



ENDING HOMELESSNESS THROUGH THE DIGNITY OF WORK

Headquarters • 1671 The Alameda, Suite 306 • San Jose, Ca 95126

October 24, 2018

Dear Housing & Human Services Commission,

Thank you for your time and service, I am sorry that I am not able to be there this evening in person.

I wanted to write and express how important the funding for our program is, and how impactful the funds are to our city and community. Downtown Streets Team continues to serve the un-housed population through our work experience program and the need is greater than ever. We have seen an increase in men and woman attending our weekly success meetings and joining the wait list. With the Sunnyvale Shelter being year-round we increasing our services and the CDBG funding allows to provide the employment and case management services needed.

We have continued to grow our Team with grants from the Santa Clara Valley Water District and other partners like Bank of America, which allows us to serve more un-housed men and women. Our partnership with Sunnyvale Community Services is strong and we are working together to end homelessness in Sunnyvale. I know this is the first of many meetings and I look forward to sharing with you more impact data and testimonies of how this funding is helping change the lives of our Team Members. Thank you again for your time and service.

Sincerely,

Chris Anderson

Project Manager- Sunnyvale Downtown Streets Team



Downtown Streets Team, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation.

Tax ID: 20-5242330

StreetsTeam.org

**SEE
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HOMELESSNESS**

NORTH COUNTY
(650) 969-8656

SOUTH COUNTY
(408) 847-7252



SALA
Senior Adults Legal Assistance

CENTRAL OFFICE
1425 KOLL CIRCLE
SUITE 109
SAN JOSE, CA 95112
(408) 295-5991
FAX: (408) 295-7401

October 23, 2018

Joseph Shin
Community Development Department
City of Sunnyvale
456 W. Olive Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

**RE: Comments for Biannual Review of Priority Needs for
Human Services in Sunnyvale**

Dear Mr. Shin,

Senior Adults Legal Assistance (SALA) submits these comments for the public hearing on October 24 before the Housing and Human Services Commission regarding the Biannual Review of Priority Needs for Human Services in Sunnyvale. We request that our letter be distributed to the Commission and that these written comments become part of the hearing record.

We understand the Commission is interested in receiving input on priority needs that will be included in the applications for Human Service Grants for fiscal years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. The need for **Legal Assistance for Sunnyvale seniors**, particularly individuals and couples that are low income and at-risk, is one such area of priority need..

This priority need is currently identified in Sunnyvale's 2015-2020 Consolidated Plan (CON Plan) as objective D and is referenced in the staff memo (18-0892) on page 3 as follows:

"D. Other specialized supportive services as may be requested by the community, such as ... legal assistance for seniors ..." [Emphasis added].

SALA is currently receiving Human Service Grant support from Sunnyvale for our Legal Assistance to Seniors project targeting low income and/or at risk Sunnyvale clients because our program aligns with this CON Plan priority.

We hope that our comments will confirm that specialized supportive services for seniors, and in particular Legal Assistance for lower income and/or at risk seniors, continue to be high priority and unmet human service needs for Sunnyvale, especially in light of the fact that seniors are the fastest growing segment of the population and funding for senior services has not kept up with this growth.

The remainder of this letter documents the need for Legal Assistance for seniors and provides information about the legal services SALA provided to Sunnyvale residents in FY 2017-18. That information will also demonstrate that legal issues are often imbedded in many areas of service essential to the elder population's daily survival.

THE NEED FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR SENIORS

We preface this section by noting that Legal Assistance is a service that provides support to elders across numerous fields of human service, so the need for this service tends to be under-reported and under-ranked as a priority when funders conduct needs assessments.

For the foregoing reason, our comments are limited to the need for Legal Assistance by elders. The limitation of our comments to this need area should not be construed as our position regarding the relative merits of any other human service needs in Sunnyvale or as an indication that we believe that they are not important needs as well.

A. Documentation of Need from Local Needs Assessments

Needs reports prepared by the Area Agency on Aging (AAA), formerly Council on Aging and now known as Sourcewise) and by the County of Santa Clara provide documentation of the critical need for accessible and affordable legal services for local elders, in particular for those seniors that are low income or at risk (SALA's target population), to keep them independent and to prevent their abuse, conservatorship, or premature institutionalization.

The AAA's Area Plan for 2009-2012 notes that legal assistance is a priority need *"to help older persons to obtain services and benefits including protective services for financial abuse, competence and conservatorship"*. The AAA's Area Plan for 2012-16 affirms that legal services are a priority service and notes such services *"are crucial in helping keep seniors in their homes"* and *"are absolutely vital to those in need of them."* The most recent Area Plan for 2016-2020 further affirms that legal assistance continues to be *"priority service"* for seniors in Santa Clara County.

Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Indigent Residents of Santa Clara County, a report prepared for the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors in August 2001, confirms the findings above and notes: *"legal representation and counsel can be essential to the elderly and their families in gaining access to health, income, and social services."* More recently the Santa Clara County Seniors' Agenda: A Quality of Life Assessment, prepared for the Board of Supervisors in April 2012, identifies legal assistance and elder abuse prevention as key service/safety net needs, noting SALA *"is the only non-profit elder law office in the county focused on the legal needs of seniors"* and that SALA's target population includes *"seniors who are most likely at risk for abuse, exploitation, and institutionalization"*.

The Senior's Agenda further states that one of the big challenges to providing free legal services to seniors are the drastic reductions in funding that have taken place and have increased over the last several years, noting that two major consequences of reduced funding are an increase in the waiting lists and a decrease in the number of clients to be served. Significantly, waiting times for SALA appointments at many of our agency's community-based sites average a minimum of 2 months.

The AAA's Area Plan for 2016-2020 notes that persons age 65+ will comprise 25% of the Santa Clara County population by 2060 as compared to 17% today and 12% in 2010. The need for supportive services for seniors, including legal services, will continue to grow along with this dramatic demographic shift toward an older population.

We believe the sources above document that Legal Assistance continues to be a need that is critical to the lives and well being of Sunnyvale seniors, particularly those that are at-risk and/or low-income. We also believe this documentation supports the conclusion that Legal Assistance is a key access service for seniors and their families or caregivers. These reports could also support the interpretation that Legal Assistance is the most critical of access services because, as a provider of last resort,

Legal Assistance is necessary to enforce elders' rights to services and public benefits after preliminary access has been denied. These needs reports also identify the linkage between Legal Assistance and Protective Services (including prevention of elder abuse and conservatorship), yet another factor that should support the ranking of Legal Assistance as a critical service need.

B. Documentation of Need from SALA

Founded in 1973, SALA is the only legal aid agency in Santa Clara County designated by the AAA, Sourcewise, to provide free Legal Assistance exclusively to elders under the Older Americans Act. SALA is also the only provider of free legal services with a physical presence in Sunnyvale, making our services accessible locally to Sunnyvale seniors. Specifically, SALA currently provides services at least twice monthly in donated space at the offices of Sunnyvale Community Services.

Consistent with the mandate of the Older Americans Act, SALA targets our legal services to elders countywide and in Sunnyvale who have low incomes, are frail, or are at-risk of abuse, isolation or institutionalization. Due to their low-income status, many of SALA's target clients are underserved because they struggle to provide for their basic needs (food, medical, housing, transportation) and cannot pay a private attorney \$400 to \$500 an hour. Our target clientele is also at higher risk (in Greater Social Need) due to characteristics (age 75/+ or disabled) many exhibit that are cited below.

Statistics for SALA clients from Sunnyvale provide support for the assessment that Legal Assistance is critical to the lives and well being of the most vulnerable and at-risk elders in Sunnyvale. Specifically, most of the Sunnyvale seniors receiving legal services from SALA in 2017-18 had characteristics that put them in great economic need or at some level of being "at risk" of abuse, isolation, conservatorship, or premature institutionalization as noted below:

- **45% were extremely low income** (incomes at or below 30% of the county median)
- An additional **21% were very low income** (incomes at or below 50% of the county median).
- **47% were age 75 or older** (placing them at higher risk according to the Older Americans Act)
- **30% had a disability** (placing them at higher risk according to the Older Americans Act).

In addition, **63%** of the Sunnyvale seniors served were female and **45%** self-identified as minority elders. We believe that these statistics for SALA clients also align with the Priority Client Types noted in the 2015-2020 CON Plan and in the staff memo on page 2, specifically **very low-income, extremely low- income and/or other special needs populations (e.g., seniors, disabled ...)** [Emphasis added]

The critical role SALA plays in the lives of elders countywide, and in Sunnyvale, is also illustrated by the types of legal problems for which they request our assistance. These requests address a broad spectrum of legal issues including: (1) **Housing** (landlord-tenant and fair housing/reasonable accommodation matters) and **Public Benefits** (Social Security, SSI, Medicare, Medi-Cal, In Home Supportive Services) to meet their **Basic Needs**; (2) **Elder Abuse and Domestic Violence Prevention** (through court issued Restraining Orders or other interventions); and (3) **Legal Planning for Incapacity/End Stages of Life** to maintain their independence, prevent conservatorship, and support Aging in Place.

We close this section by noting that the increasing need for Legal Assistance for seniors over the past decade has created a demand that far exceeds the existing service levels of SALA, the sole provider of such services locally. Moreover, funding for SALA's services has not keep up with the demand, creating waiting times for an appointment with SALA at many of our 15+ appointment

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locations through the County that now average two months. The Santa Clara County Senior Agenda report notes that this will only get worse: *"The coming "age wave" will increase the demand for these [legal] services and currently service providers are fighting for their own survival while attempting to advocate for seniors"*

SUMMARY

We believe that we have demonstrated that Legal Assistance continues to be a need that is critical to the lives and well being of elders in Sunnyvale, particularly those that are low income or at risk. The importance of Legal Assistance in the area of Incapacity/End of Life Planning and Elder Abuse is also documented, as is the role of Legal Assistance as a "safety net" service and key access service to ensure elders' adequate income, housing, basic necessities, safety, and independence.


Lastly we hope that we have demonstrated that Legal Assistance to Sunnyvale elders as provided by SALA align with the Priority Client Types (***very low income, extremely low income and/or other special needs populations including seniors***) and with Priority Needs (***other specialized supportive services as may be requested by the community, such as ...legal assistance for seniors***) set forth in the current Sunnyvale CON Plan.

The City of Sunnyvale staff is recommending **Alternative #1** that reaffirms the current list of priority needs from the 2015-2020 CON Plan, which they excerpted on pages 2 and 3 of their memo. We encourage the Commission to support this recommendation.

We also hope that the Commission will support **Alternative #3** recommended by the staff to set aside \$100,000 in supplemental funding for Human Service Grants for FY 2019/20, which in the past has supported funding for projects such as SALA's Legal Assistance to Elders.

We thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Respectfully submitted,



Georgia Bacil
Directing Attorney

Dear Health and Human Services Commission,

Good evening, thank you for the opportunity to tell you about the LTC Ombudsman Program at Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County, also to thank the **City of Sunnyvale** for your *past* and *continued* support of the Ombudsman Program.

The Ombudsman is the **Advocate** for the most **vulnerable citizens of your city** – those who live in Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities. We advocate for the dignity, rights and needs of seniors and disabled in those facilities.

This is an **unduplicated service** in Santa Clara County – no other program has **24/7 access** to residents in facilities. All are required by law to have our posters (phone number in large type) in their facilities.

The Program is authorized by the federal Older Americans Act, as well as the California Older Californian Act to advocate for the rights of seniors and disabled residents in long term care facilities. The main function of the Ombudsman Program is to **investigate and to resolve complaints made by or on behalf of residents related to issues of quality of care and abuse**.

In essence the program protects and helps improve the **quality of care and quality of life** for the frailest of our senior and disabled population.

Living in a long term care facility is often not the first choice for anyone. Many seniors and disabled adults have *no* option but to live in a facility and for this reason it is very important that their rights are protected. The presence of LTC Ombudsmen in itself improves quality of care and life of all residents by giving a voice to those seniors and providing an advocate for their needs and concerns.

We investigate **ELDER ABUSE**, complaints, solve problems, mediate, give referrals and witness Advance Health Care Directives... all our services are **FREE** to residents and their family/friends.

We partner with other agencies ie. *Silicon Valley Independent Living Center, SALA, Next Door Solutions, Police and Sherriff Departments, Adult Protective Services, and Licensing for the facilities, to name a few.*

Actual Sunnyvale facilities and residents:

- **4** Nursing Homes + **28** RCFEs (Assisted Living Facilities + 6-Bed Board & Care) = Total 31 facilities
- **1,125** residents in Sunnyvale facilities
- City of Sunnyvale: **1 Staff + 5 volunteers** – (last year our volunteer contributed 5,295 hours throughout Santa Clara County)



11/14/2018

For: City Council Agenda:

Housing and Human Services Commission Meeting

Nov 14th at 7 p.m.

Dear City of Sunnyvale Commissioners,

On Behalf of the Adult Day Care Center of Catholic Charities that operates in the City of Sunnyvale. I would like to express my gratitude for your past support on behalf of the beneficiaries of our services in this City.

Thanks to you, our services improve the quality of life of dependent seniors and their caregiving families in the City of Sunnyvale. Seniors who are experiencing first stages of dementia and cannot be left at home alone depend on services like ours to allow their closes relatives access some respite. While our services helps the seniors to age in place, be socially active, delaying premature institutionalization, depression and dead; and also alleviating the high cost of senior care for these families.

The funds provided by the City of Sunnyvale continues to help to subsidize for some Adult Day Care hours for families who cannot cover for service's cost; allowing them to access a minimum of respite care or extend the number of days they can use such services.

We look forward to keep serving this City and its strong sense of community support for the elderly.

As always, we thank you for your support and for believing in Community Based Organizations, like ours.

Respectfully,

Milton Cadena

Milton R. Cadena, MPA
Program Director, Day Break Cares
Older Adult Services- Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County
535 Old San Francisco Road,
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
(408) 831-0440 Ext. 422