



SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
PROVIDER NETWORK



Wage Equity and Workforce Stability for Frontline Nonprofit Workers in Homelessness and Mental Health: A Multi-Coalition Presentation

A Multi-Coalition Perspective

- **HSN** is a coalition of 80+ nonprofits that form the backbone of the local public safety net, centering the impact of policy and spending decisions on vital health and human services programs.
- **SHPN** is a coalition of 15+ nonprofits that provide housing—the cornerstone of the local response to homelessness—centering the needs of formerly homeless tenants and the buildings they call home.
- **HESPA** is a coalition of 30+ nonprofits that operate life-saving programs in the homeless response system, centering the needs of unhoused people, youth, and families.



Shared Goals for Our Policy and Spending Choices



- **Improve outcomes for adults, youth, and families.**
 - When people heal, so do communities.
- **Promote a stable workforce and stable systems of care.**
 - Wage equity is the pathway out of poverty for our workers and the people they serve.
- **Invest in impact (versus under-budgeting and under-delivering).**
 - Underspending carries high costs—economic costs, costs to public confidence - and costs to our values as a City.

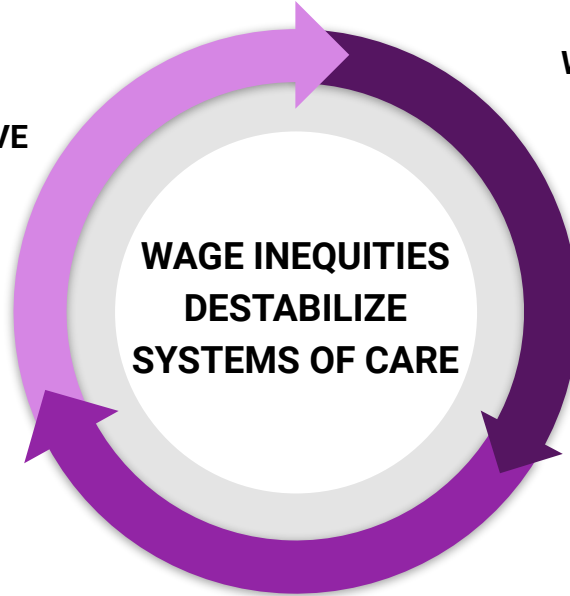
The Controller's Report on Nonprofit Wage Pressures

- **The City contracts with 600+ nonprofits to deliver \$1.2 billion in essential safety net services each year, including for homelessness and mental health.**
 - Contract budgets do not keep pace with extreme inflationary and market pressures, including wages and other costs directly impacting health and wellbeing.
- **HSH funds the highest numbers of the lowest-wage workers as a proportion of its total spending (approx. 800 FTEs received MCO-related adjustments in FY19-20).**
 - Wage structures do not reflect the difficulty—or life-saving nature—of the work.
 - Wage inequities are racial inequities that destabilize entire systems of care.
- **We need new and better strategies to relieve extreme wage and cost pressures that are fraying the public safety net.**
 - The CODB is too little, always late, and inconsistent.
 - The MCO is difficult to implement and only targets the lowest-wage workers.
 - One-time initiatives create parity issues and are high effort, low reward.
 - We need strategies that cover all frontline workers regardless of funding source.

Underinvestment Perpetuates Injustice

WAGE INEQUITIES HARM PEOPLE WE SERVE

- FEWER RELATIONSHIPS
- CHAOTIC PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTS
- REDUCED SAFETY, SUPPORT, TRUST
- REDUCED ACCESS TO SERVICES
- PEOPLE GET STUCK IN PROGRAMS
- OTHER PEOPLE CAN'T GET IN
- NO FLOW THROUGH THE SYSTEM



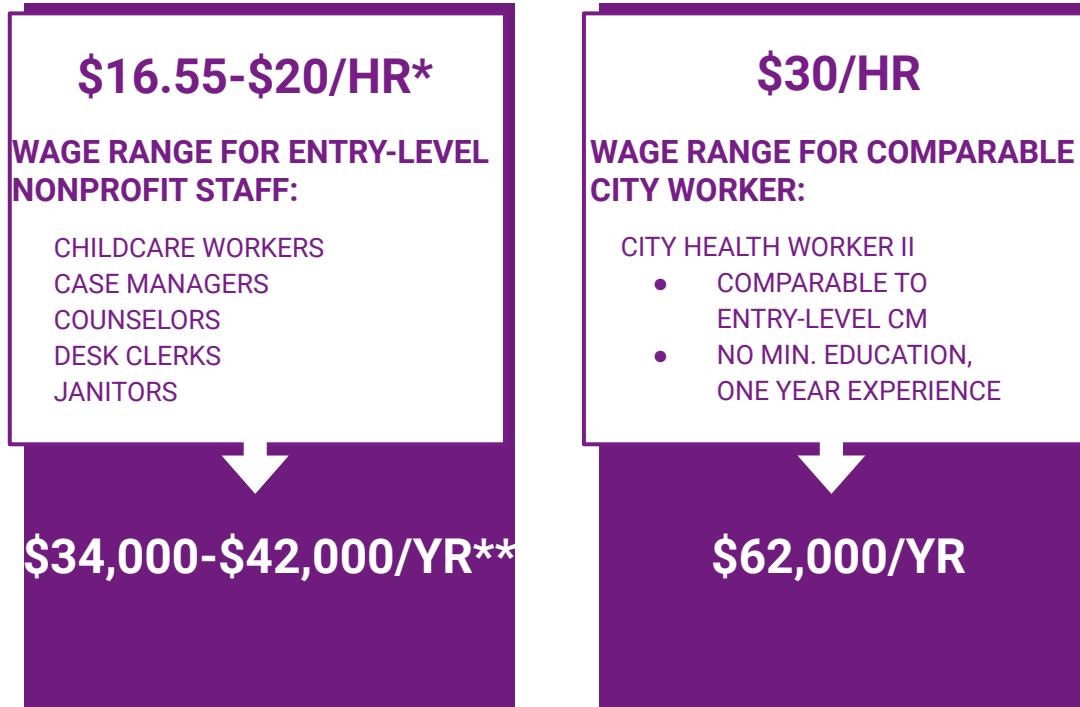
WAGE INEQUITIES HARM WORKERS

- THEY SUPER-COMMUTE AT ALL HOURS
- THEY LIVE IN OUR PROGRAMS
- THEY WORK 2-3 JOBS
- THEY STRUGGLE TO FEED THEIR FAMILIES
- THEY HAVE LIVED-EXPERIENCE TRAUMA
- THEY HAVE SECONDARY TRAUMA
- THEY BURN OUT PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY

WAGE INEQUITIES HARM PROGRAMS AND DIMINISH IMPACT ACROSS THE SYSTEM

- HIGH TURNOVER = INCONSISTENT STAFFING, CONSTANT TRAINING, LACK OF INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE
- VACANT POSITIONS = UNDERSTAFFING, HIGH CASELOADS, SERVICE DELAYS (E.G., TURNING OVER UNITS)
- CONTRACTS GO UNDERSPENT AND CONTRACT OBJECTIVES GO UNMET

Wage Equity and Parity



*The MCO threshold is currently \$17.34/hour.

**Some case manager and clinical case manager positions earn \$20-30/hour.

The Workers Who Carried Us Through the Pandemic



“Since my son lost his job during COVID, I've become the sole breadwinner and money has become very tight. When I come in for my night shift, I get accosted by the drug dealers surrounding the train station, and I don't feel safe walking to work. Sometimes I ask my son to bring me, sometimes I have to call a Lyft, but it's about \$40 one way and I can't afford it.

I do everything I can to keep the seniors at Le Nain safe. The other day one of our tenants with mental health issues fell down the stairwell from the second floor and broke his ankle. I'm the one who found him. I work side by side with SFFD, SFPD, paramedics, etc.... I wear several hats but I don't get paid nowhere near what they do.”

GENEE, OVERNIGHT DESK CLERK

The Workers Who Carried Us Through the Pandemic

“Maintenance, janitors and desk clerks have the most difficult jobs, have the most contact, take the brunt of abuse, find tenants that are deceased—that stuff sticks with you. I can still see and smell that odor of the first time I found someone deceased. It’s not just cleaning a building, it’s a lot of human interaction.

Some site staff don’t go home because they don’t have a place to go home to. You realize that some staff might be living in the building. I’ve found suitcases and razors for shaving. We’re dealing with homelessness, but our employees also are. It’s not the person’s fault who’s experiencing homelessness but our fault.”

CRAIG, UNIT TURNOVER SUPERVISOR



The Workers Who Carried Us Through the Pandemic



“Being a desk clerk, you’re not just the person that lets people in. It’s being their therapist, their sister, their auntie, the person they confide in. They could be going through anything and you’re that person at that moment that they need to talk to.

When COVID hit, it became a struggle as I commute on public transportation from Sacramento. I am the breadwinner for my family, I support my grandmother, and my two children. We were getting late on bills because I was the only one getting an income in, so I had to help my son—who has special needs—get a job too.

The tenants have been very aggressive sometimes, so I get worried that they will follow me at the end of my shift. You never know how they’re feeling that day, so you need to protect yourself when leaving or arriving.”

GLENDA, ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER

The Workers Who Carried Us Through the Pandemic

“I started off as a janitor and worked my way through maintenance, turn-team and all that stuff and now I’m a supervisor. One thing about wages is that even though I’m a supervisor, I don’t make enough to live in SF if I had to pay market-rate rent, and there’s a lot of people in my shoes.

The past couple of months we’ve been short maintenance staff and the word orders have never been higher.... To keep up with the workload, we need to be able to have a wage for people to be happy to come in and do this type of work. The cost of living is just so high, the wages aren’t even close to what it takes. Now I’m not on the street, but may be a paycheck away from being on the street and not willing to give my job up.”

DEREK, MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR



The Workers Who Carried Us Through the Pandemic



“I’m the first person that young people see when they walk through our doors. As a trans woman, I feel privileged to work for a place that makes a huge impact on the LGBTQ+ young people. But I can’t say that this comes without any sacrifices.

I live in Concord because San Francisco is simply too expensive for me. This means that I have to get up early everyday, walk 15 minutes to the nearest Bart station, put on two masks and endure a 45-minute crowded train ride while trying not to worry about acquiring Covid.”

GEOVANNA, RECEPTIONIST

The Workers Who Carried Us Through the Pandemic

“Increasing rent, food, transportation costs, and occasional medical bills over the last year are slowly taking away my savings and any extra I had saved up. If it weren’t for my family helping out with childcare, I’m not sure what we would do because professional childcare costs doubled last year.

For most nonprofit workers like me, we feel like we are getting constantly nicked and dimed by increasing bills and all are just anxiously waiting for our annual tax rebate to make ends meet before we have to start the entire cycle over again.

Supporting our youth is a privilege and an honor; I live and commute from Richmond every day to serve them. But if my nonprofit wages don’t keep up with price increases, I am not sure if I can continue to do that, because I also have a family to take care of.”

KENYAUN, ASSOC. DIRECTOR OF HOUSING & OPERATIONS



The Workers Who Carried Us Through the Pandemic



“I am 52 years old, and I worry a lot about retirement. I try not to think about it, but I can’t help it. This is where I have lived and worked most of my life and where my family and community are, but I don’t see any possibility of being able to make it my forever home.

The irony is not lost on me that every day, we work hard to make sure that our youth can climb out of poverty and continue to live here, but we as staff people are not going to have that same opportunity.”

MARNIE, PROGRAM MANAGER OF YOUNG ADULT COURT

The Controller's Findings and Recommendations

- **Human service systems need structural mechanisms to remediate extreme wage and cost pressures, over and above a standard inflationary CODB.**
 - Annual negotiations over a sub-inflationary CODB have underfunded wages, destabilized systems of care, and stalled solutions to homelessness and mental health crises.
- **The City must transition from annual CODB allocations to multi-year contracts with “embedded escalators” to make wage and cost investments, including and especially:**
 - Wage investments for frontline staff who carried the pandemic response,
 - Wage investments to address wage compaction in leadership, and
 - Program investments directly impacting health and safety (e.g., food security, habitability).
- **The City needs short-term and long-term strategies to relieve wage and cost pressures and ensure equitable investment levels for essential safety-net services.**
 - In the short term, the City should apply a COLA above the CODB and make specific budget allocations in key service areas, including homelessness, mental health, and childcare.

Positive Steps in the Mayor's Proposed Budget

- **The Mayor's proposed budget takes positive steps toward meeting the Controller's short-term recommendations with three key investments:**

01	\$21M, OR 5.25%, COLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● INCLUDES BENEFITS● BASELINED OVER 2 YEARS● PARITY WITH CITY WORKERS
02	\$67.4M FOR PSH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● \$30M OVER 2 YEARS FOR WAGES● \$32.4M OVER 2 YEARS FOR STAFFING● \$5M FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS
03	\$60M FOR CHILDCARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● \$60M OVER 2 YEARS FOR EARLY CARE EDUCATORS VIA "BABY C"

- **Human services coalitions thank the Mayor's Office for directing urgently needed relief to the workers—and service areas—that are hurting the most.**

We Need More Movement Forward

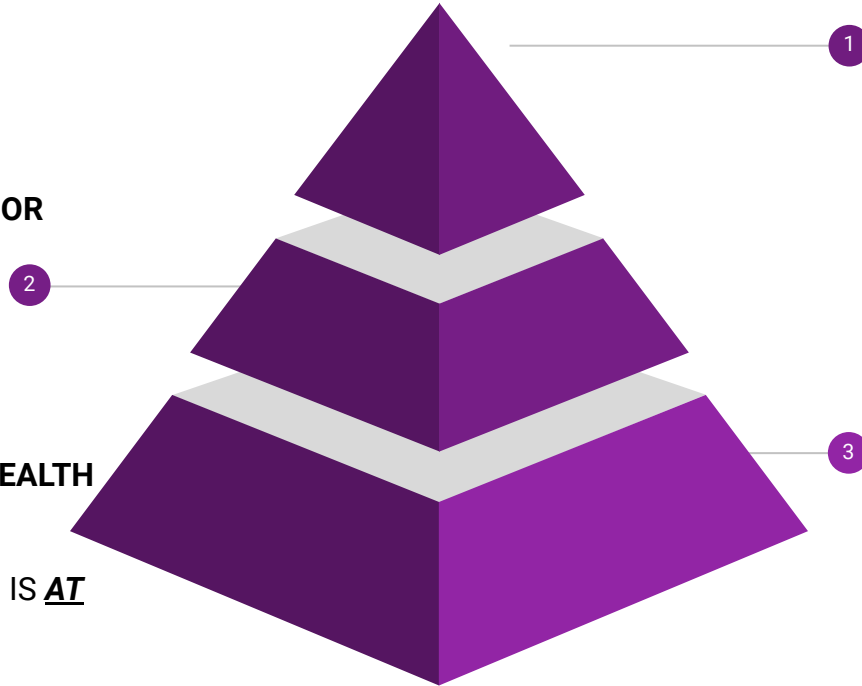
WE NEED SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENTS:

A PUBLICLY FUNDED WAGE FLOOR ACROSS ALL CONTRACTS.

A PUBLICLY FUNDED WAGE STRUCTURE TO ADDRESS COMPACTION.

A CODB THAT COVERS **BASIC HEALTH AND SAFETY COSTS** AT SITES.

A MORE COST-EFFECTIVE CODB IS AT LEAST 8.25% OF \$1.2 BILLION.



WE NEED TO FILL GAPS IN THE DRAFT BUDGET:

1 THE CONTROLLER RECOMMENDS A COLA **ABOVE THE CODB** (NOT INCLUDED IN THE DRAFT BUDGET).

THE GAP IS **AT LEAST \$20 MILLION** TO BUDGET A CODB UNDER THE PROPOSED COLA.

3 **WE NEED STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION:**

MULTI-YEAR CONTRACTS WITH **EMBEDDED ESCALATORS.**

MECHANISMS TO CREATE **EQUITY AND PARITY** WITHIN AND ACROSS ORGANIZATIONS.

What's at Stake

- The City underinvests in its own systems of care. Our workers make **poverty wages** and our **buildings are crumbling** from decades of underinvestment.
- The lack of vision and action at the system level has **stalled meaningful progress** on the City's homelessness and mental health crises.
- **We have an opportunity to invest** in a stable workforce. To build stable systems. To lift our workers and the people they serve permanently out of poverty.
- **The High Costs of Underspending:** economic costs, costs to public confidence - and costs to our values.





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Thank You and Questions