

**SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES NETWORK
2017-18 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
MARCH 8, 2017**

The San Francisco *Human Services Network (HSN)* is an association of about 80 community-based nonprofit agencies united into a public policy organization dedicated to addressing issues critical to the health and human services sector of San Francisco. HSN provides a unique contribution to the City by educating service providers, elected officials, policymakers and the community on how policy decisions affect San Francisco's comprehensive array of social and health programs.

The HSN Steering Committee has identified three strategic priorities for the next two calendar years, 2017-18: sustainability, accountability and mobilization. The following principles define these priorities:

Sustainability

Sustainability: Ensure that nonprofits serving our community are healthy organizations with the resources necessary to provide effective, high-quality services on which disadvantaged San Franciscans can depend.

- Government contracts with the City and County of San Francisco should reflect the true costs of providing services.
- The City must prioritize multi-year contracts with nonprofits, including cost escalators to ensure predictability and financial security, provide fair salary increases to staff, and address inflationary increases to operating costs.
- Nonprofit contracts must provide sufficient funding to provide workers with fair wages and benefits sufficient to enable them to live in San Francisco.
- Nonprofit contracts must include the costs to fund City wage and benefit mandates, rather than passing unfunded mandates on to service providers.
- The City must work with nonprofits to set fair indirect rates that are consistent across multiple departments.
- The City must not impose arbitrary benefit caps that limit nonprofits' ability to bill for benefit mandates that exceed a percentage of wages, while nonprofits struggle to provide sufficient salary increases.
- The City must address the need for affordable housing for nonprofit workers.
- The City must address the need for affordable office and service space for nonprofits.

Accountability

Accountability: Nonprofits that receive public funding are responsible for providing efficient and effective services at the contracted level of outcomes, and for providing government with information and access to monitor their performance. The City government is responsible for supporting nonprofits' ability to provide services by ensuring that contracting and monitoring policies, procedures and measures are meaningful, consistent, efficient and sensible. The City is also responsible for evaluating and ensuring the quality of its own taxpayer-funded services.

- The challenge we all face is striking an appropriate balance through regulations that provide oversight and reduce the risk of abuse – but do not overload diverse nonprofits with excessive rules and costs that have minimal public benefit.
- The City should evaluate its own services in accordance with similar programmatic and fiscal requirements as it applies to nonprofit contractors, and consider bidding out services that would be more effective if run by community-based organizations.
- While most of our sector seeks to hold itself to the highest ethical standards, we all suffer from the transgressions of a few. HSN believes that nonprofits must assume responsibility to ensure integrity within their organizations, including compliance with regulations and contractual reporting requirements.
- The City must recognize that accountability measures are time-consuming and expensive, and the money comes out of service dollars.
- The City must reaffirm its commitment to implementation of the 2003 Nonprofit Contracting Task Force recommendations – including timely certification and payment, elimination of unnecessary and duplicative requirements, standardization across departments, and streamlined monitoring appropriate to the level of risk.
- When monitoring contractors, the City should not micromanage. Oversight must focus on mutually agreed-upon outcomes and performance standards, not means.
- Use limited City resources efficiently. Maintain reasonable reporting requirements for all, while focusing on those organizations that need the most help through corrective action plans and technical assistance. Ultimately, the City should terminate the contracts of nonprofits that are unable to perform and fail to correct their deficiencies.
- The City should treat nonprofits as full partners in the provision of crucial services to City residents. Partnership includes transparent and fair bidding processes and negotiations, appropriate dispute resolution procedures, and opportunities for input when changing contract language, practices, systems and policies.

Mobilization

Mobilization: Identify strategies to create a culture of advocacy in our sector, marshaling San Francisco's nonprofit health and human service organizations' collective resources, influence and electorate, and focusing our sector's untapped potential in the political arena around common goals to address the health and well-being of our organizations and the people we serve.

- Nonprofits not only can engage in lobbying and other advocacy -- they have a civic responsibility to engage in such activities in order to counter threats to our safety net and healthcare system, and achieve social justice victories for the disadvantaged populations they serve.
- HSN is committed to overcoming the barriers that deter nonprofit advocacy through leadership and skills training, education on lobbying rights and restrictions, educational forums, and targeted opportunities for action.
- We must broaden our education and advocacy efforts beyond nonprofit executives to include other organizational leaders, workers struggling with low wages and housing displacement, Boards of Directors and other volunteers, and clients (where appropriate).
- We must build alliances with other coalitions around common issues.
- HSN seeks to strengthen our sector's advocacy capacity by securing funding to hire a community organizer for the San Francisco health and human service sector.