

8/24/10

To: Mr. Shawn Smith, City Attorney, City of Key West, FL

From: Dr. Karen A. Larson, Professor of Anthropology and Interdisciplinary Studies, Gustavus Adolphus College, 800 W. College Ave. St. Peter, MN 56082, klarson2@gac.edu, office (507) 933-7424, (507) 327-6649

Re: RESEARCH SURVEY OF HOMELESS SERVICE PROVIDERS

INTRODUCTION:

I have been performing both contract and pro bono research within the City of Key West for over ten years (cf. 2007 survey of worker satisfaction and workforce housing needs, email copy attached for reference). Recently, in the context of a planned book length volume on the culture of the city, my research assistant, Ben Batz, and I performed a pilot study on the Key West homeless population, in order to determine the necessity/efficacy of a longer term study of homelessness in Key West. The results of the pilot survey will be made available when they have been prepared.

In the process of collecting information, we interviewed homeless people and their service providers. As we did, a suggestion came forward from a community member which coincided with my own observations. The suggestion was that it would be useful to survey those who provide services to the homeless, in order to better understand the culture that they create. General questions would include the extent to which the ideal of working together is realized, what promotes or hinders collaboration between providers, etc. Specific survey questions will be developed in consultation with service providers in a technique known as "ethnographic method." The technique is designed to create research results that will have maximum utility for the respondents. I would be happy to undertake such a project within the next few months, by means of a mail survey.

REQUEST:

This project would have no financial impact on the city. All paper, mailing, data processing, and other costs would be handled through my office.

I do not intend this survey to become part of my larger book project. Nor will it be used for any professional publication at either the faculty or student level. The intent is that it be done solely as applied work, that is, exclusively in the service of the city. In order to insure that the return rate on the survey is worthwhile, I am asking for city endorsement to that effect.

Should I receive such endorsement, the survey can be distributed with a statement that the work is in the service of the city, making the matter of in whose interest the work is being done clear. Results will be analyzed and returned to the city and respondents in a timely fashion. My ethical obligations do require that the material also be made available publicly (as was the 2007 work).

Shawn D. Smith

From: Karen Larson [klarson2@gustavus.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, August 24, 2010 5:50 PM
To: Shawn D. Smith
Subject: Endorsement for survey of homeless service providers

Attachments: KWHPSE.docx; CKWWSS FINAL REPORT.doc



KWHPSE.docx (16 KB) CKWWSS FINAL
REPORT.doc (150 K..

Dear Mr. Smith,

Thank you for our telephone conversation of last Friday, 8/20. Please find attached my statement regarding the requested city recognition/endorsement of the planned survey of homeless service providers.

I'd be appreciative if you have a moment to acknowledge its receipt.

Thank you.

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