

Report on Community Involvement and Neighborhood Complaints for The Geraldine E. King Homeless Resource Center

Address:

131 East 700 South
Salt Lake City, UT

Salt Lake City Council District 4—Central City

Council Member: Analia Valdemoros

Salt Lake City Planning Director: Nick Norris

The Conditional Use Permit (CUP), issued by Salt Lake City for the Geraldine E. King Homeless Resource Center, requires the operator to submit a yearly report to Salt Lake City’s Planning Director and the City Council member in whose district the Homeless Resource Center (HRC) is located. As per the CUP, this report should include the following information:

(A) List of individuals who have participated in the community coordinating group meetings;

(B) A summary of each community coordinating group meeting;

(C) A summary of complaints received from the community by the operator of the homeless resource center or homeless shelter; and

(D) An explanation of how complaints have been addressed/resolved.

Gail Miller Homeless Resource Center Overview

As this is the first report to be submitted to Salt Lake City officials, we felt it might be helpful to provide some brief background information for institutional history.

In response to an RFP released by Shelter the Homeless in March 2018 , Volunteers of America, Utah submitted a proposal to operate the Women’s Homeless Resource Center on 700 South in Salt Lake City. Based on their proposal, as well as their long-standing reputation for excellent service in this community, a twenty-one member selection committee, as well as the Board of Directors for Shelter the Homeless, chose Volunteers of America, Utah to operate what is now called The Geraldine E. King Homeless Resource Center (King HRC).

Oakland Construction was chosen as the general contractor to build the King HRC, which reached substantial completion in June 2019, and a large grand-opening event was held on June 21, 2019. Due to some staffing issues, it wasn’t until August 13, 2019, that The King HRC officially opened to clients.

On most nights the King HRC operates at capacity*, with 200 women receiving food, shelter and housing-focused, wrap-around services. These services include:

- Progressive Engagement Case Management
- Housing Locators—This team works at all of our facilities; they are constantly looking for new housing opportunities for our guests and thus work closely with case managers.
- 4th Street Clinic Nurse Care Managers and the Mobile Clinic—providing onsite healthcare.
- Three meals daily—for many of our guests, since becoming homeless, this is the first time they've consistently eaten three meals every day.
- Connection to substance abuse treatment services
- Connection to mental health supportive services
- DWS Employment and Eligibility Services
- Breast cancer screenings
- Diabetes prevention education
- Yoga Classes
- Access to free washers and dryers (and laundry supplies)
- Personal Hygiene supplies
- Clothing
- Food and supplies for Pets
- Connection to LDS Church representatives

****In case you're thinking, "We have such a large unsheltered population in our community, so why aren't you at 100% capacity EVERY night?":*** Bed management at a shelter is more complicated than it might seem on the surface. We serve women who are free to come and go from the King HRC as they please. Every day all of the beds in the facility are reserved for a specific woman. Most of these women have been guests at the facility from the night before, but everyday a small number of beds are assigned to new guests who have been waiting to get into one of the HRCs. Despite all of the beds being reserved during the day, it's fairly common to have a few women not show up that night to claim their bed. Because there aren't enough beds in the systems to meet the demand, when a bed is not claimed, the front desk staff notifies someone from the Coordinated Intake Program run by Utah Community Action (UCA). Without going into deeper detail as to how we coordinate the intake for the HRCs and manage overflow in Salt Lake County, we'll simply say that the UCA staff works very hard to fill those unclaimed beds. Considering this is done late at night, there are times when a bed or two goes unused. Those unused beds always fill up the next day, and the cycle starts again. However, despite the complexities of bed management, the Kings HRC's average occupancy rate is over 95%.

(A) List of individuals who have participated in the community coordinating group meetings;

Since the Miller HRC opened in August 2019 only two community meetings have been held—on November 14th, 2019 and February 13th, 2020. The following individuals have attended one or more of the community coordinating group meetings—which we now call, “Neighborhood Advisory Councils”:

Name	Role/Organization;
Jack Davis	Central City Neighborhood Council
Zoe Morgan	SLC Government
Dennis Faris	VOA Community Engagement
Morgan Bodily	VOA Case Manager
Rhiannon Magera	King HRC Guest/Advocate for the Homeless
Kristina Olivas	Shelter the Homeless
Charly Swett	VOA King HRC Director
Sue Ativalu	VOA Director of Residential Housing
Amanda Christensen	VOA Homeless Outreach Program Director
Hoang Nguyen	Local Business Owner (Sapa Investment Group)

(B) A summary of each community coordinating group meeting;

November 14, 2019 Neighborhood Advisory Council—Held at the King HRC, included the following topics:

- Introductions of those present and their role in the neighborhood
- Overview of services provided at the King HRC and the importance of the Neighborhood Council.
- How the neighborhood could help women who are guests at the King HRC.
- Possibility of job training for women at Sapa (located close by the HRC, at 722 South State Street)
- The problem of Taufer Park and what can be done.
- Small grants to businesses and neighbors surrounding the HRCs are available. (Zoe Morgan brought flyers with more information)

February 13, 2020 Community Meeting—Held at the King HRC included the following topics:

- Charlie Sweet, King HRC Director, reported that they have seen an increase in neighborhood partnerships and volunteers. (The SLC Arts Academy has especially provided many volunteers to serve dinner.) Since the last meeting, the Huntsman Center came to provide breast cancer screenings.
- Yoga classes will be starting soon, and the neighborhood is invited. Wasatch gardens is also starting a community garden with the women.
- There have been frequent offers of service opportunities from neighbors. Zoe Morgan suggested that a special meeting regarding partnerships and potential opportunities for guests of the King HRC be set up soon.

- Housing is always the focus at the King HRC. Fifty-nine (59) people have moved into housing since the King HRC opened.
- Staff at the King HRC are still working on setting up job training programs for guests.
- Taufer Park and the surrounding area is still a problem. Salt Lake City is communicating with Salt Lake Arts Academy when abatements are happening.
- It's common to see loitering around the neighborhood – The mitigation and City team are working on issues around the neighborhood.
- Educating the broader community about homelessness remains a challenge that VOA is looking to tackle.
- Sapa Group received a license for a CDB Pharmacy (at the old Bank of America property across the street from the King HRC). There will be 24-hour security.
- Reminder of grants SLC's small grants for businesses and neighbors surrounding the HRCs.
- Hoang Nguyen commented that there are a lot of efforts to help the homeless, but that things seem to be isolated. Zoe Morgan talked about the Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness, which is regularly working to minimize gaps in the system and to increase communication within different groups.

(C) A summary of complaints received from the community by the operator of the homeless resource center or homeless shelter; and

VOA has set up a tracking system to deal with community complaints, expecting that with the opening of a new Homeless Resource Center, many of the neighbors would report their concerns. Yet, the King HRC has yet to receive any direct complaints from the community. This can largely be attributed to the superior work of Salt Lake City Government's Homeless Engagement and Response Team and the Community Engagement Specialist that Salt Lake City funds, but is housed at the King HRC. This team has created pro-active relationships with the community, to address any potential issues before they become a complaint. (A sampling of just some of the work done by Zoe Morgan, Homeless Community Engagement Coordinator, and the Homeless Engagement Team from Salt Lake City, can be found at the end of this report).

While no complaints have been aimed directly at or to the King HRC, the city has received community complaints regarding two areas close by the resource center. They are:

- Taufer Park—two blocks east of the King HRC, this has been a problem spot in the city even before the King HRC opened, because of the large number of homeless campers who live in the park. Several complaints have been made to the city about groups camping there, particularly mentioning biowaste issues.
- Project Reality—one block east of the King HRC, staff have complained that there were "Loiterers and Campers. Sometimes becoming aggressive"

(D) An explanation of how complaints have been addressed/resolved.

According to the Mitigation Team Tracking Sheet, the above complaints have been addressed as follows:

- Taufer Park—Dennis Farris, Community Engagement Specialist, stops by the park frequently, talking to campers and sharing resources. Additionally on January 24, 2020 it was noted, “SLCo Health and PD did cleanup on Monday. PD also increasing enforcement of no camping ordinances.”
- Project Reality—On January 27th, 2020 it was reported that the onsite management of Project Reality were contacted and were given Dennis Farris’ contact information so they could report any further incidences, also stating, “Morgan [Bodily, Mitigation Case Manager] and Dennis will keep in touch and attempt to mitigate any issues as they arise.”

Community Engagement on a City Level

(Work done by Salt Lake City Homeless Engagement and Response Team)

- Maven District engagement, their bra/underwear drive for the Geraldine, future partnerships with the individual businesses
- Urban Indian Center engagement, hosting future events with their clients and Gail Miller clients
- Yoga classes going since late October at the Geraldine. Were twice monthly, now happening every week. We have a regular crowd at this point, and I will be inviting housed women from the surrounding neighborhood to attend for free yoga and to make new friendships between residents and housed neighbors starting next Wednesday.
- Consistently attending and presenting at the Community Council meetings within the two HRC neighborhoods (Central City CC and Ballpark CC) to respond to complaints, concerns, questions. These meetings are monthly.
- Representing at Client Focused Core Group and Legal Rights Core Group
- Prepared presentation on Homeless Services at Ballpark, to explain and talk through the system with representatives from five different provider groups, might extend this to Central City.
- Weekly outreach to SLC arts academy with information about cleans at Taufer Park so they know when they can send the school kids to play or do park projects.
- Constant outreach with Community Intelligence Officers, City contracted clean teams, and the VOA city mitigation representatives for better responses to community concerns
- Meeting neighbors through flyering about the City sponsored Landscape/Security improvement grant for the neighbors of the new HRCs
- Facilitation of the Neighborhood Advisory Councils (scheduling, preparing agendas, providing a note taker, facilitating discussion).
- Finding the right avenue for skilled volunteers—meeting with and facilitation introductions from a massage therapist to find the right place for her to volunteer.