

From: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
To: [Jesseka Rodriguez](#)
Subject: FW: Input on 11/19/24 Decision to Terminate Contract with Optimal Solutions Consulting
Date: Friday, January 17, 2025 5:12:43 PM

From: Robyn McKeen [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 5:05 PM
To: Board Of Supervisors <boardofsupervisors@santacruzcountycalifornia.gov>
Subject: Input on 11/19/24 Decision to Terminate Contract with Optimal Solutions Consulting

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Dear County Supervisors,

I'm writing to express my disappointment and concerns regarding the actions taken on November 19, 2024 to unexpectedly terminate the contract with Optimal Solutions Consulting. The CORE Initiative is both a critical funding source and a community effort to improve alignment for results and outcomes for our residents. Nicole Young and Nicole Lezin's support of the ambitious effort, under the County's direction, has been transparent, comprehensive, underpinned with integrity, and highly beneficial to the community. Based on what I've observed, I think the situation could have been handled with far greater respect and intentionality in regards to both the community initiative and the consultants.

In my community work, I have experienced both sides of program funding—serving as staff at agencies that received funding as well as those that provided it. When our community launched the CORE Initiative, I celebrated the intention and effort to align funding to community outcomes. Having applied for and received CORE funding in the early years for the Smart Path Coordinated Entry project at Housing Matters, I have firsthand experience of both the application process and the extensive technical assistance and alignment-building workshops offered by Optimal Solutions. In addition, having worked closely with nearly all of the CORE applicants over the years, I've heard and understand the frustrations that some nonprofit staff have about the CORE process, including the length and complexity of the application, and genuine concerns about shifts in funding allocations and priorities.

A collective community effort like CORE is going to have imperfections, and I see it as the responsibility of county leaders to work collaboratively with community partners to identify and improve those gaps, rather than reacting to criticism by essentially scrapping the initiative. I respect that as County Supervisors you have the unthanked task of weighing many perspectives and realities and making the best informed decisions you can. Given that, if a decision like this must be made in the future, I

hope you will do so with a thoughtful plan for the project, as well as communicating ahead of time to the parties involved out of respect for their professionalism and investment in the project.

Thank you for considering.

Sincerely,
Robyn McKeen