

# **Restorative and Reentry Services, LLC**

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## **Emergency Cold Weather Shelter 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Oversight**

### **Weekly Report for Week 6**

**Project Name: 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Emergency Shelter Oversight**

**Date: Reporting period December 25 - 31, 2023**

**Date Submitted: January 3, 2023**

**Submitted by: Cathleen McLaughlin, JD/MBA**

**Monica Gross MD, MPH**

#### **A. Background**

As required under Contract #2023003145, fully executed on November 17, 2023, RRS submits its Weekly report for Week 6. This report is for the period December 25 – 31, 2023.

All weekly reports for the prior 5 weeks have been submitted by RRS to AHD, the 3 Assembly Members designated, and the Administration. Moving forward, weekly reports will be submitted, using the following schedule:

Week 6	12/25 – 12/31	Submit by 1/3/2023
Week 7	1/1 – 1/7/2024	Submit by 1/10/2024
Week 8	1/8 – 1/14/2024	Submit by 1/7/2024
Week 9	1/15 – 1/21/2024	Submit by 1/24/2024
Week 10	1/22 – 1/28/2024	Submit by 1/31/2024

#### **B. Actions taken during this Reporting Period**

1. RRS focused on the operations at the 3 Emergency Cold Weather Shelter sites – The Cold Weather Shelter (CWS) at 1111 E. 56<sup>th</sup>, The Alex Hotel, and The Aviator. RRS went to each facility for a townhall and also did 6 random visits to ECWS locations during this reporting period.

2. The current Townhall schedule is:

a. Alex – 2 p.m. Tuesday (December 26, 2023)

0 clients and staff attended (Note: this was the day after Christmas Day so RRS thought it was understandable that there was not interest in being at a Townhall) RRS used the time to connect with clients outside a townhall meeting. Only concern reported to RRS when RRS was at the Alex, through conversations with clients and staff, was that shrews were in the building. 1 client had de-con at her door to help eliminate that problem in her room.

b. CWS – 2 p.m. Thursday (December 28, 2023)

32 attended – RRS is now hosting the Townhall in the TV area. This has significantly increased the attendance. Concerns raised during the townhall were a sense of inconsistency regarding who was offered an opportunity to be moved to a hotel room, how to get connected with a ‘housing specialist’, clients being disrespectful toward each other, clients stealing from one another, noise at night, mail not be distributed regularly and for some, the impression mail was not being received, use of drugs by some clients while on their cots (ie. Some clients reported they could smell fentanyl and meth being smoked by others in their cot area), inconsistent application of shelter rules by different work shifts (ie. On one shift, a client can charge phones in a certain area but when another shift comes on, the rule changes). Other concerns reported were: no coffee provided for the last 2 breakfasts, one of the men’s showers is broken and inoperable, request for way to watch news (there currently is no cable or TV channels. All that is available are DVD movies), and cleanliness of men’s bathroom.

RRS highly supports the open dialog between clients, shelter staff and RRS. Clients’ questions were appropriately answered by shelter staff. Clients’ concerns were respectfully addressed. The goal of the townhall is to build a sense of community at CWS which in turn, will help stabilize the environment.

c. Aviator – 2 p.m. Friday (December 29, 2023)

(12 attended) (Note: Starting next week, RRS will be moving this Townhall to 12 noon. The sense was that 2 p.m. on Fridays does not draw enough clients but a noon Townhall may.)

Discussion at the Aviator included slippery walk areas in the Aviator parking lot. The Alaska Hotel Group stated it puts out a lot of gravel between the Aviator client door and the smoking area. Some concerns about security and housekeeping going through drawers in room. The Aviator team appropriately explained why housekeeping does check around rooms to ensure compliance by clients with shelter rules. Messaging by everyone at the Townhall was that having a bed at the Aviator is a privilege and should be respected. Many are still waiting and wanting to move to the Aviator or the Alex. It is up to the clients to appreciate the opportunity they have been given and use this time to move forward in their lives.

3. Attended the weekly Third-Party Oversight Meeting at 2 p.m. Wednesday. No significant concerns were raised by any of the participants.

4. Updated client concern spreadsheet and notified shelter staff at CWS and the Aviator of client concerns which included:

a. CWS – woman’s bathroom was closed for approximately 2 days because of a plumbing issue. During that period, woman were using men’s bathroom. Another complaint was sent immediately upon receipt to CWS management about client concerns during the night. CWS management responded to the clients involved immediately and situation was professionally and properly dealt with.

b. Aviator – client reported that security personnel took a food item during the entry process for himself that was the client’s. Alaska Hotel Group management was notified.

7. Accepted approximately 20 calls from shelter clients that did not rise to client complaints. Examples of these calls are:

a. Requesting transportation to CWS (same as stated in last week’s report) – RRS informed the clients they could access CWS by using the Shuttle service from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Navigation Center to CWS and reminded them that a shuttle also brings individuals from CWS to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Navigation.

b. Concerns of not being able to reach shelter staff at the 3 locations. RRS continues to give the clients the telephone numbers provided by Henning, Inc. Phone #s provided are:

Alex – 907-310-5998

Aviator - 907-793-5555

CWS - 907-538-8547

c. Clients wanting an opportunity to move from CWS to the Alex or the Aviator. RRS messaged to these clients to speak with their assigned case managers or housing specialists. If they do not have a case manager or housing specialist at CWS, then they needed to self-advocate so they are put on CWS staff’s radar.

d. Difficulty with roommates or wanting a different roommate. These concerns, if they are from the same individuals who have contacted RRS before, are encouraged to speak directly with Aviator and Alex shelter management.

4. Requested aggregate data around shelter and housing information from the shelter operators by email dated 12/21/2023. AHD was copied on the email. Still awaiting a response. RRS does hear anecdotally that some clients are moving out of the hotels into permanent housing but, RRS cannot confirm this.

5. The 'Client Concern Spreadsheet was updated and sent to AHD and the Shelter Operators 1/1/2024, with an update pending. 2 complaints are still being investigated by Henning, Inc. All others have been investigated and resolved. Outstanding complaints are:

a. CWS night security getting into an altercation with a client in December 2023. Client has been moved to the Aviator. Status of the investigation is unknown.

b. CWS night crew allowing unacceptable behavior. 2 clients who stated concerns were moved to the Aviator. Status of the investigation is unknown.

6. Clients are beginning to be more open about life at the unsanctioned camps during the summer. At one town hall it was learned that at 3<sup>rd</sup> & Ingra a \$50 tax was placed on tents by predators per night. The owner of the tent was required to pay \$50 per night to ensure that their tent was not going to be burned. (Note: RRS strongly encourages the MOA, AHD, Assembly, and shelter operators to listen to these pieces of information in order to create safer spots for those not involved in criminal or gang activity to shelter safely next summer).

### **C. Action Item Report, Process and Plan (What has been Accomplished)**

1. RRS must comply with under the contract:

- Provide recommendations and guidance to service providers. **(on-going)**
- Work with shelter service providers to provide options and guidance to address any challenges, gaps in services, and/or community collaboration. Activities will include but are not limited to:
  - Assessing timeline and services with community partners around the transition of clients from shelter services to permanent housing **(AHD has encouraged RRS to primarily focus on day-to-day shelter operations so RRS is only monitoring transitions of clients between the various ECWS locations)**
  - Communicating with all stakeholders opportunities to know, cure and/or amend process and address situations in real time. **(on-going)**
- Create a real-time communication process at all ECWS locations to efficiently measure client expectations, behavior, and resolution through individual and group-based best-practices, resulting in an “open door” for shelter clients to address concerns. **(on-going)**
- Work closely with the AHD team to ensure that any contractual and liability issues that may arise from recommended changes are appropriately addressed before any changes or recommendations are implemented. **(on-going)**
- Create, print, and post in all ECWS locations the process for shelter residents to lodge complaints and concerns about the facilities and services to the Contractor. **(completed – although RRS will be improving its signage in coming weeks)**

- Distribute a written weekly report no less than once weekly to the Anchorage Health Department, the Municipality of Anchorage Administration, and the Anchorage Assembly. **(now scheduled by RRS to be submitted by noon on Wednesdays)**
- Notify the identified reporting team immediately and in real-time if needed due to the urgency of a concern. **(on-going)**
- Report on contract compliance, services provided at each ECWS location, client concerns, etc. **(on-going and will be more of a focus in the coming weeks)**
- Actively share and address concerns with shelter staff, clients, and community providers. **(on-going)**

With the above-stated contractual terms in mind, RRS reports:

1. This last week of 2023 was one where clients generally expressed gratitude for having a place to rest. With the temperature dipping below zero, all shelter services were at or near capacity. There was one death of a non-congregate shelter client in downtown Anchorage. There is an increase in the use of meth, 'blues' and fentanyl which is permeating the houseless community.
2. RRS's site review of all 3 ECWS locations, various calls, and client comments, has given RRS the basis to state that the ECWS operations at this time, at all 3 locations, are stable.
3. RRS strongly supports the movement of clients between the 3 locations based on a client's current needs. Last week RRS met individuals at CWS who were moved to one of the hotels. The positivity coming from these individuals, and the willingness for them to begin to meaningfully work with shelter staff, was very uplifting.

**D. Action Items for the Report Week of January 1 - 8, 2023 - Report, Process and Plan (What Will Be Accomplished)**

1. Continue to build an open and healthy communication policy between RRS, AHD and the ECWS operators.
2. RRS will connect with Henning, Inc. and The Alaska Group about confirming that the 24/7 phones at each ECWS site are in operation and properly manned. There continues to be a concern by some clients and service providers that they are unable to get phone calls answered.
3. Receive the aggregate data regarding client census, movement and housing as requested above.
4. RRS will put more time at each ECWS location to ensure that it is more aware of activities at each site at various times of the day.

**E. Recommendations, Conclusions and Summary**

RRS's work under the Contract will be done with the goal of providing open channels of communication, a willingness to openly address challenges and opportunities, and to work with all individuals involved in Cold Weather Shelter Services. RRS is also open to and encourages constructive comments and criticism so it can perform as best as possible under this Contract.

Any questions, please contact RRS through phone, text, or email at any time.

**Respectfully,**  
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