

City Solutions - Harvey West Community Safety

Research: The Harvey West Community Safety team reviewed the qualifications and responsibilities for the Santa Cruz Homeless Services Center Safety Officer with a focus on the safety for the HSC clients and the community.

Research by: PM

Write-up by: LJ

Date range of research: 2013-09-27 - 2013-10-02

Summary:

- The structure and staff to manage difficult behavior at the HSC are not in place.
- Though safety staff have been hired, the Day Resource Center environment would be very tough to manage. The Day Resource Center has an open door policy means that:
 - There is no formal agreement between the client and the Santa Cruz Day Resource Center about behavior.
 - The rules of conduct are not readily available to the clients.
 - Since the clients are not screened for case management, they may have a violent history that is not known to the SC HSC services.
- The pay for the safety staff (\$11) is quite low for the needed skill set. Based on the HSC intake, the officer would need to know how to defuse very difficult situations in a group environment.
- The newest Community officer job listing (see latest CraigsList job listing at the bottom of this document) still does not list the full set of skills needed to do the work. The listing states “Ability to safely diffuse potentially violent situations through demonstrated conflict resolution skills required.”
- The method of HSC client screening and management is costly to the community (police, court) as the job also states “Willingness and ability to make a citizen's arrest, call the police, and testify in court required.”
- Again, Santa Cruz does not line up with the way clients are managed in other communities. The Berkeley Shelter coordinator said “just because you need homeless services and there are people there who have mental health issues. I know those people need services, too, but there has to be some standard of behavior.”

Here are the 2 articles that triggered the research:

2013-09-19 - Santa Cruz Sentinel - Security Guard Alleges Harassment at the HSCr
http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/santacruz/ci_24132950/security-guard-alleges-harassment-at-homeless-services-center

2013-09-24 - Santa Cruz.com - Homeless Services Faces Racial Suit

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http://www.santacruz.com/news/2013/09/24/homeless_services_faces_racial_suit

Quotes from the Sentinel article:

- The lawsuit describes a "hostile work environment" at the center at 115 Coral St., where he was taunted with racial slurs by homeless people who ate and slept there.
- "It's a very challenging group of individuals to work with," he said of the homeless clients. "All of the people running the program have been exposed to hostile and verbal (abuse) instances in the course of their work," he said.
- It is funded privately and also receives money from the state, Santa Cruz County and the city of Santa Cruz.
- He wore a necklace badge and clothes similar to a mechanic -- as he described it -- in part because homeless clients often don't respond well to uniformed guards.
- Miller said he did not receive training to deal with the center's clients, "many of whom had serious mental disorders," the complaint states. At least one other employee witnessed the threats
- You're talking about a group of individuals, some of which are confrontational, abusive and under the influence of a variety of intoxicants. But that's our clientele," Griffin said.

Quotes from the Santa Cruz.com article:

- Donald Frazier, executive director for the BOSS (Budding Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency) shelter in Berkeley, says his staff handles most harassment incidents with conflict resolution. But if someone threatened to kill a staff member, that would change things.
- "We would probably call the police on a threat as serious as that," Frazier says. "Nine times out of 10 they end up leaving on their own, but we still report it."
- Gettleman acknowledges the situation is complicated because some of the people who receive services have mental illness that might contribute to their volatility, but he says that's no excuse for bad behavior.
- "You shouldn't have to be subjected to racial hostility," Gettleman says, "just because you need homeless services and there are people there who have mental health issues. I know those people need services, too, but there has to be some standard of behavior."

Interview Highlights:

There were no interviews with the SC Homeless Service Center. The team is waiting for a reply to have a discussion about safety. This is our 4th request to meet.

2013-09-17 - Job Opening Campus Safety Coordinator - Posted on Craigslist

Organization Overview - The Homeless Services Center is dedicated to the coordinated provision of services for homeless persons. The goal of the Homeless Services Center

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is to provide both emergency and transitional services to homeless individuals and families that will enable our clients to achieve self-sufficiency.

General Description Of The Job - Under the direct supervision of the Daytime Essential Services Program Manager: work within a broad framework of standard policies and procedures; patrol campus grounds, program areas, and neighboring block (Coral Street, neighboring railroad tracks, and Hwy 1/River Street intersection) to maintain order, security and safety of all clients, employees, guests, and property; promote positive behavior of clients and visitors on the campus.

Duties And Responsibilities - Assist in the security and supervision of clients in or around campus buildings, facilities and adjacent areas. Oversee and assure appropriateness of client conduct on or around campus. Prepare and maintain related records including incident reports, "ban lists" and security log. Perform related duties as necessary in an emergency. Additional duties, including garbage removal and donation assistance as required.

Necessary Qualifications

- Ability to work with clients and guests in maintaining order on the campus;
- Ability to establish and maintain cooperative relationships with those contacted during the performance of required duties, including HSC personnel, clients, volunteers and the community;
- Understand and apply rules, regulations, procedures and policies;
- Demonstrated written and verbal communication competency;
- Knowledge of challenges related to issues of homelessness, including: mental health, substance abuse and behavioral challenges.
- Ability to safely diffuse potentially violent situations through demonstrated conflict resolution skills required.
- Ability to manage crisis situations with calm leadership skills;
- Willingness and ability to make a citizen's arrest, call the police, and testify in court required.

Experience and Education:

- Completion of the 12th grade or equivalent;
- Guard Card or equivalent work experience required;
- Meet the physical requirements necessary to perform the job and maintain regular attendance.

Physical Requirements

- Ability to safely lift up to 25 pounds, and stand and walk for the great majority of the shift.

Shifts available vary. Please apply via email to recruiter@santacruzhs.org with cover

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letter and resume.

Compensation: \$11.00/hr, non-exempt. With 30 hours or more per week, this is a benefitted pos

Posting ID: 4073196661

Posted: 2013-09-17, 9:31AM PDT

2011 Homeless Count for Santa Cruz*

*Though the homeless count census has been release by most counties in California, the Santa Cruz 2013 Homeless Census results have not been released by the Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors.

California County CoC (Continuums of Care)	County Homeless Count	County Population (US Census Bureau 2011 estimate)	Number Homeless per 10,000
Santa Cruz County (Santa Cruz)	2,771	264,298	105

Contact Information: NA