



MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE

**SUPERVISOR, FOURTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: October 22, 2024

23

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

A REQUEST FOR THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS TO AUTHORIZE AN AUDIT OF ARBOR E&T, LLC DBA EQUUS WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS (CONTRACT #564750) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

On January 22, 2024, San Diego County experienced the heaviest rainfall in a single day in over one hundred years. This resulted in widespread flooding, catastrophic property damage and devastation throughout San Diego County. The floods inflicted disproportionate damage to San Diego County's most vulnerable and impoverished communities across southeastern San Diego and the unincorporated areas of San Diego County. Thousands of San Diegans were displaced as their homes and cars were flooded and deemed inhabitable.

On January 30, 2024 (1), the Board of Supervisors (Board) voted to authorize an amendment of the County of San Diego's contract with Arbor E&T, LLC dba Equus Workforce Solutions ("Equus") (Contract #564750) to provide temporary non-congregate shelter and case management services to those impacted by the floods. Due to the urgent need to respond as quickly as possible to those who had been displaced by the floods, and the lengthy process required to contract with new service providers, the Board authorized an amendment of the County of San Diego's pre-existing contract with Equus. Equus has been providing emergency non-congregate housing services in the County of San Diego since 2021.

Unfortunately, many community members have voiced significant criticisms about Equus. Flood survivors are frustrated with how disorganized Equus was and have provided anecdotes of being sent to hotels that had been shut down. Flood survivors were also repeatedly asked for the same personal information they had already provided to Equus. This made them worried that their personal information was not being kept secure.

The Board should help address the community's concerns and lack of trust with Equus by authorizing an audit of Equus' contract with the County of San Diego as it relates to the flood survivors. This audit will also help the Board determine whether public funds were properly used by Equus, and if any improvements can be made so that the County of San Diego is better prepared for future emergency situations or natural disasters.

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Today's action will authorize an audit of Arbor E&T, LLC dba Equus Workforce Solutions (Contract #564750) and report back to the Board within 120 days.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

SUPERVISOR MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE

1. Direct the Auditor and Controller to provide an audit under San Diego County Charter Section 801.1(c) of Arbor E&T, LLC dba Equus Workforce Solutions (Contract #564750) as related to the Emergency Temporary Lodging program and report back to the Board of Supervisors within 120 days.
2. The audit should include, but not be limited to, an analysis of the following:
 - a. A detailed analysis of Equus' actual expenditures versus contracted amounts;
 - b. The number of households provided with temporary lodging, including their lengths of stay;
 - c. An explanation of where each household went when their temporary stay ended, or why they had to leave their temporary shelter;
 - d. The types of case management services provided to the households;
 - e. The number of households provided with case management services;
 - f. A detailed analysis of Equus' data security as it relates to the personal information provided by the households;
 - g. The procedure used by Equus to address and try to resolve complaints made by the households; and
 - h. The number and types of complaints made by the households.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Decades of inadequate and inequitable infrastructure investments in southeastern San Diego left communities of color and low-income communities vulnerable to devastation from the hundred-year rainstorm on January 22, 2024. The audit will provide transparency and accountability to the flood survivors and ensure that their concerns are addressed.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

This action will strengthen the County of San Diego's sustainable Economy and Resiliency goals. The audit findings will help ensure alignment of the County of San Diego's resources with emergency services that are intended to ensure the capability to respond and recover to the immediate needs for individuals, families, and the region.

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FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

On January 22, 2024, San Diego County experienced the heaviest rainfall in a single day in over one hundred years. This resulted in widespread flooding, catastrophic property damage and devastation throughout San Diego County. The floods inflicted disproportionate damage to San Diego County’s most vulnerable and impoverished communities across southeastern San Diego and the unincorporated areas of San Diego County. Thousands of San Diegans were displaced as their homes and cars were flooded and deemed inhabitable. On January 23, 2024, California Governor Gavin Newsom proclaimed a state of emergency in San Diego County.

On January 30, 2024 (1), the Board of Supervisors (Board) voted to authorize an amendment of the County of San Diego’s contract with Arbor E&T, LLC dba Equus Workforce Solutions (“Equus”) (Contract #564750) to provide non-congregate shelter and case management services to those impacted by the floods. The Board intended for a program with Equus that would provide qualified households with non-congregate sheltering for 30 days while case managers worked with the households to connect them to available resources. Any extensions beyond 30 days were to be evaluated based on very specific household circumstances. The program was to provide temporary lodging to those whose homes experienced major damage and were not habitable, and who were not receiving temporary housing through other sources such as homeowners or renters insurance. Due to the urgent need to respond as quickly as possible to those who had been displaced by the floods, and the lengthy process required to contract with new service providers, including community-based organizations, the Board authorized an amendment of the County of San Diego’s pre-existing contract with Equus. Equus has been providing emergency non-congregate housing services in the County of San Diego since 2021.

Unfortunately, many community members have voiced significant criticisms about Equus. Flood survivors are frustrated with how disorganized Equus was and have provided anecdotes of being sent to hotels that had been shut down. Flood survivors were also asked repeatedly for the same personal information they had already provided to Equus. This made them worry that their personal information was not being kept secure.

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed action supports the County of San Diego's 2024-2029 Strategic Plan by supporting the Strategic Initiatives of Empower and Community. Empower is supported in the area of Transparency and Accountability because the proposed action will ensure that program and fiscal integrity is maintained. Community is supported because the proposed action will support safety for all communities, including community preparedness and regional readiness to respond to other disasters in the future.

Respectfully submitted,



MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE
Supervisor, Fourth District

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A