



## Stanislaus County Fire Authority Annual Report 2009-2010

### INTRODUCTION

June 30, 2010 marks the completion of 4-1/2 years of the Stanislaus County Fire Authority. Each year the Executive Committee compiles information from the contracted service providers on the highlights of their accomplishments during the past year. Each service provider has provided a brief outline of some of the projects and accomplishments that were achieved on behalf of the fire agencies in Stanislaus County this year.

The Fire Authority strives to keep the Board of Supervisors educated and informed of its goals, objectives and functions. The Executive Committee believes that, in order for future success, we must keep the Board, as our partner, aware of the needs and challenges of the fire service.

The membership of the Fire Authority plays a vital role in directing the services they have identified as priorities. Each year, all member agencies are afforded an opportunity to review the financial status of the organization, approve an annual business plan, evaluate, and provide, in a written format, their opinion on performance expectations and service levels, and how service levels can be improved or enhanced to better meet their needs.

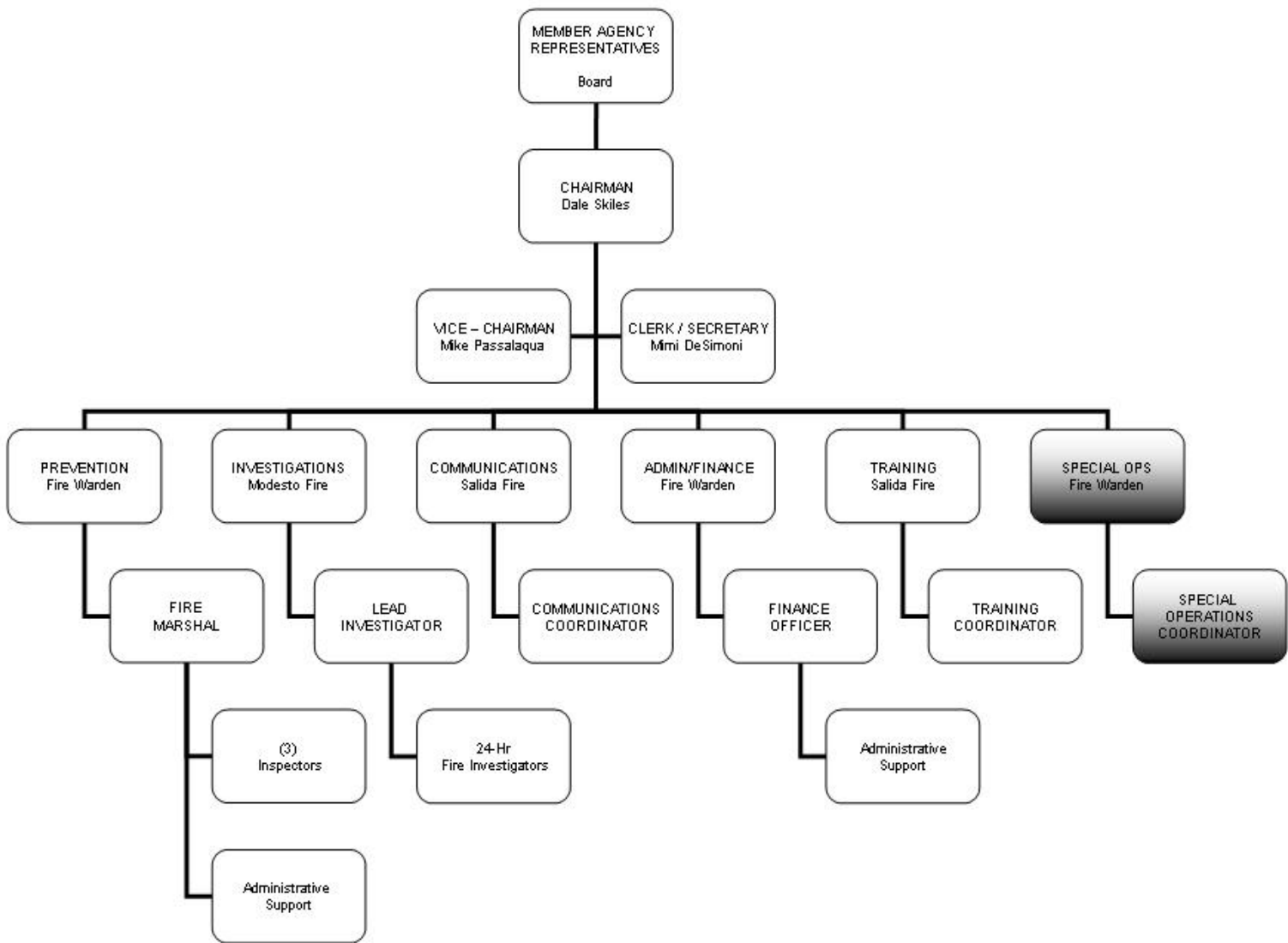
There are 20 member agencies in the Fire Authority. Each agency has designated a representative, most have an alternate, authorized to vote on issues brought before the Board. The active participation of the membership is important to the success of the organization, and attendance and participation is encouraged. During the past year there were eleven regular meetings, and one special meeting. The average attendance was just over 12 agencies per meeting, which is up slightly from 2008-2009. The following is a breakdown by agency:

Number of Agencies	Meetings Attended	% of Attendance
4	12	100%
5	11	90%
2	9	75%
2	8	66%
1	7	58%
1	4	33%
5	0	0%



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The following chart represents the Fire Authority organization and service providers. The Executive Committee, made up of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Clerk/Secretary, was re-elected to serve during the 2009-2010 fiscal year.





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Service:	<b>Finance Administration</b>
Provider:	Stanislaus County Fire Warden
	Salida Fire, Woodland Ave. Fire
Contract Period:	Year to year
2009-2010 Program Cost:	\$ 26,501
Annual Increase	None
Funding Source:	
General Fund	\$0
Fees	\$0
Less Than Countywide	\$ 26,501

Program Highlights

During the 2009-2010 year the elected Executive Board positions were as follows:

- Chairman – Dale Skiles, Salida Fire District Chief
- Vice-Chairman- Chief Mike Passalaqua, Woodland Ave. Fire District
- Clerk/Secretary - Mimi DeSimoni, Stanislaus County Fire Warden’s Office

The Executive Board meets and communicates regularly to ensure that the membership is provided with accurate and timely information on the services that are being provided through the Fire Authority as well as about issues that affect the fire service. The Stanislaus County Fire Warden’s Office staff provides financial, administrative, and operational support to the Fire Authority and the individual fire agencies in the County. Also included is the support provided as the Fire and Rescue Operational Area Coordinator as a resource to the fire agencies in the County. Some of the projects and accomplishments achieved this year include:

- Acted as budget manager for the County Fire Service Fund.
- Developed 09-10 Business Plan for approval by Fire Authority.
- Executive Committee met on a regular basis.
- Tracked annual revenues and expenditures of the County Fire Service Fund and reported to the Fire Authority.
- Managed all Fire Authority documents including Form 700s, agendas, minutes, agency representative designations, voting records, and reports.



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- Provided information upon request from CEOs Office and Board of Supervisors regarding fire agencies and Fire Authority.
- Monitored contracts and reimbursements between Stanislaus County and service providers.
- Administered the financial cost sharing of the MDC program.
- Worked with districts on budgeting, and dry period funding issues.
- Provided analysis of assessed valuation for fire districts.
- Took the lead in communicating with the Building Department regarding on-going issues related to development fee collections and reporting.
- Provided administrative support to the Fire and Rescue Operational Area Coordinator, coordinating daily conference calls, CICCS Position lists updates, and the daily dissemination of information on deployed resources during strike team activations.
- Provided support to fire agencies in the County on reimbursement issues related to out of county response.
- Supported Fire Warden's Office with California Incident Command Certification System (CICCS), Incident Qualification System (IQS), and Resource Ordering System Status (ROSS) data base programs administration.
- Provided annual requalification and training for CICCS positions.
- Administered Homeland Security grants providing benefit to the fire service with funding for enhanced communication infrastructure, training, and portable transmitters.



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Service:	<b>Fire Communications</b>
Provider:	Salida Fire District
Contract Period:	12/1/06 – 11/30/11
2008-2009 Program Cost:	\$141,124
Annual Increase	Annual 4% increase was suspended in 09-10
Funding Source:	
General Fund	\$ 0
Fees	\$ 0
Less Than Countywide	\$ 141,124

Program Highlights

The Salida Fire Protection District has been providing Fire Communications services since December 2006. In addition to on-going projects, some of the services provided and accomplishments achieved during the 2009-2010 year include:

- Wrote narrative for ARG Regional MDC grant for Modesto City Fire. The grant was awarded in early August 2010. Over the next year, I will work with Modesto Fire to assist with implementation.
- Represented fire agencies at the CAD working group.
- Acted as chairman of the Communications Advisory Committee and MDC workgroup.
- Continue to develop radio programming standards for Stanislaus County fire agencies. Also continue to work with adjacent counties to implement frequency narrow-banding for Stanislaus County.
- Completed task book for Communications Unit Leader (COML). Submitted paperwork and now fully certified and qualified.
- Attended ROSS Training and serve as a backup to the Operational Area Coordinator for Stanislaus County Fire.
- Attended HipLink training and began implementation.
- Supported fire agencies with programming, troubleshooting and paging needs.
- Provided end user support to all fire agencies with Stanislaus County (PC's, radios, networks, etc).
- Worked with SBT and the County Fire Agencies to come up with a plan to implement Regional RMS.



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- Became a member of APCO (Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials). Attend meetings and training to insure Stanislaus County Fire Agencies are represented.
- Represented fire agencies on Operational Technical Advisory Committee (OTAC) of SR-911.
- Continue to make equipment recommendations countywide.
- Represent Stanislaus County Fire agencies in various discussion groups to come up with future communications solutions for Stanislaus County.
- Managed technical aspects of Command Post 90 (CP-90).



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Service:	<b>Fire Investigations</b>
Provider:	Modesto Fire Department
Contract Period:	7/1/06 – 6/30/11
2008-2009 Program Cost:	\$507,861
Annual Increase	Annual 4% increase was suspended in 09-10
Funding Source:	
General Fund	\$ 0
Fees	\$ 0
Less Than Countywide	\$507,861

#### Program Highlights

On July 1, 2009, the Fire Investigation Unit (FIU) of the Modesto Fire Department completed its fourth year of providing fire investigation services to the unincorporated areas of the County. During the 2009-2010 year, the FIU consisted of one 40hr/week supervisor, three shift investigators, one clerical support person and five relief investigators normally assigned to suppression crews. The FIU is managed by the Division Chief / Fire Marshal. The following is a summary of services provided during the fiscal year:

- From July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010 a total of 226 investigations were performed in the County contract areas.
- 145 were determined to be arson (64%).
- 57 were determined to be accidental (25%).
- 24 the cause could not be determined (11%).
- The FIU averaged over 24 hours of follow-up investigation per month.
- This effort, along with the cooperation of the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department, resulted in 10 arrests with 4 additional arrests after monthly reports were finalized for a total of 14 arrests for the year.
- A report of all activities, broken down by jurisdiction, was provided every month at the Fire Authority meeting.



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Service:	<b>Fire Prevention</b>
Provider:	Stanislaus County Fire Warden
Contract Period:	7/1/06 – 6/30/11
2008-2009 Program Cost:	\$471,162 (Contract \$573,133)
Annual Increase	Annual 4% increase was suspended in 09-10
Funding Source:	
General Fund	\$291,000
Fees	\$136,786
Less Than Countywide	\$ 43,376

Program Highlights

The Stanislaus County Fire Warden’s Office began providing fire prevention services on July 1, 2006. This completes the fourth year as a service provider. The Fire Prevention Bureau is staffed with the Fire Marshal, 3 Fire Prevention Specialists, 1 full time Account Clerk, and is also supported by a Deputy Fire Warden as well as a finance manager. Periodically, special projects were done by a part time employee under a personal services contract. Some of the projects and accomplishments achieved during this year include:

- Refined data and processes with respect to the electronic fire records management system (RMS).
- Provided monthly reports to all fire districts of services performed in their jurisdiction, and a total of all hours of activities from fire RMS system.
- Represented fire districts at Environmental Review Committee meetings and provided information and documentation to districts on impending issues affecting districts as well as comments made to the ERC on their behalf.
- Continued new construction plan review and inspections.
- Administered an aggressive force clean program for hazardous vegetation in accordance with the provisions of the County Weed Abatement Ordinance
- Provided state-mandated inspections.
- Provided training to enable fire prevention staff skills to obtain State Fire Marshal Certifications.
- Distributed a water and access standards letter for fire districts to clearly define the standard to be applied in their jurisdiction. Worked with fire agencies on analysis of State Fire Code for adoption in fall 2010.



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- Developed and implemented contract with City of Oakdale to provide additional

Service:	<b>Fire Training</b>
Provider:	Salida Fire District
Contract Period:	2/1/07 – 11/30/12
2009-2010 Program Cost:	\$168,455
Annual Increase	Annual 4% increase was suspended in 09-10
Funding Source:	
General Fund	\$ 0
Fees	\$ 0
Less Than Countywide	\$ 168,455

fire prevention services.

#### Program Highlights

The Fire Training Service of the Stanislaus County Regional Fire Authority is committed to assisting member agencies in providing a comprehensive training program that includes up-to-date training materials and instruction. The training coordinator continues to support and encourage the development of a standardized platform for regional training. The Salida Fire Protection District has completed 3-1/2 years of providing regional training. During the 2009-2010 year the training coordinator provided various opportunities for training and training program development.

- **CICCS / NWCG Wildland Courses**  
With the implementation of CICCS the training coordinator fulfilled the need for training courses at the firefighter 2, firefighter 1, and engine boss levels, including the following courses:
  - S-190 (Into. To Wildland Fire Behavior) 8hrs.
  - S130 (FireFighter Training) 35hrs.
  - S-290 (Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior) 32hrs.
  - L-180 / S-131 / S-133 (FireFighter Type 1 Training) 8hrs.
  - S-230 / S231 (Crew Boss / Engine Boss) 35hrs.
- **CICCS Achievements and Research**
  - Researched CICCS and NWCG 310-1 requirements.



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- Developed many valuable contacts to assist Stanislaus County fire agencies.
- Became a member of the CICCIS Pace V peer review committee.
- **NWCG Certification**-Developed a relationship with the Stanislaus National Forest to eventually enable us to issue NWCG certifications with the Stanislaus National Forest as a sponsor.
- **Regional All Risk Exercise**
  - Planned and delivered a successful large scale training exercise with over 120 participants and staff from Stanislaus County and contiguous counties.
  - Delivered training situations with different goals and objectives including wildland firefighting with live fire, structure firefighting with live fire, WMD / mass causality at a public school, and a rescue situation with building collapse at a commercial property.
  - The training was operated utilizing area command.
- **Communication Training**
  - Developed and performed radio communication training for all fire agencies in Stanislaus County and contiguous counties for grant funded radio equipment.
- **ArcGIS Training**
  - Obtained a training program for the ArcGIS software and distributed to all interested fire agencies in Stanislaus County.
- **Training Courses**
  - Coordinated many training courses in 2009 and 2010 including SFM Driver Operator 1A and 1B, SFM Training Instructor 1A, 1B, and 1C, CPR, SFM confined space awareness.
- **Networking**
  - Developed a working partnership with local, state and federal agencies to provide assistance and expertise in training materials and instructors.
- **Instructors**



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-Continued to develop a cadre of instructors locally and state-wide to assist in delivery of regional training courses which will build self sufficiency for course delivery in our county.

- **Training Advisory Committee**

The training coordinator had the privilege to work with all fire agency training officers from Stanislaus County through the training advisory committee. The training advisory committee was instrumental in providing direction for training in Stanislaus County.



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Service:	<b>Special Operations</b>
Provider:	Stanislaus County Fire Warden's Office
	Program eliminated 1/10
Contract Period:	12/1/06 – 1/15/10
2009-2010	\$ 95,363
Annual Increase	Annual 4% increase suspended in 09-10 Funding discontinued January 2010
Funding Source:	
General Fund	\$ 0
Fees	\$ 0
Less Than Countywide	\$ 95,363

### Program Highlights

The Stanislaus County Fire Warden's Office provided the Special Operations Coordinator position for 3 years. The position was supported by a Deputy Fire Warden and administrative support staff. During the 2009-2010 year, it was determined, through careful analysis of the budget, that a program would need to be eliminated. Through a vote of the membership, this program was eliminated in January. Progress was made on the following projects during the 2009-2010 fiscal year:

- The confined space rescue policy was completed and approved by the membership.
- Workgroup met to evaluate the interest and county-wide capabilities to form an urban search and rescue team.
- Met with each agency prior to the program elimination to determine what special operations needs were priorities.



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2009-2010 Financial Summary

	Projected	Actual
<b>Revenues</b>		
Less Than County Wide	\$ 1,206,936	\$ 1,004,727*
Fire Prevention Fees	\$ 150,000	\$ 136,786
County Match	\$ 291,000	\$ 291,000
<b>Reimbursements</b>	\$ 18,000	\$ 17,374
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 1,665,936</b>	<b>\$ 1,449,887</b>
Use of fund balance	\$ 230,390	\$ 125,555
<b>Total to fund programs</b>	<b>\$ 1,896,326</b>	<b>\$ 1,575,442</b>
<b>Program Expenses</b>		
Fire Prevention	\$ 590,554	\$ 471,162
Fire Investigations	\$ 528,175	\$ 507,861
Fire Training	\$ 175,193	\$ 168,455
Fire Communications	\$ 146,769	\$ 141,124
Admin / Finance	\$ 131,914	\$ 26,501
Special Operations	\$ 159,509	\$ 95,363
County cost	\$ 117,092	\$ 117,092
Other expenses	\$ 47,120	\$ 47,884
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,896,326</b>	<b>\$ 1,575,442</b>

\*Total taxes net of \$87,788 borrowed by the State of California

In September 2009, the Fire Authority Finance Committee made the following recommendations to ensure that the budget remained within acceptable levels:

- Suspend the 4% annual contract increases
- Eliminate the Special Operations Program
- Suspend the vehicle replacement that was stipulated in the Fire Investigation contract.

These cost cutting measures along with the Fire Warden's Office holding the Admin/Finance support position vacant, and an unforeseen temporary vacancy in the Fire Prevention Bureau created enough savings to reduce the negative impact on the fund balance that has carried over.



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### Comments

The following comments were received from member agencies in response to the Chairman's request:

- "Speaking for the Santa Clara Unit, we have benefited greatly from the improved organization and function of the services. The most significant improvements have been in the area of communications, Fire Prevention, and Investigations. You and Chief Skiles (with the membership) have done an outstanding job of providing the administrative frame work for the Fire Authority."
- "My two cents are that having a contact representing fire at SR 911 to interface on communications issues has been a great benefit for the Emergency Command Center."
- "I believe that the RFA in its totality met the goals and expectations in the previous year. I think that there are good reports given on progress each month at the RFA meetings and we all know what is being accomplished. I believe that it was a good move to hire Alicia Hinshaw part time to assist the districts with their EMS programs. With OSHA 5199 and all other emerging EMS issues we can really benefit from Alicia's knowledge and experience."

In training there seems to be a big emphasis on the CICC classes, which I think are important, but I would like to see training classes expanded to include some regional sites that could facilitate training in all areas of the county.

Communications has done well, although in Turlock we have a limited need to utilize this service. As we use the county wide mutual aid program more I know that we will need to be involved at this level to ensure that our engine companies are able to make a seamless transition from 800 mghz to the VHF system. Chad has done a good job of keeping Turlock informed and involved and we appreciate his leadership in the communications division.

One area that I think we could work on is the legislative division. I am learning that there is legislation that I need to be aware of and more involved in. I would like for us to pursue the RFA expanding this section to assist the county fire agencies.

We really don't use the other services offered by the RFA, but I do pay close attention to those issues as they may become our issues.



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Finally, I think that Chief Skiles does a very good job of facilitating the meetings. In some ways he is the glue holding the RFA together. Well done!"

- "Please accept this letter as a joint response from the Oakdale Fire Protection District and the Oakdale Fire Department to your request for members of the Stanislaus Regional Fire Authority to identify successes and opportunities for improvements in the coming year.

The fire investigation contract administered by the Modesto Fire Department is a valued service to both of our agencies. However, we believe that the program should develop "rules of engagement" which establish when it is appropriate to request an investigator to respond to an incident. There is a perception that, at times, an investigator is requested when it is not necessary. Quite frankly, the personnel in our respective agencies are guilty of this fact because they have not been directed, or trained, to make good decisions when considering the need for this resource. As you know, there is only one investigator on duty, each day, for the entire county. When that resource is inappropriately requested and assigned to an incident without true need, it is a waste of time, money, and decreases their availability to respond to "worthy" requests for service.

An incident occurred this past year which may have identified the need for adjustment within the fire investigation unit. The fire investigation unit should strive to develop working relationships with outside agencies to provide assistance on large, complex incidents within the county. This will establish the ability to engage subject matter experts from outside agencies and will introduce a third party into the process to provide unbiased review of physical evidence. This sharing of resources between agencies will ultimately make the entire function, or process, much more effective and credible.

The Training contract administered by the Salida Fire Department is of the least value to our departments as we receive very little direct benefit from this service. Our departments provide and administer our own training program which is managed by our assigned Training Officers, however, we do recognize the efforts and work given for the annual "All Risk" training event and believe it is an asset to our countywide firefighting team. It is our recommendation that the Training contract be cancelled as soon as possible. If we are unable to cancel this contract, we should review and revise the objectives and focus on specialized training such as Hazardous Materials Decon, First Responder Awareness/Operational, and supporting the CAD implementation project. One of the components that impacted the consistency and success of this program is



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that within this contract period, we have had three members serving in the position of Training Officer. We should not renew this contract when it expires in 2012. The elimination of the Training contract will reduce the RFA's annual expense and reduce the draw on reserve funds. This may extend the length of the other contracts that are of greater value to our organizations. We acknowledge the contributions, efforts, and dedication of all the employees of the contract providers who daily assist us in meeting our mission.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our thoughts and offer constructive input for our future."