



**Improving Conditions for Transgender  
and Gender Diverse Communities  
within Seattle Shelter Systems:**

Recommendations Presented to the City of Seattle's Human  
Services Department

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# Introduction:

Ingersoll Gender Center (“Ingersoll”), founded in 1977, is one of our country’s oldest organizations led by and for transgender and gender diverse communities. We provide direct services, resources, community connections and advocacy for transgender and gender diverse communities with a vision of a world that nurtures healthy communities free from violence, centers self-determination for all people, and celebrates all gender identities and expressions. In the spring of 2019 as a result of years of service and advocacy the City of Seattle’s Human Service Department (HSD) approached us to produce a set of recommendations on how they could improve shelter conditions for transgender and gender diverse communities in Seattle in part to respond to a statement of legislative intent issued by the Seattle City Council. We hosted listening sessions with HSD staff, transgender and gender diverse communities, and community leaders. Their feedback, our research, and years of service have helped us produce these policy recommendations.

Transgender communities in Seattle are more likely to experience homelessness than both non-trans communities and trans communities nationally; 37% of transgender Washingtonians have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. In addition to the system specific barriers that exist currently in Seattle there are some core pieces of how transphobia shows up in our cultures, institutions and communities that must be named in order to craft policies that will affect real change for transgender and gender diverse communities.

Transphobia, like other types of gender based oppression, is rooted in sexism and white supremacy that has deeply impacted any sense of trust between our communities and systems of government. That deep distrust paired with the specific challenges of the current homelessness response system in Seattle results in a not uncommon decision for many in our communities to sleep outside rather than face the violence they may experience when accessing shelter and services. For our communities the violence they experience within the shelter system is not just the too common physical assault; it is the pervasive distrust of trans people and our experiences that impacts the support provided by staff or how conflict is resolved. If shelter staff are not being actively trained and supported to challenge damaging narratives about trans people, the power they hold in evaluating the reality of trans people in crisis makes a critical difference.

In addition to the training and technical assistance recommendations outlined in this report, HSD must continue to develop their analysis around why transgender and gender diverse communities are more likely to interact with the homelessness response system. An analysis that misses the connections like those between high rates of employment discrimination faced by our communities and housing access or

disability access issues and rates of moving out of homelessness, shelter agencies will continue to fail our communities.

You will find all resources used and cited to draft these recommendations in an appendix attached. We will also include a list of definitions for key terms relating to gender diversity that will help when reading our recommendations and while thinking through sections from the agency contract discussed.

We are excited to offer these robust recommendations and look forward to seeing HSD continue to engage with historically marginalized communities to build a more just response to our collective housing crisis.

## **Challenge: HSD contract language and structure does not provide clear expectations for service providers.**

HSD provided us their 2019 electronic contract for shelter agencies in Seattle. We analyzed the contract; identifying areas addressing gender and gender based discrimination to evaluate if there could be further improvements to make expectations clearer for service providers, as well as contract staff. We reviewed key sections in a listening discussion with HSD contract staff to gauge their understanding of equal access and protections afforded to gender diverse people in our city and their role in enforcement.

The current HSD contract includes language acknowledging the protections clients have from harassment and bias based on gender identity or sexual orientation from participating in programs offered by shelter providers. However, there is not further resource or information available for HSD contract staff to use as guidance with service providers on how to ensure equal access.

**"The Agency is expected to ensure equal access to program services in accordance with a person's self-identification of sexual orientation or gender identity. The Agency's staff shall not inquire about sexual orientation or gender identity to determine program eligibility or deny access based on records indicating a different sex or gender."**

*- HSD e-contract, Page 14.*

### **Equal Access**

Shelters are considered a public accommodation. Shelters are also well known to be highly gendered spaces, where in most cases people are placed into different sleeping arrangements and expected to use separated facilities based on their gender identity as being either male or female. Therefore, it is imperative to clarify the expectations for Shelter staff to uphold equal access to shelter programs for gender diverse folks including those who may not identify as strictly male or female.

In Seattle people have the right to use a gender segregated facility that is consistent with their gender identity. Shelter staff should be expected to provide reasonable accommodations to transgender and gender diverse people who are seeking shelter services from their agencies.

A national study conducted in 2015 reported that transgender Washingtonian respondents were denied equal treatment or service, verbally harassed, or physically attacked at many places of public accommodations. 33% experienced at least one

type of mistreatment in the past year (2014) when accessing a public accommodation where staff thought or knew they were transgender<sup>1</sup>.

Reasonable accommodations could look like making sure basic access needs are met for transgender and gender diverse people when utilizing shelter services. While working within the scope of local and state law, along with the acknowledgment of the violence and harassment that trans and gender diverse people continue to face in the public sphere, we describe reasonable accommodations within the context of a shelter in-take process as an example:

### **Intake Procedures**

In regards to their gender, client's should be able to self identify when necessary during their intake and to disclose if they prefer a name other than the one listed on their ID. It should also be made customary to ask all clients which gender pronouns (he/she/they) they prefer staff and other residents use. ID documents showing inconsistencies with their chosen name and gender should not be used to exclude a person from accessing gender segregated spaces that are consistent with their actual gender identity.

IDs are often barriers to transgender and gender diverse people when trying to access employment, housing and government assistance. For example only 14% of Washingtonians who participated in the NCTE survey reported that all of their IDs had the name and gender they preferred, while 62% reported that *none* of their IDs had the name and gender they preferred. The cost of changing IDs was one of the main barriers respondents faced<sup>2</sup>.

By the end of this year it is safe to say that the state of Washington Department of Licensing will be using an third gender marker "X" for folks who do not identify as female or male. HSD needs to provide expectations of accommodation for contracted staff when placing folks with third gender markers.

Under no circumstances should staff share private information about a client such as their trans status or medical information, unless the client provides explicit consent. "Outing" someone as transgender could have devastating consequences such as

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<sup>1</sup> 2015 *U.S. Transgender Survey: Washington State Report*. (2017). Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

physical harm or further transphobic discrimination and harassment by shelter staff or other clients. Clients should be made aware of anti-harassment policies and the grievance policy held by the agency.

The intake should include conversation around housing placement and sleeping arrangements. The safety of the client should be taken seriously. Therefore, staff should discuss availability of beds that are closer to night staff and the availability of private showers/bathrooms or alternate times for facility use if the client prefers. In gender segregated shelters, people who identify as men should be housed with men and use men's showers, while people who identify as women should be housed with women. People who do not identify as men or women should be housed where they feel most comfortable and safe. If private rooms are available, this information should be shared with the client as an option as well.

People may file claims with the City of Seattle office for Civil Rights (SOCR) for being denied services or being treated differently as part of a protected class. More clarification on the rights of individuals to use gender segregated facilities can be found under Chapter 14.06<sup>3</sup> of the City of Seattle Municipal Code.

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<sup>3</sup> Seattle, WA Municipal Code, Chapter 14.06 UNFAIR PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS PRACTICES, [https://library.municode.com/wa/seattle/codes/municipal\\_code?nodeId=TIT14HURI\\_CH14.06UNPUACPR](https://library.municode.com/wa/seattle/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=TIT14HURI_CH14.06UNPUACPR)

## Challenge: How HSD enforces shelter contracts to uphold the rights of gender diverse people

**“ Through the lens of equity, HSD supports programs, initiatives, and policies that address six key platforms: ...**

**5. Responding to Gender-Based Violence”**

*- HSD e-contract, page 6.*

### **Gender Based Violence**

The lack of understanding and consensus amongst staff on contract language impacts their ability to enforce shelter contracts to uphold the rights of transgender and gender diverse people seeking shelter.

The fifth key platform issue noted by HSD in their contract language is their support of programs that address gender-based violence. In our discussion, the working definition for gender-based violence was inconsistent amongst contract staff. Most HSD staff that responded to our questions regarding gender based violence were referring to domestic violence, a particular type of gender based violence. More specifically, contract staff were referring to domestic violence against women who were assigned female at birth.

As mentioned before, domestic violence may be a form of gender based violence however it is not representative of the larger picture of gender based violence.

It is also critical to acknowledge that survivors of domestic violence or intimate partner violence may include transgender men, transgender women, and people of

**“There are no DV and trauma survivor resources for transgender men. Very different level of need than cisgender and straight men services.**

*- Community member, Listening Discussion, 2019.*

other gender identities. In our questioning of HSD staff and transgender community members, both groups named transgender men as having limited or no access to support services and resources for accessing safety and shelter as survivors of domestic violence whether as single adults or with their children.

It was noted by an HSD staff member that the “homeless service system is not the best place to address gender-based violence.” So while general shelter providers

**“person-centered approach responds to the unique needs of each family and individual based on a brief assessment of their needs, strengths, and vulnerabilities. Once assessed, people are matched to the appropriate housing resources. Services should be customized to fit an individual’s needs rather than expecting an individual to follow strict programmatic guidelines for services they may or may not need.”**

- HSD e-contract, page 6.

may not be the appropriate programs to respond to gender-based violence, it is reasonable to expect them to provide resources and referrals to programs that center survivors of gender-based violence who are transgender or gender diverse.

### **Create a Person-Centered, Systemic Response**

33% of respondents to the NCTE survey in Washington who experienced homelessness in the 2014 avoided staying in a shelter because they feared being mistreated as a transgender person. These findings are consistent with the two community listening discussions we hosted which were comprised of about 20 gender diverse community members who had experienced homelessness at some point in their lives while living in Seattle. We also found that more than half of each listening group refused to stay in City funded shelters because they felt that it was safer to sleep outside because of their fear of harassment and violence they’d face in a shelter based on their gender identity.

**“We have to go to extreme ends of the gender binary to try and stay safe in a shelter.”**

- Community Member, Listening Discussion 2019.

## **Moving Forward**

### **Training and Technical Assistance**

By facilitating ongoing training and knowledge sharing from community groups and other civil rights groups for contract staff and shelter staff, HSD will cultivate a culture that values a deep understanding of the complexities that transgender and gender diverse folks navigate while trying to get their basic needs met like shelter and safety. HSD should be committed to supporting a community of practice for shelter providers to engage in an ongoing development of knowledge and resources

needed to move the work forward of disrupting transphobia, sexism, and racism in current provider practices Which will be expanded upon in further sections.

### **City of Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR)**

Ongoing education around gender diversity and gender based oppression will help contract staff and future shelter staff stay current on the ever-changing language used to describe the varied experiences of transgender folks. HSD needs to work collaboratively with existing resources available to them through the City like the Gender Justice Project (GJP).

The GJP housed within SOCR, is an effort to create an inclusive workplace and city. Seeking to end gender and racial bias within the City workforce,<sup>4</sup> the GJP provides intensive workshops and trainings that examine how racism and sexism work together to uphold transphobia and homophobia in our society. By developing language and understanding around gender equity, GJP facilitators help staff explore ways they can work together to challenge and disrupt gender and race based discrimination in the workplace.

### **Conflict Resolution**

It is encouraged that conflict resolution training and deescalation trainings be provided regularly to contracted agencies from third party organizations to ensure that knowledge is being held within agencies despite staff turnover. In the coming section we will explain in more detail why deescalation and conflict resolution skills are an important piece to addressing systemic barriers faced by the gender diverse community when accessing shelter services.

### **Community Knowledge: Creating a tool to Measure Cultural Competency**

Continued collaboration with transgender community groups will support HSD in being accountable to the gender diverse community by gaining culturally relevant and necessary insight from community leaders who are better equipped to assess the complex needs of gender diverse folks.

One potential outcome for building these relationships would be that HSD can work to ensure that critical terminology is well-defined in HSD agency contracts so that

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<sup>4</sup> "Gender Justice Project." *Seattle Office for Civil Rights*. <https://www.seattle.gov/civilrights/what-we-do/gender-justice-project>

## **Challenge: The current grievance processes in place for both shelter providers and HSD does not meet the needs of transgender and gender diverse communities.**

both staff and contracted providers have a consistent framework when addressing gender based discrimination while supporting transgender and gender diverse folks accessing shelter services.

Further, HSD should work with community groups to create a tool that measures cultural competency within City funded shelters and programs. This tool may include criteria noting strategies used to incentivize worker retention of gender diverse staff in agencies who are not queer and trans led organizations or criteria capturing when an organization is “by and for”.

### **Distrust of transgender people**

Due to our cultural norms and the way we police gender in our society, the gender binary that we operate under leaves little room for acceptance of variation within a person’s gender identity. The gender binary tells us that only men and women exist in our society and that each plays a specific role with masculine traits being highly valued.

These are the same cultural norms that say men shouldn’t cry or express affection towards one another and where women are expected to be nurturing and demure. Or if women are too assertive, men won’t find them attractive, assuming that a

***“If you don’t conform you get outed. When you get outed you get abused.”***  
- Community Member, Listening Discussion 2019.

woman’s identity is always in relation to men. Everyone in our society is hurt by our rigid gender constructs.

This forces gender diverse people to defend their existence because in our cultural understanding, transgender people shouldn’t exist. Aspects of transphobia are rooted in the idea that transgender people are lying about their gender identity and actually disguising themselves as the “opposite gender.” Transgender people are often seen as predators and deviant so we need to be put in our place when trying to access public spaces when presenting as our authentic selves.

With this understanding, we see that those who hold positions of authority over communities which include transgender people, will always be set up to fail them

unless they are adequately trained to understand how gender roles stemming from patriarchal culture work to oppress all of us, especially those who don't fit neatly into an M or F box.

### **Conflict with Shelter Staff**

A transgender man who came to our first listening discussion shared his story about the only time he and his son decided to stay in a shelter in Seattle. Typically this family survived by staying with other community and finding ways to avoid sleeping in the streets. However, this time they felt that there were no other options that felt safer for

***"My cis peers don't get the same kind of provocation."***

- Community Member, Listening Discussion 2019.

them. Having nowhere else to go that evening, he decided to present as female in order to avoid conflict within the shelter and to avoid having to sleep in the streets with his son. These duplicitous strategies to avoid being marked as a predator by staff, become increasingly difficult for folks who may not be able to comport within the gender binary.

When asked how they felt they were treated compared to cisgender and gender conforming folks staying in the shelter, community members felt like staff and other clients alike were trying to push their boundaries, "getting [them] to cause problems." Another gender diverse person who was enrolled in a shelter program endured "curt and dismissive" behavior from the shelter staff within their agency. When the community member would seek accommodations during shower times, that particular staff member would refuse to let them shower at all. When the community member was asked to take a drug test administered by that same staff member, the staff member was caught trying to alter the community members test in order to get them dismissed from the program.

### **Conflict with other clients**

A community member remarked that when conflict with other folks in shelters occurred after a staff member outed the community member to other shelter seekers, nothing was done. Staff tried to provoke this person until they reacted in a way that would get them kicked out of the shelter. When a complaint was filed, the burden fell on the community member to produce evidence of the alleged behavior. However, other staff who witnessed the behavior refused to come forward.

## **Current Grievance Policy**

Currently grievances are only handled within the site of the incident. HSD staff were unable to reach a consensus on the procedures a client of a shelter should follow in the event that the grievance persists and the client has exhausted the shelter's internal process.

By having the agency be in charge of processing and tracking grievances within its organization, it provides a disincentive to the agency to be consistent in how effective and equitable their grievance policies are in practice. There is no clear defined expectation that all grievances must come to a resolution or be handled within a certain time frame. Given that shelters see a rotation of people seeking their services often dependent upon emergency and crisis, a grievance policy with a lot of red tape becomes a high barrier to a client seeking an outcome while they are still actively utilizing the shelter's services.

In addition, filing a grievance puts a community member at risk of being a target of retaliation be it from another person staying at the shelter or a staff member named in the complaint. In their experience, a community members from our discussion witnessed people being kicked out of programs for filing grievances. Another participant referred to a grievance procedure they went through as a "loop of hopelessness." In regards to harassment from other clients, participants in our listening sessions recounted having to continue to interact and "dodge" their harassers during different times when seeking support from different programs. These experiences reinforce the choices transgender and gender diverse people continue to make-sleeping in the streets rather than relive traumatic experiences within city shelters.

Further, whether it was their own grievance or another person, ***nobody in our discussions had heard of a successful resolution from a filed grievance.***

## **Moving Forward**

### **Accountability**

All participants in our community listening discussions noted agency staff as a contributing factor to their reluctance in either interacting with the shelter system or choosing to leave the shelters they had entered for services. Whether it was from past experiences of staff members outing folks without their consent, or refusing to

interrupt sexual harassment from other shelter seekers, it is clear that staff have the ability to play an instrumental role in either deescalating conflict or advocating for someone who is being mistreated by others. Due to the discrimination that gender diverse participants have observed within city shelters, many who decided to stay in shelters had to hide their transgender identity by altering their gender expression and other duplicitous behavior for fear or violence from other shelter seekers and discrimination from agency staff.

HSD should be working with their contracted agencies to develop systems that mediate conflict and grievances filed by community members so that the burden does not fall on community members to have to advocate for themselves with no support or resources for successful resolutions.

It is deeply questionable to ask someone being harassed or abused to seek assistance from that very person or entity. Anecdotal evidence from the listening discussion and the hundreds of community members we've supported with emergency housing, suggests that night staff in shelters have a reputation for high turnover rates. Often times complaint and grievance policies take too long to process for any resolutions to be effective, specifically in regards to conflict between staff. With a high turnover rate, resolutions will mean very little in terms of accountability for that staff member. However, noting the number of instances that grievances occur within a particular organization and the type of grievances filed could provide HSD with meaningful data to use when evaluating the effectiveness of an agency to provide adequate services to gender diverse clients.

An effective and equitable accountability model is not limited to but should include and address the following:

- 1.** A third party enforcement group that accepts, tracks, and investigates grievances filed by community members when it comes to harassment and discrimination.
  - 1.** This enforcement group should be in part community trained, trauma informed, and focused on reducing harm to all those named in the conflict or grievance.
- 2.** Be clear of what transphobia and gender based hate crimes involve:
  - physical and verbal harassment
  - Outing a person without consent
  - Barring individuals from accessing gender segregated spaces and facilities that are consistent with their gender identity
  - Staff ignoring or refusing to interrupt transphobic harassment and discrimination occurring during their shifts.

- 3.** Provide the person filing a grievance with options and resources that will help them feel supported and safe while still seeking shelter programs and services.
- 4.** The process should be timely with an explicit timeline outlined as part of the grievance process.
- 5.** The resolution of the grievance process should consider the individual incident as well as the accountability of the agency/site of the incident.

## **Challenge: Performance based contracts have negative impacts on transgender and gender diverse communities.**

The current performance based contract used by HSD with shelter agencies does not explicitly state the proportion of their clients who fall under protected classes that are then moved into permanent housing as part of their performance metrics. The current metrics used within the performance based contract assumes that it takes the same amount of effort and labor to move any individual into permanent housing when in reality the barriers faced by people of color and transgender or gender diverse people are much greater than those for white and non trans individuals. Further, with the shortage in affordable and accessible housing for agencies to draw from, agencies involved with doing good work are being penalized for not having the resources to move people out of homelessness.

### **Quality vs. Quantity**

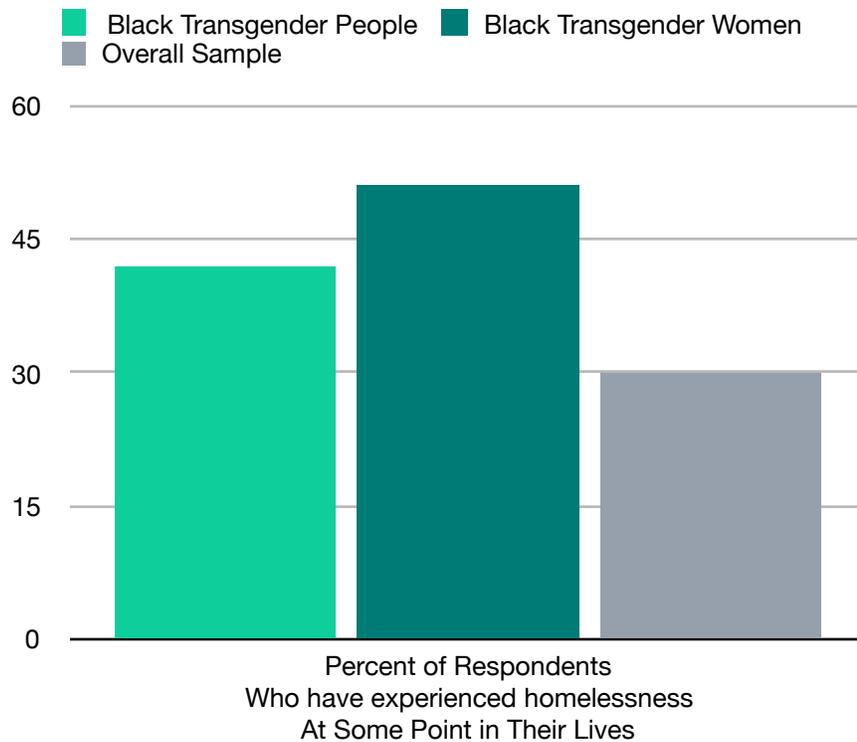
If there is no requirement for agencies to track demographics outside of typical data like race and sex, there is a missed opportunity to gather information about other marginalized communities like gender diverse people and people with disabilities.

Furthermore, it's important for HSD contract staff to understand that people are not solely marginalized based on single identities. As a result, those who face compounded barriers because of their race, gender, age, ability, etc. often have to work that much harder to advocate for themselves within systems that are not meant for them to succeed.

Many of the participants in our community discussions identified as people with disabilities. Accessing shelters were a huge barrier for all of the disabled participants. Whether it was the fact that older buildings had no elevators and no staff who knew how to operate a wheelchair lift, or staff refusing to let service animals into the shelter because they thought the animal was just a pet. All of the participants who identified as disabled had been turned away from a shelter or weren't able to have basic access needs met while accessing a shelter.

### **Transgender People of Color**

Studies have shown that transgender people of color face barriers to accessing stable housing and employment at disproportionate rates compared to their white counterparts. The Graph below shows NCTE findings that black transgender people had higher rates of experiencing homelessness than the overall sample. This number increased when looking at the responses of black transgender women:



### **NCTE Data (2015) on Black Transgender Participants**

Many participants in our community discussions made reference to being labeled “difficult” or a “trouble maker” when filing complaints, or attempting to advocate for themselves in other ways when they were being targeted by other shelter clients and staff. Participants who opted to stay quiet about their experiences while staying in a shelter did so in order to avoid these labels which often resulted in the dismissal of the transgender person from the shelter.

By only going off of number of people moved into permanent housing with no breakdown of race *and* gender, we are failing to ensure that the most marginalized and therefore, the most “difficult” people are also being moved into permanent housing. That is to say, if HSD continues to ignore intersectional data when evaluating the success of their contracted programs, they will continue to fail transgender people of color in Seattle accessing shelter services.

## **Tracking and verification**

During the staff listening sessions it was made clear that not all shelters gather the same data with respect to gender and gender identity. Often agencies will collect data about a person identifying as male or female, however it is not required to allow people to identify as transgender or gender diverse during their intake process as part of data collection for the Homeless Management Information System.

HSD has an opportunity to develop baseline data about the local transgender community who are attempting to access shelter services that lead to permanent housing. The lack of this basic data reinforces the barriers that exist for transgender led organizations to apply successfully for performance based contracts in the future.

By not taking this opportunity, HSD is failing to evaluate the level of service gender diverse people are being offered within currently contracted agencies and to develop a more detailed profile of the transgender people working their way through the shelter system in Seattle.

## **Unintended Consequences**

How do we ensure that people who have a harder time being placed into permanent housing aren't being pawned off on other organizations to maintain their performance measures for their funding?

For example, if a person were to file a grievance at a shelter and shortly thereafter, they are referred out to another agency– how does HSD track whether or not this pattern persists between this particular organization, the nature of the grievance, and the identities carried by the client?

Another concern is that within the current agency contract, there isn't a maximum number of times that a person can be referred out before they must be moved into permanent housing. The dearth in information and systems to ensure equity for marginalized people leaves them transgender people the dark about their own experiences, which further isolates the people HSD and their contracted shelters purport to serve.

How is HSD supporting the work being done by agencies that are in fact moving people from historically marginalized communities into permanent housing when

their numbers may not reflect the effort that is truly required to overcome the obstacles that face these groups?

The RSJI toolkit is meant to mitigate unintended consequences and although it isn't a perfect tool or explicitly for evaluating gender equity, it would have illuminated a lot of the concerns that intersect with the experiences of transgender and gender diverse communities.

### **Moving Forward**

One clue into how transgender people are being treated could be to analyze the frequency in which they are getting referred out to other organizations to avoid dealing with folks who are harder to place into permanent housing. There is no system currently in place that tracks how often a particular person is being referred out before they either enter permanent housing, or exit the shelter system. More importantly, because grievances are handled internally, based on the e-contract there is no way to note a pattern of how often people are referred out or kicked out after they've filed a grievance or complaint with a particular shelter.

In order to make existing contract language around supporting folks with varying gender identities and sexual orientation useful, measuring cultural competency as part of an agency's performance goals should also be considered.

In short, HSD should use all equity measuring tools available including the RSJI toolkit to identify gaps and oversights within the existing contract structure to ensure that the move to performance based contracting furthers the mission of moving people out of systemic poverty and *not* incentivizing questionable practices that further harm people living in crisis.

## Conclusion:

Under the ideologies of white supremacy and male supremacy, people in our society face oppression from different target locations. Forms of oppression like sexism and racism that we operate under impact us all in different ways. Bias and barriers enforced by racism and sexism are further multiplied if you identify as transgender or gender diverse. It's important to name that transgender people of color and especially, transgender women of color, are the most targeted within the transgender community. In the context of this report, transgender women of color are profiled as predatory and fraudulent in how they present their gender identity when accessing shelter services or when being denied housing.

While the recommendations we've provided are comprehensive, the issues pertaining to gender equity and inclusion within HSD contracted shelters are deep and cannot be remedied solely with this current iteration of inquiry. The level of commitment that HSD leadership need to make in order to create meaningful change for transgender and gender diverse people seeking assistance within the shelter system goes beyond satisfying the Statement of Legislative Intent.

In conclusion, HSD is greatly encouraged to continue to provide opportunities for education around the transgender experience and the experiences of gender diverse people when navigating gatekeeping and other barriers within institutions like City funded shelters.

HSD should create a systematized way for contracted agencies to provide opportunities for clients to self attest their gender identity whether or not their ID documents match during intake, or any other orientation processes for shelter programs and services. Within this new system there should be a way to track referrals based on gender identity and the number of times an individual is referred out to other organizations before exiting homelessness or exiting the shelter system.

HSD should use a third party system that serves to mediate conflict and grievances related to bias and discrimination filed by community members so that the burden does not fall on community members to have to advocate for themselves with no support or resources for successful resolutions.

Although there are some youth programs funded by HSD that are LGBTQ centered, there are no programs currently being funded by HSD that specifically address the needs of transgender and gender diverse adults. Since the transgender experience is so varied, with people often coming out later in their lives which may lead to financial

instability due to workplace discrimination or housing discrimination, there is a disproportionate gap in services for folks who are transgender or gender diverse within HSD contracted agencies. Moving forward, HSD should consider transgender and gender diverse people as a vulnerable population that needs to be centered when contracting with shelter agencies.

We are encouraged by the willingness of HSD staff to begin engaging in deeper conversations about the intense systemic change and cultural shifts needed for our City's shelters to better serve transgender and gender diverse communities. In order to achieve any of the changes outlined in the report or the numerous others needed to achieve that systemic change HSD must remain in deep relationship with transgender and diverse leaders and community organizations. The City of Seattle's shelter system routinely and systemically fails our communities in its current state. Collectively, our communities have too much at stake to not take aggressive and system-wide action.

# Appendix

1. Definitions
2. HSD e-contract with Shelter Agencies
3. U.S. Transgender Survey: Washington State Report
4. U.S. Transgender Survey: Report on the Experiences of Black Respondents
5. U.S. Transgender Survey: Report on the Experiences of American Indians and Alaska Native Respondents
6. Transitioning Our Shelters: A GUIDE TO MAKING HOMELESS SHELTERS SAFE FOR TRANSGENDER PEOPLE by Lisa Mottet and John M. Ohle
7. City of Seattle Municipal Code: 14.06.010

## Definitions:

8. *Gender* - The socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers “appropriate” as masculine or feminine.
9. *Gender Identity* - A person’s internal sense of gender, which may be different from one’s assigned sex
10. *Transgender* - An umbrella term that describes individuals whose gender identity is different from their assigned sex at birth. There is no one way to be transgender.
11. *Assigned Sex at Birth* - An individual is assigned “female” or “male” at birth. This is achieved through a subjective process of evaluating physical and possibly physiological characteristics of the individual.
12. *Public Accommodation* - A public accommodations is where people gather or buy goods and services.
13. *Protected Class* - is a group of people who have a common characteristic and who are legally protected from discrimination on the basis of that characteristic. Gender identity is considered a protected class in Seattle<sup>5</sup>.
14. *Gender based violence* - Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse towards a person based on their actual or perceived gender identity.
15. *Domestic Violence or Intimate Partner Violence* - Domestic violence or intimate partner violence includes physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, as well as sexual coercion and stalking by a current or former intimate partner.
16. *Gender Binary* - The classification of gender as being distinctly either feminine or masculine with no overlap.
17. *Gender Expression* - The way that a person communicates their gender identity. This may include the way a person dresses, styles their hair, the way they speak or the way they carry themselves.

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<sup>5</sup> Civil Rights. Seattle Office for Civil Rights. <https://www.seattle.gov/civilrights/civil-rights#whatisaprotectedclass>