

October 7, 2019

Ms. Adrienne Easter
Manager of Homeless Investments
Human Services Department
City of Seattle



RE: Northlake Village Performance Improvement Plan

Dear Adrienne,

The Low Income Housing Institute is submitting information on the Performance Improvement Plan submitted to HSD on September 6, 2019.

During the past 30 days, many attempts have been made by LIHI staff to meet with the people living in Northlake Village. We have offered to meet on-site as well as off-site—but each request has been denied by villagers because of Nickelsville. As recently as October 4th we were informed that another vote was taken in the camp to not allow a meeting with LIHI and HSD.

LIHI identified two case management staff who attempted to meet with clients to help them secure housing. LIHI also had Josh Castle, Brad Gerber and Ralph Neis make multiple requests to meet with villagers. We were also frustrated by the lack of cooperation with our maintenance staff who tried to address bed bug infestation in the tiny houses. Unfortunately because of Nickelsville, no significant progress has been made on the Performance Improvement Plan.

Below are the key areas for improvement and resolution outlined in the September 6th Performance Improvement Plan:

A. Communication

- As you are aware, the meeting planned for September 9th for LIHI and HSD to meet with the village did not occur. LIHI voiced concerns and shared information about the request for improvement at the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting. The August 26th HSD letter and LIHI's September 6th response were shared with CAC members and the few residents at the meeting. However, LIHI has not been able to communicate with all residents directly.
- LIHI responded in writing to the grievance request to remove Will Uhlig as case manager on August 21st. Will has continued to offer case management to those willing to engage. Another LIHI case manager was also assigned.
- LIHI has been unable to gain access to the site to gather information needed per our contract with HSD.
- HSD has shared with the CAC and residents present at CAC meetings that failure to cooperate with LIHI and HSD could result in closure of the village.

B. Security

- LIHI has been unable to gain access to the site to get the photos removed of LIHI and HSD staff.
- LIHI has not been able to assist the many individuals who have been barred—as Nickelsville is returning people back to the streets. LIHI is supposed to get notice of bars so we can assist individuals with shelter and provide information on the grievance process if they felt unjustly treated or barred.

C. Safety & Sanitation

- LIHI has been unable to gain access to the site and enforce changes for safety concerns such as people sleeping in the green dome.
- LIHI has been unable to gain access for routine inspection of the sanitary conditions in the kitchen, storage, bathrooms, and trash/recycling areas.
- Nickelsville has asked for chemicals to self-treat bed bugs instead of requesting help from trained LIHI maintenance staff. They know from the past that the proper procedure is to request LIHI assistance for bed bug treatment. This has created a problem where Nickelsville initially refuse to identify the locations needing treatment and did not allow our staff access. Only recently did they finally relent—causing treatment to be delayed and making the infestation worse.

D. HMIS and Supportive Services

- Alexa James, LIHI's Manager of Compliance & Supportive Services, was able to obtain 6 HMIS consent forms and intake forms. She was also able to get 4 service agreements signed, stating they are accepting case management and want to participate. There are 4 people in 3 households that still have not complied with HMIS requirements. 11 households have not completed their Coordinated Entry VI-SPDAT assessments.
- LIHI has not been able to obtain bar and exit information, and evidence of sex offender screening from the village.
- Many people refuse to meet with a case manager or indicate they are not interested in housing, therefore they have not been referred to housing. Nevertheless LIHI continued to encourage clients to communicate with case managers to move into permanent housing.
- No one moved into permanent housing from Northlake from August 28 through September 24.

E. Operations & Staffing

- One person moved from Northlake to another village and wrote the CAC and HSD on the problems he faced living under Nickelsville.
- Other people tell us about feeling under pressure from Peggy Hotes and Marvin Futrell from Nickelsville and how they are not able to make decisions and be autonomous. They feel intimidated by Nickelsville as they are not able to have meetings without Nickelsville being present. We have been informed from residents that if they say they would like to work with LIHI that they risk Nickelsville retaliating against them and barring them.

- LIHI has not moved forward with assigning a Site Coordinator to be on the ground for operations due to inability to access the site.
- LIHI has been unable to gain access to the site to enforce appropriate referral and intake processes.

Please contact me at sharon.lee@lihi.org or Ralph Neis at rneis@lihi.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Lee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sharon Lee
LIHI Executive Director

CC: Diana Salazar, Lisa Gustaveson, Will Lemke, Shawn Neal