

**From:** [Trish Spencer](#)  
**To:** [Lara Weisiger](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: VOL Contract questions  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 4, 2024 4:01:37 PM  
**Attachments:** [VOL staff organization and bio.pdf](#)

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: Amy Wooldridge <[AWooldridge@alamedaca.gov](mailto:AWooldridge@alamedaca.gov)>  
Date: Jun 4, 2024 3:13 PM  
Subject: VOL Contract questions  
To: Trish Spencer <[tspencer@alamedaca.gov](mailto:tspencer@alamedaca.gov)>  
Cc: Lisa Fitts <[lfitts@alamedaca.gov](mailto:lfitts@alamedaca.gov)>, Jennifer Ott <[jott@alamedaca.gov](mailto:jott@alamedaca.gov)>

Hello Councilmember Herrera Spencer,

CM Ott shared your questions with me regarding the Village of Love contract questions. These are the responses:

1. Does staff monitor the services being provided by VOL? Does staff perform unannounced visits to VOL facilities?  
Absolutely. We conduct an annual formal monitoring with VOL in addition to regular, ongoing monitoring through both scheduled and mostly unannounced visits. Staff visits VOL facilities at least once weekly and usually more often.
2. Does staff conduct exit interviews of people leaving the safe parking and other shelters operated by VOL?  
Formal exit interviews are challenging given the transience of the people served, however staff talks regularly to people at VOL facilities. We check in with them frequently and provide staff contact so people can reach out to meet with staff directly. Staff meets with the facility users one on one upon request.
3. Do we have a CV for Joey or any of the managers at VOL?  
Standard procedure is to require a short biography of key staff as part of the proposal. Attached are the pages with that information.

Thank you,  
Amy

Amy Wooldridge, she/her  
Assistant City Manager  
[awooldridge@alamedaca.gov](mailto:awooldridge@alamedaca.gov)  
(510) 747-4709

#### 4. Team Organization and Description:

Each staff member at The Village of Love has worked with the unsheltered in varying capacities, including providing street outreach, providing direct assistance within The Day Center/Safe Parking programs, managing transitional housing facilities, providing case management, facilitating homeless support groups and classes, organizing outreach events, street clean up, and working with other local organizations to provide wrap around services for the unsheltered.

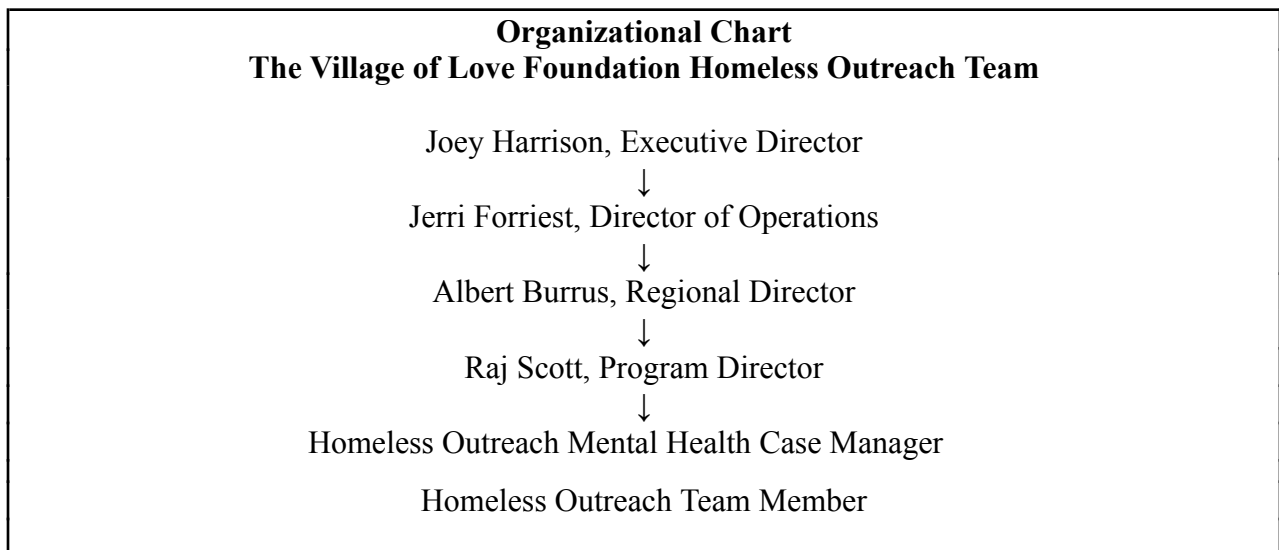
We understand that to attain the goal of outreach, working together with the other organizations is crucial. The Village of Love Homeless Outreach Team, Day Center, Safe Parking, Overnight and Emergency Supportive Housing programs, work closely and effectively with Christ Church Winter warming shelter, Christ Church onsite shower program, 211 and the Homeless hotline, Dine and Connect, and the Mobile Health Unit.

That is, The Village of Love, plus five other organizations, coming together to provide an umbrella of services for the unsheltered. Which means the unsheltered to which we outreach, will be able to fully utilize all services provided at The Village of Love (spend the day indoors, sleep inside overnight, sleep in their vehicle, receive referrals to social services), deliberate on issues related to the homeless, have access to sleep inside, have a place to shower, utilize a free public call line to find organizations that can assist them with social services, etc., receive a meal, receive free medical care, linkages and referrals to community resources.

If one group doesn't participate, vital services become nearly impossible to pull off. To assist the unsheltered, we rely on local organizations working together towards similar goals.

Our team is composed of members who are supported by each other, work towards interchangeable achievements, and share common attainments. In order to successfully achieve the goals, this requires teamwork, coordination, open communication, and most of all, patience.

The principal Contact is Joey Harrison, Executive Director of The Village of Love Foundation.



## **5. Key Staff/Team Experience:**

The Homeless Outreach Team Members receive training on the specific duties and tasks required. The Homeless Outreach Team Members are goal oriented and support one another within an integrated system. As part of the outreach team, they visit encampments daily and make regular contact with the unsheltered and assist in providing supplies, information and performing onsite assessments. They work to build trusting relationships with the unsheltered, to encourage them to be receptive to services. As frontline workers, they have a significant understanding of the unsheltered community. They regularly engage and assist unsheltered individuals with services and provide resources and referrals to other agencies, as needed. The Outreach Team workers have great communication and time management skills, and work well with community organizations.

Essential team members of The Village of Love Foundation, include:

### **Joey Harrison            Executive Director, The Village of Love Foundation**

In his role as the Operations Director at the Temescal Business Improvement District, he started a successful homeless outreach program as well as trained and led the outreach team in downtown Berkeley. Joey also helped to train the outreach teams in uptown/downtown Oakland and in San Francisco Tenderloin district. Joey was slated to speak on a panel with the renowned Kerry Morrison and the esteemed Dr. Thomas Insel, at the CDA, California Downtown Association Conference in March 2020 at the West Coast Urban District Forum. From the Oakland Police Department, Joey was awarded the Chief's Certificate of Commendation for his leadership and work in the community.

Mr. Harrison created a de-escalation training program and has presented training for business Improvement districts in Temescal, Uptown Downtown Oakland, Jack London, Tenderloin, Downtown San Leandro, Union Square In San Francisco, Berkeley Telegraph, Downtown Berkeley, Options Recovery, SOMA West, and the City of Alameda.

As Operations Director for the Temescal Business program, Joey helped develop, and was the lead, in the pilot community engagement program for the unsheltered. This program was a success and is now a funded program in the district.

Joey has experience as a house manager, having held that position at Options Recovery where he managed 32 clients.

Mr. Harrison worked closely with psychiatrists and case managers as the lead on a pilot program for Alameda County Behavioral Health Services Oakland Community Support Center (OCSC), with SMI (serious mental illness) focus, assisting those who have mental health challenges, helping them achieve their goals by providing outpatient case management services. This pilot program began with 4 clients and grew to over 30 regular clients, with facilities in multiple locations

Joey recently received the Chief Accommodations award, as well as the Horizon SMS Holdings Award, in Nashville, Tennessee, for his work in the community.

Joey was selected by former Oakland Mayor Libby Schaff, to sit on the newly formed Oakland Homeless Commission.

Mr. Harrison also sits on the Oakland District Leaders Homeless Coalition Steering Committee.

**Jerri Forriest                      Director of Operations, The Village of Love Foundation**

Jerri's background includes Office Manager for WIC, Executive Administrator for Healthy Start, Operations Manager of Crescent City Career Institute Medical Career School, Operations Coordinator for Run With Us, a social and life educational travel group for women in recovery; or who have experienced trauma, Front Office Assistant of Pegasus Mental Health Day Treatment Center, Community Organizer and Public Event Facilitator.

Ms. Forriest has overseen operational activities at every level of an organization. Responsibilities included hiring and training employees and managing quality assurance programs, strategizing process improvements, budget maintenance, developing community relationships, developing processes and procedures and ensuring operations within a fast paced organization.

Ms. Forriest is a Consultant, Certified Medicaid Application Specialist, an EKG Technician and Certified in CPR and First Aid.

Ms. Forriest facilitates The Village of Love weekly pop-up distribution event for the unsheltered, guiding unsheltered support groups, distributing clothing, food, hygiene supplies and resource information to the unsheltered community.

**Albert Burruss                      Regional Director, The Village of Love Foundation**

Mr. Burruss' background includes Operations Manager, General Manager, Branch Operations Manager, Multi-unit Operations and Personnel Manager and Operations and Safety Manager

Mr. Burruss had been responsible for the daily oversight of a 32- person team in multiple locations, maintaining current budgeted revenue and managing a multimillion-dollar annual budget. He oversaw recruitment, hiring, training, continuous development of all staff, disciplinary actions, and growth of business through internal efficiencies and improvements.

As General Manager of Block by Block – Oakland, Mr. Burruss was responsible for the daily guidance and direction of a 45-person team; Performance management, Recruitment and selection of employees, which led to a 119% reduction in turnover. He Trained, coached, and mentored employees to create a cohesive team of security and maintenance in the ambassadors representing Downtown who performed Street Outreach.

His collective efforts include having collaborated with community partners including the City of Oakland, Oakland Police Department, security providers, public outreach and mental health organizations, and stakeholders to facilitate vital city functions.

Mr. Burruss has acted as a liaison for the district with the City of San Jose, improving community awareness and relations and he has actively participated in the Chamber of Commerce, by holding a Board Director role.

**Raj Scott      Program Director, The Village of Love Day Foundation**

Mr. Scott oversees The Village of Love's programs and program managers. He works closely with our Day Center/Safe Parking management, Emergency Supportive Housing management, and the Berkeley Sacred Rest Drop In Center manager.

He has years of experience as House manager at Options recovery. His extensive experience includes peer support, group leadership, counseling, and coaching.

In addition to his management experience, Mr. Scott he has lived experience, having been homeless for a period of time. He is able to relate to the needs of the unsheltered and has developed ways and methods to motivate.

**Regina James      Mental Health Case Manager (Full Time)**

As part of the Homeless Outreach Team, Regina is responsible for managing clients with critical mental health conditions. She works to connect these clients with Alameda Family Services, case managers, and their care team, to provide higher level care for mental health clients.

Regina brings a wealth of experience to the Outreach team, having worked previously as a substance abuse counselor and detox specialist. She has years of experience working with low income families and individuals. She is skilled in relapse prevention, substance abuse treatment plans, conflict resolutions, and psychosocial assessments.

**Elbert McBride      Homeless Outreach Worker (Full Time)**

As part of the Homeless Outreach Team, Elbert provides clients with rides to essential appointments and services, as well as to the Village of Love's Alameda Day Center. He responds to calls to our Homeless Outreach Team's phone, and regularly checks on clients, offering to bring them to the Center and Safe Parking programs.

Elbert brings years of experience working with the unsheltered community, having worked as a counselor at Youth Uprising and as a care provider for IHSS. His professional goal is to pursue a

career assisting individuals that struggle with everyday living, and help them find success and security.

**Sharon Gambles      Homeless Outreach Worker (Part Time)**

As part of the Homeless Outreach Team, Sharon provides clients with rides to essential appointments and services, as well as to the Village of Love's Alameda Day Center. She responds to calls to our Homeless Outreach Team's phone, and regularly checks on clients, offering to bring them to the Center and Safe Parking programs.

Sharon has years of experience working as a Peer Advocate at UCSF Medical Center and Lyon Martin Medical Associates, and brings expertise in working with HIV positive clients. She also worked as a Substance Abuse Counselor at Haight Ashbury Center for Recovery, where she supported NA and AA meetings and the recovery of HIV positive individuals dealing with substance abuse. She is skilled in addiction counseling, case management, behavioral health, and crisis intervention.