavioral health services, primary care, social services, vocational opportunities, and affordable housing development in a coordinated, complementary and progressive strategy to assure that we build inclusive, healthy and sustainable communities and neighborhoods throughout the City.

At the same time, recent public policy discussions have focused on the status of the non-profit agencies in San Francisco, with specific discussions of the weaknesses and strengths of our sector. A recent report from a task force established by the Mayor, "Partnering With Non-Profits in Tough Times," along with a Department of Public Health Stakeholder Engagement Process in 2009, have highlighted the changing role of non-profit services in San Francisco. Both reports emphasize a need to address accountability, effectiveness and standards of care and administrative practices within the non-profit health and human services sector.

The non-profit sector is faced with specific challenges and opportunities represented by both of these current reports. The workshop on Caring for Vulnerable San Franciscans: Our System of Care will discuss and make recommendations regarding the following issues:

: What is the changing role of non-profits in providing essential safety-net services to vulnerable San Franciscans? What do we anticipate is the ongoing balance between City and County operated services and those provided in the non-profit sector?

: What should be the role of non-profit contract agencies in the development and implementation of health and human services policies and procedures that directly affect our agencies and our clients? What structure would assure meaningful participation in City and County department policy development on the part of the nonprofit sector without creating a conflict of interest?

: What barriers currently exist that impede the development and implementation of effective and responsive community services for vulnerable populations? What strategies would eliminate these barriers, while creating more efficient pathways to timely service delivery?

: What strategies are essential to establishing a 10-year Master Plan for the provision of health and human services? How can such a plan be assured of an ongoing obligation from the City and County to implement the plan? What ongoing political, financial, and bureaucratic barriers are there to assuring a commitment to implementing the Master Plan? How can these barriers be eliminated or reduced? What barriers exist that impede the development of a coordinated health and human services Master Plan across City and County departments? What strategies would be effective in removing these barriers?

: Should the non-profit services community, including staff and clients, take a leadership role in defining standards of care for all services, both civil service and contractor, including identifying metrics for determining strong and effective non-profit agencies? Should the non-profit agencies commit to establishing standards for the sector that will serve as guidelines for all the non-profit agencies that contract to provide services in the City and County? If so, what structure would we recommend to establish and enforce these guidelines?

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY, SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH**

The recent San Francisco Department of Public Health Community Programs Stakeholder Engagement Process placed a specific emphasis on the shifting circumstances of the nonprofit organizations throughout San Francisco neighborhoods and communities. Current fiscal realities, including annual significant budget deficits at the federal, state and city and county levels of government, demand that nonprofit agencies develop strategies for survival and growth in order to meet the ever-increasing need for services.

In addition, a task force was established by the Mayor in 2009 to address the challenges facing the nonprofit service provider community in the current funding environment. The task force report, "Partnering with Non-Profits in Tough Times" identified a number of emerging issues that the nonprofit community, along with its City and County partners, must address to assure the ongoing vitality of the sector and the continued provision of safety-net services to the most vulnerable San Franciscans.

This workshop will focus on the challenges of organizational structure and capacity, ongoing fiscal stability and the strategies for growth that face our extensive nonprofit provider community. Discussions will address, describe and move forward recommendations on these issues, including:

: What strategies are there for maintaining funding for existing service levels, and expanding the capability of nonprofit agencies to meet the increasing demand for services throughout communities in San Francisco? What is the responsibility of government, at all levels, to assure the availability of safety-net services? What is the proper balance between City and County direct services, and those provided through contracts with community-based nonprofits?

: Nonprofits are encouraged, and, in some cases, expected, to diversify their funding base and avoid putting "all their eggs in one basket." What survival strategies and innovative practices are available for nonprofit service providers when the three major funding sources - government, foundation support, and individual donors – are all cutting allocations, changing funding priorities, or reducing support significantly?

: Should nonprofit health and human service providers operate more like a business? Does our sector need to adapt its assumptions and fundamental operational philosophy to embrace more traditional forms of management and financial planning? How can the nonprofit agencies move toward a practice that looks beyond the year-to-year cycle of government funding, as well as the unpredictable funding practices of the philanthropic community, to build a more sustainable financial foundation?

: How has the philanthropic community responded to the precipitous decline in public funding for essential services? What should be the role of the foundations in supporting long-standing

nonprofits that are at risk of disappearing or severely cutting back on services during this economic crisis?

: What strategies should be followed to support the capacity development of organizations that provide key services in priority neighborhoods? Are there benefits to consolidations, mergers, and shared resources among existing nonprofit agencies? What are the risks and unintended consequences of these strategies? What other effective approaches are there to address the continued stress placed on nonprofits, of all sizes, to meet administrative and documentation standards without sacrificing the ability to bring timely and relevant direct services to individuals and communities in distress?

: Traditionally, government and philanthropy have been the financial engines for nonprofit service development and growth. Given the severe limitations on both of these sources of financial support in the near future, what other innovative approaches are there to providing reliable and ongoing sustainability for our agencies? What fiscal and contracting practices and policies could be supported by the City and County to provide a stronger financial stability for community nonprofit partners?

: The current fiscal environment has meant a marked increase in the number of individuals and families that rely on public services for basic and essential services and support. The same economic climate that has affected our agencies has also had a devastating impact on the most vulnerable citizens in San Francisco. What must be done to assure the growth of community-based, relevant and responsive services in the face of growing poverty, homelessness, and public health needs?

: What is the role of the nonprofit community, administrators, board members, staff and clients, in working to create a public policy environment that assures the vitality and growth of health and human services for members of our City? What is the role of the nonprofit community in advocacy and political action?

## **NONPROFIT WORKFORCE: BREAKDOWN OR BREAKTHROUGH**

As new or seasoned workers, consumer-employees, labor representatives, managers or employers, we experience the nonprofit work environment from radically different perspectives. What we each contribute professionally and personally to the many missions of our organizations varies considerably. What we receive in return to sustain our complicated and ever-changing lives is often out of balance with what we need. The underlying economic and educational issues that make the nonprofit workforce what it is are formidable. This workshop is an opportunity to put those workforce issues on the table with the intention of striking a better balance between conflicting realities.

1. Workforce issues and their impact on our ability to serve our constituencies – for example:
  - Wage parity
  - Cost containment
  - Service cuts and workloads
  - Use of interns
  - Clients as employees
  - Burnout
  - Career paths
  - Others
  
2. The role of nonprofits as employers
  - Nonprofit organizations' policies and practices
  - Nonprofit relationships with labor unions
  - Impact of City policies on the employer's role.
  
3. Framing key policy issues for a policy agenda

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NONPROFITS AND CITY: RESTORING THE SENSE OF PARTNERSHIP**

Non-profits have contracted with the City to provide health and human services for over 50 years. In the last few years, the relationship has shifted from one of partnership to an adversarial, in some cases non-collaborative role. This workshop will focus on how to regain a collaborative working relationship with the City and on identifying concrete actions that the City can implement to create change in how non-profits contract and partner with the City. The goal is to come up with actionable ideas with defined outcomes that can become part of the progressive platform for the 2010 elections and beyond in San Francisco.

Four topics will be explored during this workshop:

1. Perception of nonprofits
  - How are we seen by ourselves, the City and the public?
  - Do we have a mission that is separate from our identity as contractors with the City?
  - Why are nonprofits the pawns in the cuts and addback budget games of the Mayor and the Board?
2. Consolidation/reorganization
  - What's the problem with the way things are?
  - Why are consolidation and reorganization the solutions to the problem?
  - What resources are needed to facilitate consolidation or reorganization?
3. Our status as independent contractors
  - Are we accountable for our outcomes?
  - Are City-run services held to the same standards and outcomes?
  - If we are independent contractors responsible for outcomes, why does the City try to micromanage the means by which we provide our services?
  - Whatever happened to the streamlining agreements from the Citywide Nonprofit Contracting Task Force?
  - How can the RFP process be made more transparent and fair?
4. Role in policy and decision-making
  - How can we better represent our clients and advocate for their needs without looking self-serving?
  - How can we encourage the City to contract out services without objection from City labor unions?
  - How do we get a seat at the table when service system changes are discussed?