

From: [Ernesto Olivares](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment Nov 19 Item 15.3
Date: Thursday, November 14, 2024 4:52:59 PM
Attachments: [City Council Letter 111924 Item 15.3.pdf](#)

Attached is a written public comment on item 15.3 of the November 19, 2024, regular meeting agenda.

Ernesto Olivares

[REDACTED]

Santa Rosa, CA 95404

[REDACTED]

November 14, 2024

Submitted by Email Only

Santa Rosa City Council
100 Santa Rosa Ave
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

RE: REPORT ITEM 15.3 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH NEW HOPE FOR YOUTH FOR STREET OUTREACH AND CRISIS RESPONSE SERVICES

Mayor Rogers and Members of the City Council,

I strongly support the proposed agreement with New Hope for Youth (NHFY) for Street Outreach and Crisis Response Services. This initiative, funded by Santa Rosa's violence prevention tax (Measure H), is vital for our community's safety and aligns with the strategic goals of the Violence Prevention Partnership (VPP), which seeks to address root causes of violence through public health approaches, trauma-informed care, and equity-driven practices.

The proposed \$1,200,000 in funding will empower NHFY to serve Santa Rosa's high-risk, gang-impacted youth and families, addressing urgent community needs as outlined in the VPP's recent strategic plan. These services are especially critical given the increase in youth and gang violence post-COVID-19, which VPP has identified as exacerbated by compounded trauma from natural disasters, pandemic isolation, and social unrest.

With over 45 years in public safety, I have witnessed firsthand the effectiveness of comprehensive community-based interventions. My role in shaping Santa Rosa's Violence Prevention Partnership revealed widespread consensus: intervention, paired with prevention and reentry support, is essential to reducing youth and gang violence. VPP's structure embodies this, with collaborative input from city, community, and law enforcement stakeholders working toward shared goals through initiatives like the CHOICE Grant Program, the Guiding People Successfully (GPS) Program, and youth-focused life skills curricula.

After Measure O's passage in 2004, Santa Rosa established a balanced strategic framework addressing prevention, intervention, enforcement, and reentry. Extending this funding with Measure H has allowed the VPP to evolve, incorporating modern needs such as mental health support, wraparound services, and trauma-informed care. These approaches are not only evidence-based but reflect the community's enduring commitment to sustainable violence prevention. The VPP's mission, updated in 2023, emphasizes creating safe, healthy environments for youth empowerment and community resilience, principles that align seamlessly with NHFY's Credible Messenger model.

New Hope for Youth's Credible Messenger model employs individuals with lived experience who are skilled in trauma-informed care, de-escalation, and conflict resolution. NHFY's approach is a model of shared responsibility, bridging the gap between formal agencies and vulnerable youth. Their work will support VPP's intervention goals in Santa Rosa, which include essential services such as:

Neighborhood Climate Checks: Partnering with the Santa Rosa Police Department, NHFY will assess dynamics in identified hotspots, promoting early conflict resolution.

Crisis Response and Victim Support: By engaging victims in hospitals and homes, NHFY will provide immediate assistance and long-term support, reducing the risks of retaliatory violence.

Diversion and Reentry: NHFY's collaboration with juvenile probation offers alternatives to incarceration, supporting positive reentry and reducing recidivism.

Whole-Family Support and Pro-Social Activities: NHFY strengthens protective factors essential to long-term violence reduction by engaging families through wraparound services.

This partnership also alleviates pressures on law enforcement by enabling NHFY to manage nonviolent crises, allowing police to focus on more severe threats. NHFY's proactive, community-focused services align with Measure H's goals and fulfill the VPP's public health and trauma-informed framework by directly addressing complex issues that require deep community trust and empathy.

By approving this agreement, the Council will support a critical component of Santa Rosa's violence prevention strategy, affirming our city's commitment to safety, resilience, and healthy youth development. This investment in NHFY's services promises to save lives, foster safer neighborhoods, and support our youth's healthy futures.

Thank you for your dedication to making Santa Rosa a safe, thriving community.

Sincerely,



Ernesto Olivares, Community Safety Consultant

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Attachments:

The Benefits of Community Violence Intervention Workers in Violence Prevention

The Benefits of Community Violence Intervention Workers in Violence Prevention

Community Violence Intervention (CVI) Workers, often called "credible messengers" or outreach workers, are trusted individuals with lived experience or strong ties to their communities. They work directly in neighborhoods to reduce violence, mediate conflicts, and provide support to those at risk of gang involvement. Their inclusion in gang prevention efforts offers numerous advantages that enhance the effectiveness of violence prevention initiatives:

Credibility and Trust-Building

CVI workers often come from the same neighborhoods they serve and may share similar life experiences with those involved in gangs or at risk of joining. This background allows them to build a level of trust and credibility that traditional law enforcement or social service personnel might need help to establish. Familiarity with community dynamics enables CVI workers to open lines of communication with gang-involved individuals, fostering trust and dialogue where it may not otherwise exist.

Conflict Mediation and De-Escalation

CVI workers are trained in conflict mediation and de-escalation, allowing them to intervene in potentially violent situations before they escalate. By addressing brewing tensions and resolving disputes on the spot, they help prevent gang-related incidents and reduce the likelihood of retaliatory violence. This proactive approach not only keeps communities safer but also helps to promote a more peaceful environment.

Violence Interruption in Real-Time

Because they closely monitor gang dynamics, CVI workers understand the risks associated with specific individuals or neighborhoods. Their ability to respond in real-time, sometimes even during or immediately after violent incidents, enables them to interrupt cycles of retaliation and prevent further escalation. This direct intervention is crucial in reducing the overall level of violence in communities affected by gang activity.

Providing Alternatives to Gang Life

CVI workers serve as bridges to essential resources, connecting at-risk youth and gang members to employment programs, educational opportunities, mental health services, and recreational activities. By offering pathways that promote personal development and stability, CVI workers provide meaningful alternatives to gang involvement, addressing the root causes such as poverty, trauma, and lack of opportunity.

Reducing the Burden on Law Enforcement

By handling nonviolent crises and engaging in proactive community work, CVI workers alleviate some of the pressure on law enforcement, allowing police to focus on more serious crimes. This distinction enables a non-punitive, supportive approach to at-risk individuals, reducing potential adverse interactions with law enforcement and creating a more positive community-police relationship.

Breaking the Cycle of Retaliation and Violence

In communities where violence often leads to cycles of retaliation, CVI workers play a critical role in breaking these cycles. They work with both victims and perpetrators, offering counseling, support, and outreach to reduce the likelihood of revenge-based violence. This approach helps to prevent prolonged gang conflicts and promotes peacebuilding within the community.

Cultural Competency and Sensitivity

With a deep understanding of cultural and social nuances, CVI workers bring a culturally sensitive approach to violence prevention. They respect and understand the norms within their communities, which enables them to address the underlying issues that drive gang involvement more effectively than outside professionals.

Role Modeling and Mentorship

Many CVI workers have successfully exited gang life or avoided it despite challenging circumstances, and their personal stories serve as powerful examples for others. Their resilience and positive choices inspire youth and individuals at risk, demonstrating viable paths away from gang involvement and fostering hope within the community.

Data and Intelligence for Prevention Strategies

Given their direct connection to community members, CVI workers can provide invaluable insights into the local dynamics of gang activity, potential hotspots, and emerging trends. This intelligence helps inform community prevention and intervention strategies, ensuring that resources are targeted effectively and that prevention efforts are grounded in real-time information.

Cost-Effectiveness

Investing in CVI programs can reduce the economic and social costs associated with gang violence, such as healthcare expenses, criminal justice involvement, and lost productivity. By preventing incidents before they escalate, CVI workers contribute to more sustainable, long-term solutions, ultimately benefitting the entire community.

Fostering Community Resilience and Healing

Beyond immediate violence prevention, CVI workers help build a stronger, more resilient community by addressing trauma and fostering healing among residents impacted by violence. Their presence promotes safety, empowerment, and community solidarity, aiding neighborhoods in recovering from the effects of gang violence over time.

In summary, Community Violence Intervention Workers bring a compassionate, community-based approach to violence prevention, enhancing gang prevention efforts by engaging directly with those most affected. By offering alternatives, providing critical support, and building trust, they help break cycles of violence and create a safer, more supportive environment for individuals and the broader community. This holistic approach strengthens communities and promotes lasting peace, addressing immediate safety concerns and long-term social stability.

From: [Ellen Bailey](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Report Item 15.3 Resolution to Approve Professional Services Agreement with New Hope for Youth for Street Outreach and Crisis Response Services
Date: Friday, November 15, 2024 1:43:11 PM

November 15, 2024

Santa Rosa City Council
100 Santa Rosa Ave
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

RE: REPORT ITEM 15.3 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH NEW HOPE FOR YOUTH FOR STREET OUTREACH AND CRISIS RESPONSE SERVICES

Mayor Rogers and Members of the City Council,

As the former Manager of the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (currently the Violence Prevention Partnership (VPP) I am writing to express my support for the proposed agreement with New Hope for Youth (NHFY) to provide Street Outreach and Crisis Response Services for Santa Rosa. The services to be provided by NHFY are in alignment with the strategic goals of the VPP and are essential to keeping our community safe. The proposed \$1,200,000 in funding will empower NHFY to serve Santa Rosa's high-risk, gang-impacted youth and families, addressing urgent community needs as outlined in the VPP's recent strategic plan. These services are especially critical given the increase in youth and gang violence we are now experiencing.

As you know, in 2004, Santa Rosa passed Measure O and created a model to address youth violence that included prevention, intervention, enforcement, and reentry. Extending this funding with Measure H has allowed the VPP to evolve, incorporating needs such as mental health support, wraparound services, and trauma-informed care. These approaches are evidence-based.

New Hope for Youth's Credible Messenger model employs individuals with lived experience who are skilled in trauma-informed care, de-escalation, and conflict resolution. Their work will support VPP's intervention goals in Santa Rosa, which include essential services such as:

Neighborhood Climate Checks: Partnering with the Santa Rosa Police Department, NHFY will assess dynamics in identified hotspots, promoting early conflict resolution.

Crisis Response and Victim Support: By engaging victims in hospitals and homes, NHFY will provide immediate assistance and long-term support, reducing the risks of retaliatory violence.

Diversion and Reentry: NHFY's collaboration with juvenile probation offers alternatives to incarceration, supporting positive reentry and reducing recidivism.

Whole-Family Support and Pro-Social Activities: NHFY strengthens protective

factors essential to long-term violence reduction by engaging families through wraparound services.

We learned in 2004 that *“We can not arrest our way out of youth violence. Youth violence is a community wide problem that requires a community wide response.”* The solutions lie in working in partnership with law enforcement and the larger community to provide prevention, intervention and re-entry services for our youth and families. The services being proposed by NHFY are a key component to our success in keeping our youth and families safe.

I urge you to approve the PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH NEW HOPE FOR YOUTH FOR STREET OUTREACH AND CRISIS RESPONSE SERVICES.

Thank you for your hard work, dedication and commitment to Santa Rosa being a safe place to live and work.

Sincerely,
Ellen Bailey

Submitted by Email