

Dear Sir/Madam,

Seneca Family of Agencies was founded in 1985 as a small residential program dedicated to serving youth whose mental health and behavioral challenges were not adequately addressed by the existing behavioral health and child welfare systems. Over the last 30 years, Seneca has partnered with counties across California to develop a comprehensive continuum of services that addresses the complex needs of youth and families who face the most profound challenges.

Seneca's current continuum of care in Santa Clara County includes the community-based treatment and intensive case management programs, all of which serve high-risk youth who are diagnosed with schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, major affective disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, behavior and bodily function disorders, anxiety and adjustment disorders, and co-occurring disorders (mental health and substance use). These programs include: (1) SB 163, Adoption Assistance Program (AAP), and Ranch Re-Entry Wraparound; (2) Intensive Targeted Wraparound for youth at imminent risk of psychiatric hospitalization; (3) community-based treatment and intensive case management for probation-involved youth; (4) Professional Parents and therapeutic foster homes; and (5) Outpatient and Intensive Outpatient Therapy.

Between all of these different programs we serve 325 kids annually in Santa Clara County. Our organization is currently not a living wage employer, but we strive to ensure that our employees are fairly and equitably compensated. It is vital that we offer our staff wages and benefits that are competitive, humane and will increase on an annual basis, as needed to ensure that retention of qualified staff is possible. To this end, we would like to work with the county to ensure that:

- Annual and fair Cost of Doing Business increases are built into all County contracts, not just those funded by the County General Fund. This will enable all contract agencies to continue to provide Living Wage salaries within our organizations.
- Rates and cost reimbursement are designed to fully fund our County Services at levels that ensure living wages are paid.
- Nonprofits develop a multi-year tiered pathway to achieve living wage standard

As a Behavioral Health Contractor, we appreciate that in recent years the Department of Behavioral Health Services has provided COLAs for some non-general fund contracts such as AB109 and MHSA. However, we are very aware this was done at the Department's discretion and that the Department budget adjustments do not consistently provide for contracts funded with restricted monies such as AB109, Mental Health Services Act, Measure A or State and Federal pass through contracts.

To keep up with annual Living Wage increases, we realize that COLA's do need to be built into all of our County Contracts. We recognize that this may not be possible immediately, but we look forward to working with you to determine the best way to achieve this goal.

We are in support of the Living Wage Ordinance and greatly appreciate your consideration of the above mentioned points in order to help us become a Living Wage employer.

Thank you,

**Puja Satwani, LCSW**

**Executive Director – Santa Clara County**

**SENECA FAMILY OF AGENCIES**

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