[Urging Flexible Incentive Pay and Testing for Frontline Non-Profit Workers During Public Health Emergency]

Resolution urging City Departments to authorize additional funds and support to their contracted non-profit homeless service providers, including guaranteed free testing and incentive pay through increased contract amounts and flexible contract spending.

WHEREAS, The City and County of San Francisco is currently experiencing an outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) which has been deemed a pandemic by the World Health Organization; and

WHEREAS, On March 6, 2020, the San Francisco Health Officer issued a Declaration of Local Health Emergency Regarding Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), which was preceded by a February 25, 2020, Proclamation by the Mayor Declaring the Existence of a Local Emergency; and

WHEREAS, As outlined by the Shelter in Place Order No. C19-07, the San Francisco Health Officer has determined that businesses that provide food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals, and residential facilities and shelters for seniors, adults, and children are exempted from the Shelter in Place ordinance and are encouraged to still operate and provide essential services to the City and County of San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, Non-profit staff in the Homelessness Response System serve over 3,000 vulnerable individuals and families in shelters and navigation centers, over 5,000 San Franciscans who live on the street or in encampments, over 10,000 people in transitional and supportive housing, and countless other vulnerable clients through drop-in centers, access points, outreach teams, residential treatment centers, and other services; and
WHEREAS, The essential services that non-profit organizations and their workers in the Homelessness Response System deliver are vital to the safety of our homeless neighbors, housed neighbors and our entire community; and

WHEREAS, The City has an enormous responsibility to take care of the workers who keep our essential services running and who must continue to work outside the home; and

WHEREAS, Among workers deemed essential, many reporting to work sites know they will not be able to social distance due to the nature of their work, putting their own lives at risk; and

WHEREAS, While some of these workers earn competitive wages, the vast majority earn between $16.50 and $24.00 per hour per the City’s Minimum Compensation Ordinance for Contracts and Contract Amendments with Nonprofit Corporations, well below the local median wage; and

WHEREAS, Even in the midst of this crisis, these workers have been asked to continue their daily work tasks, sometimes with little to no additional Personal Protective Equipment, reduced public transportation options, a lack of guaranteed free testing or basic testing protocols in their workplace, and unclear guidance from local health officials to keep their facilities and staff safe; and

WHEREAS, As of April 13, 2020, there were already 10 known cases of homeless shelter staff testing positive for COVID-19, and more than 80 cases for homeless guests of shelters and Navigation Centers; and

WHEREAS, Staffing shortages have long been a barrier for the City’s non-profits, as organizations have struggled to pay competitive wages and their employees have to live further and further out of the City; and
WHEREAS, The increased risk of working directly with vulnerable populations during the pandemic has put a strain on non-profit operations, with some workers having to stay home to protect their own health and the health of their at-risk family members; and

WHEREAS, During this emergency, many non-profit employers are experiencing extreme challenges in maintaining adequate direct service staff, which has a negative effect on client care and safety; and

WHEREAS, As the City seeks to expand and shift its homeless services to prevent the rapid spread of COVID-19 in congregate settings and among the unsheltered population, staffing challenges have been cited as a top barrier, indicating the magnitude to which we rely on our frontline homeless response system staff for our collective health; and

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Human Services Agency (HAS) has reached out to its contracted non-profits citing “an urgent staffing need to support the City’s emergency operations during the COVID-19 pandemic” and deploying “both City and non-profit staff as disaster service workers to support housing operations at hotels, congregate sites, and other housing arrangements we are securing for the most vulnerable San Franciscans;” and

WHEREAS, In the request for non-profit staff to be re-assigned as Disaster Service Workers, the memo from HSA further states that “To support staff deployed for this purpose, HSA will fund these essential positions at a rate of $24 per hour,” with “Any differential between the $24 per hour wage rate for this position and participating employees’ current hourly wage rates will be covered through your existing HSA contract—using contingency funding in your contract, as needed;” and

WHEREAS, Last month, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), the lead agency in the Los Angeles County Continuum of Care, passed Enhanced Risk Service Delivery Procedures that authorized “Emergency Pay” for LAHSA essential personnel who provide security, operations management, front line support, cleaning and maintenance, and
supportive service delivery, and gave their funded contractors the discretion to increase hourly wages to necessitate continued delivery of services, not to exceed time and a half; and

WHEREAS, Non-profit service providers have taken on additional, unanticipated costs related to food for tenants, clients, and staff; transportation; janitorial services and cleaning supplies; laptops; and more, and many have already implemented incentive pay out-of-pocket without explicit agreement that the additional costs will be covered by their existing contracts; and

WHEREAS, As of April 13, 2020, Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing contract managers had reached out their contracted non-profits to augment service contracts one-off, and had allocated modest funding augmentation to select contracts, intended to give each organization the flexibility to address their need; and

WHEREAS, For many non-profits on the frontlines of the COVID and homelessness crisis, many of their janitors, desk clerks, maintenance techs, and resident support staff are not funded through City contracts through the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco was recently given $6.2M by the State of California for emergency homeless services support during COVID, allocated $11M from the federal government via the CARES Act for homelessness, and also granted flexibility for its previously allocated Homeless Emergency Aid Program funds from the state by Executive Order from the Governor; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Supervisors already passed a Resolution urging the Mayor to require employers in large retail grocery, retail drug store, and food delivery services to offer expanded workers’ rights package that includes hazard pay and access to personal protection equipment during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) emergency; now, therefore, be it
RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors ("The Board") reaffirms its commitment to front line workers employed in essential non-profit homeless services in order to ensure the health and well-being of the city from COVID-19; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges the Department of Public Health to immediately expand free testing to all clients and on-site service workers in the homelessness response system, and to the extent possible provide free testing onsite, not only when there is a confirmed case in the worksite but also proactively before any cases are identified; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, The Board urges the Department of Public Health to conduct robust contact tracing in shelters and supportive housing sites, and publish a comprehensive plan to notify individuals and their worksite of test results; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, Department of Public Health, and any other Department that contracts with non-profit organizations to provide homeless services, to explicitly authorize incentive pay as part of new contract flexibility rules; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges the above-referenced Departments to further augment contracts with funds for incentive pay for all frontline service workers employed doing on-site, direct service work deemed essential by the City of San Francisco in homeless and community service shelters, navigation centers, outreach programs, supportive housing, drop in centers, homeless medical and respite programs, and the like; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges the above-referenced Departments to include augmented funds for on-site employees of all Community Service and Homeless Service programs of this type even if those employees are not part of City contracts or funded in majority by the City and County of San Francisco, as all front line homeless service workers providing essential services are serving the community of San Francisco; and, be it
FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges Mayor Breed to exercise her authority under Charter, Section 3.100.13 emergency powers clause to develop an emergency order that provides homelessness response system workers with expanded rights that includes incentive pay and free COVID-19 testing; and, be it FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the Board transmit this Resolution upon its passage to Mayor Breed, the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, and Department of Public Health.
Resolution urging City Departments to authorize additional funds and support to their contracted non-profit homeless service providers, including guaranteed free testing and incentive pay through increased contract amounts and flexible contract spending.

April 29, 2020 Budget and Finance Committee - REFERRED WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION

May 05, 2020 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED
Ayes: 11 - Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton and Yee

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 5/5/2020 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution, not being signed by the Mayor within the time limit as set forth in Section 3.103 of the Charter, or time waived pursuant to Board Rule 2.14.2, became effective without her approval in accordance with the provision of said Section 3.103 of the Charter or Board Rule 2.14.2.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board