

March 29, 2024

Executive Office  
401 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 800  
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Mr. Dow Constantine:

Thank you for serving this community for a fourth-term as King County Executive. You lead one of the largest regional governments in the United States. In your online biography, you take pride in your priority to ensure that every person thrives and is economically secure to contribute to the life of our community. We appreciate your focus and efforts.

My name is Grant Migliore and I am a student at Adelphi University. I belong to the school's social work social action group. Another group member interviewed a Program Director who manages and oversees operational functions of a homeless shelter in your district. My social action group members are concerned about the economic justice and equality in shelters. More specifically, there is a lack of funding for the overpopulation of migrants entering our system.

This interview was designed to find out if everyone seeking shelter was treated fairly despite their financial situation. The population of the shelter in question included adults, domestic partnerships, adults with families and siblings. The Department of Homelessness Services funds this housing facility. All residents seeking shelter must qualify by providing evidence that they were homeless for one year. To determine their eligibility to reside in this shelter, clients were questioned about police contact including tickets provided by the police and asked if the clients used any showering facilities or stayed in places like libraries to keep warm. The responses of the clients would help determine whether the clients have been homeless and for how long they have been homeless. Without documentation of some sort, the Program Director stated that "we will have to go a different route." Many of these people are workers who lost their jobs during the pandemic. Some used to work at restaurants where they used to eat and

some worked at facilities that provided showers. To make matters more difficult, there has been a huge increase of asylum-seeking refugees to support. The Program Director said he had 40 migrants contributing to an overpopulation of his shelter without the additional funds to service them.

The migrants need assistance too. The Program Director said they come from other states or countries where “they are escaping government corruption, violence, and many other traumatic events.” Our government is not providing additional funding; yet according to the Program Director our government is “requesting that migrants be given a plane ticket to their country after staying at the homeless shelter for over 30 days.” The Program Director said “another option is to be transferred to another transitional housing dedicated to migrants, located with no specific resources and/or support.” The Program Director refers to the assistance as a “Band-Aid.”

The members of my action group agree with the Program Director’s belief that there needs to be a change in the power dynamics within the system. Program Directors of homeless shelters need help and they need it now. We are requesting a better plan on how funding should be disbursed. The Program Director makes a strong suggestion to have the people making decisions to be a witness of the people’s outcomes who are affected by their decisions. It is our hope as social work students to advocate for the underserved and promote economic justice for all residents in shelters. Hopefully there can be an increase in funding to manage the needs of migrants entering our country. Thank you for your time and consideration of our concerns.