



Council of the District of Columbia

John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Brianne K. Nadeau
Councilmember, Ward 1

Chairperson
Human Services Committee

Committee Member
Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization
Government Operations
Health

March 4, 2020

Laura Zeilinger, Director
Department of Human Services
64 New York Avenue, NE, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Director Zeilinger:

Thank you for attending the performance oversight hearing convened by the Committee on Human Services on January 29, 2020. I also want to offer thanks to you and your staff for providing support during the Committee on Human Services performance oversight hearing at the R.I.S.E. Demonstration Center on February 18, 2020, and for hosting the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Human Services Policy Committee at the Ayah. During each of these events and in recent news coverage, questions regarding the operation of the hotels and the completion of the Short Term Family Housing (STFH) Construction Projects have been raised.

Although the completion of the remaining STFH sites will not guarantee that DHS will be able to stop placing families in hotels, there is no doubt that the two issues are closely linked. Furthermore, in prehearing responses, DHS wrote that it plans to exit hotels by the end of calendar year 2020,¹ which is around the same time that the final STFH facility will be completed. For me, the closure of the hotels and the completion of the remaining STFH sites is an important step in the process that the Mayor envisioned some years ago to ensure that families have a safe and dignified place to stay on a temporary basis while they work to stabilize or transition into more permanent housing.

As Council begins to plan for the FY2021 budget, it is of particular importance that the Committee on Human Services has the most up-to-date information on both matters. Drawing on our experience with the closure of DC General and the opening of the first STFH facilities, I gathered a number questions and requests, outlined on the following

¹ “Quality Inn is slated to close in the third quarter of FY20, Days Inn during the first quarter of FY21.” FY19-20 DHS Performance Oversight Pre-Hearing Responses, Question 66.

page. Unless otherwise indicated, I would appreciate responses by next Friday, March 13. As always, I am available to address any questions or concerns should they arise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brianne K. Nadeau". The script is cursive and fluid.

Brianne K. Nadeau

Cc: Mayor Muriel Bowser
Deputy Mayor Wayne Turnage

1. Is DHS aware of any delays in the construction of the remaining STFH facilities that may compromise their delivery dates?
2. Does DHS have an expectation that all delays will be shared with the agency as soon as practicable, or only to the extent that the delivery date may be compromised?
3. By what date does DHS intend to stop using hotels as emergency shelter for families?
4. If any of the remaining STFH facilities are delayed, will DHS move forward with its plan to stop using the hotels by the date provided in response to question three?
5. Aside from delays in the completion of the STFH facilities, are there any circumstances under which DHS might consider continuing to use the hotels past calendar year 2020? For what purposes?
6. If DHS does not stop using the hotels as emergency shelter for families before the start of 2020-2021 school year:
 - a. What plans will be put in place to ensure that students are able to safely commute to school?
 - b. Is there a plan to continue shuttle service for the next school year?
7. Beginning Friday, March 13, and every second Friday of the month until hotels are no longer being used, please provide a report detailing the following for each hotel:
 - a. The current number of families residing at the hotel, including length of stay;
 - b. The number of exits, detailed by program;
 - c. The number of lease-ups scheduled, detailed by program;
 - d. The number of families making significant progress to lease-up, providing as much detail as possible for each family, including the projected lease-up dates; and
 - e. The number of families confronting significant barriers to lease-up, providing as much detail as possible for each family, including how the agency is working with families to overcome such barriers.
8. Beginning Friday, March 13, and every second Friday of the month until hotels are no longer being used, please provide a written plan that includes the following:
 - a. The projected need of contracted units of emergency family shelter or hotels;
 - b. The available number of contracted units of emergency family shelter or hotels, including locations; and
 - c. The total projected cost for contracted units, detailing whether currently funded in the Fiscal Year 2020 budget and financial plan.