

From: Sam Ruark <sam@greenbuilt.org>
Subject: Re: Weatherization program Update- Termination Notice to Perform All Services Internally
To: Jeremiah P. LeRoy <Jeremiah.LeRoy@buncombecounty.org>
Cc: Bridget Herring <bherring@ashevillenc.gov>; Kiera Bulan <kbulan@ashevillenc.gov>; Jackie Hamstead <Jackie.Hamstead@buncombecounty.org>; Jamie Wine <jamie@bluehorizonsproject.com>; Hannah Egan <hannah@greenbuilt.org>; Kelvin Bonilla <kelvin@greenbuilt.org>; Amber Gilot <amber@greenbuilt.org>
Sent: April 27, 2023 4:43 PM (UTC-04:00)

Thank you Jereiah for your message and attention to this matter. Your email is helping me breathe a little easier.

We understand the actions you all are taking to ensure Equity is reflected in the RFP process and respect those actions.

I have [REDACTED] to Dee's message that I am contemplating sending out to the whole group. However, I don't want to keep perpetuating negative responses and taking up the valuable time of electeds. If you feel like this information would be helpful for the group please let me know. Perhaps this may also be valuable for the Chief Equity Officer and the SP Director.

thank you, Sam

On Thu, Apr 27, 2023 at 3:54 PM Jeremiah P. LeRoy <Jeremiah.LeRoy@buncombecounty.org> wrote:

Sam,

Thanks for keeping up updated. I received the email from Dee and we have met internally to discuss it and how we are moving forward. From the County perspective, we have an understanding of your situation and a history of past contracts with UCD that I believe you are at least somewhat familiar with.

At this point I have not heard from any elected official on the matter. I have however met with County Management as well as our Strategic Partnerships Director and our Chief Equity Officer. We will be potentially making a few minor updates to the upcoming RFP. Our first step will be a more thorough review of the RFP from our Equity team to provide us feedback on any steps we can take to ensure the highest level of thoughtfulness regarding equity and inclusion during the proposal process.

I don't view this circumstance as having any negative reflection on GBA's weatherization program staff so please don't be overly concerned about any corrective action being needed. I will keep you updated if any additional conversation arise from this incident.

Thanks,

Jeremiah

From: Sam Ruark <sam@greenbuilt.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 25, 2023 2:27 PM
To: Bridget Herring <bherring@ashevillenc.gov>; Kiera Bulan <kbulan@ashevillenc.gov>; Jeremiah P. LeRoy <Jeremiah.LeRoy@buncombecounty.org>; Jackie Hamstead <Jackie.Hamstead@buncombecounty.org>; Jamie Wine <jamie@bluehorizonsproject.com>; Hannah Egan <hannah@greenbuilt.org>; Kelvin Bonilla <kelvin@greenbuilt.org>
Subject: Fwd: Weatherization program Update- Termination Notice to Perform All Services Internally

Hi Bridget, Kiera, Jeremiah and Jackie,

I'm looping you into this email chain since it goes to many leaders in City and County government.

We are available to participate in any process relative to this to help bring understanding and resolution.

I apologize for any extra work this creates for you all.

Sam

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

From: **DEROTHEA WILLIAMS** <derotheawilliams@att.net>
Date: Tue, Apr 25, 2023 at 11:48 AM
Subject: Re: Weatherization program Update- Termination Notice to Perform All Services Internally
To: Hannah Egan <hannah@greenbuilt.org>, Kelvin Bonilla <kelvin@greenbuilt.org>, Jamie Wine <jamie@bluehorizonsproject.com>, Amber Gilot <amber@greenbuilt.org>, Sam Ruark <sam@greenbuilt.org>
Cc: Eldertomw <eldertomw@gmail.com>, JV Farr <farr77331@gmail.com>, Damain Poole <damainpoole@gmail.com>, Bennie Miller <mudface313@charter.net>, Julie Mayfield <julievmayfield@gmail.com>, councilgroup <ashevillencouncil@ashevillenc.gov>, Debra Campbell <dcampbell@ashevillenc.gov>, Avril Pinder <avril.pinder@buncombecounty.org>, Alfred Whitesides <alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org>, Brownie W. Newman <brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org>, Amanda Edwards <amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org>, Parker Sloan <parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org>, Terri Wells <terri.wells@buncombecounty.org>, Martin Moore <martin.moore@buncombecounty.org>, Dwight Mullen <dbmullen@unca.edu>, Dewana Little <dewanallittle@gmail.com>

Hello Sam and Everyone:

I wanted to respond to your email which terminates the existing contract as of May 15, 2023 and the intention by your firm or Energy Savers Network to use only " in-house" staff to perform weatherization services for the purposes which you specified.

I thank you for being honest about the quality of work of performance in our duties and with the work, as United Community Development strives to perform quality work, on time, within budget, and to treat all of the homes which we enter and service with dignity and respect.

As I stated to you in the phone call, I believe that the next contract for the Blue Horizons Project needs to be **segmented** so that a cognizant and competent Black led non-profit can not only provide these services in a more quality way to Black home owners, but also to provide equal access to contracting/procurement opportunities to ethnic minority firms. Our Weatherization/Construction Superintendent began training on blower door training with your Staff, but it was discontinued just as he was completing. Thank you and Kelvin for providing this, as we hope to continue to get him trained and certified, if we are given the opportunity.

As a member of the Reparations Commission, this is a perfect example of why Black led and other BIPOC firms do not have access to publicly let contracts which are let with public funds. We are generally excluded and the contracts are drawn with public funds but without the "intentionality." which it takes to provide real inclusion.

I will be working to see if this contract can be examined to see if it can be segmented so that not only United Community Development may be able to have the opportunity to perform in our community as it has for the last five or so years, but any other competent, cognizant firm which is BIPOC led. This contract is for a Blue Horizons Project, and United Community Development as at the table during the entire planning process and for most all of the meetings which the City, the County, and Duke Power facilitated.

I want to also extend my thanks to State Senator Julie Mayfield, and the City's Sustainability Staff who were instrumental in United Community Development of N.C. receiving the subcontract initially, as we were excluded due to a past affiliation with another nonprofit which had former ties to some of your staff. This subcontract was then "split" between the two organizations, and this other organization dropped out because of the lack of weatherization jobs to keep their crews busy. United Community Development continued because the organization also received funding from WNC Bridge and a few donations to keep working in our community on home repairs to avoid displacement and further gentrification.

I am copying pertinent City, County, and State Senator Mayfield on this email to show them what "reality looks like" for Black led nonprofits and other BIPOC contractors/subcontractors. We have discussed "Harms" and stopping the "harms" to foster equity and equal opportunity with taxpayer funds. This is an opportunity to stop the continuing "harm."

The segmentation in the contract or contracts can be for the execution of actual Weatherization Services, based on the specifics of "preventing air filtration to the building envelope", alone as it

always, has been in the contract.

I would appreciate a copy of the executed line item contract for the Blue Horizons Project with Buncombe County so that we may have it to discuss this with the Board and the Community, as as a "teaching tool".

We will notify our clients and community about this change in exclusion of subcontracting/contracting with the Weatherization Program. Thank you for allowing us to help our community and we look forward for ways to continue.

In gratitude,

Dee

Dee Williams, Project Manager

United Community Development of North Carolina

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" Civil rights without economic clout is a borrowed event - they can be taken away at any time."
Joshua Smith, CEO, the Maxim Corporation

On Tuesday, April 25, 2023 at 10:27:35 AM EDT, Sam Ruark <sam@greenbuilt.org> wrote:

Hello Dee,

This is an email followup to our call this morning.

As I shared, we will be moving all of our weatherization projects to inhouse staff as of the week of May 15th. This is important to us for a few reasons:

- Having in house staff perform projects helps us balance our budget and staffing needs
- We need to perform blower door tests on all electric houses and mobile homes to help identify air leaks and document the reduction in air infiltration
- Our data collection methods now interface with Salesforce so it saves us time and funding by doing the projects with in-house staff.
- Verification of measures installed is a key component of our work and contract

We have greatly appreciated all the work you, Brad, and James have done for the community over these 3 years of working together. It has been a pleasure working with you, and I hope we can continue to support each other in the future.

thanks, Sam

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Sam Ruark

Executive Director

Green Built Alliance

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Sam Ruark

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