



To Whom It May Concern,

I write this letter on behalf of Our Spot KC in objection to the reallocation of HOME-ARP funds in their entirety to the Hope Faith Homeless Assistance Campus under proposed Ordinance 240046. As a local 501c3 non-profit organization providing housing and wrap-around services to support LGBTQ+ individuals facing homelessness, and as a HOME-ARP applicant, we object to this proposed decision for several reasons, including the harm and exclusion of marginalized individuals, and the unacceptable burden that has been placed on non-profit agencies and other applicants.

The proposal to allocate over \$7 million to the creation of another mega-shelter in Kansas City will harm vulnerable populations. As recognized experts in the field of housing services for LGBTQ+ youth, adults, and families, we witness the impact of such facilities on those we serve every day. Our target population, as well as other marginalized communities, are not best served by a shelter of this size or nature—our increased vulnerability means that large-occupancy shelters present a much higher likelihood of harassment, discrimination, and violence. LGBTQ+ communities in shelter, because we tend to experience disproportionate homelessness at younger ages, are more likely to be younger in age, and therefore even more vulnerable to violence and coercion. In our experience serving local LGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness, in many cases youth adopt maladaptive behaviors and coping mechanisms as a result of their stay at large-capacity shelters, usually as a consequence of manipulation and control by other clients.

The City should not allocate funds to such a program because it would stand in conflict with previous efforts and declarations of inclusivity. From the establishment of the Kansas City LGBTQ Commission; to Resolution 220272, which directs the City Manager to develop a plan that addresses the housing and shelter concerns, needs and options for persons who are houseless and LGBTQ in Kansas City; to Resolution 230385 declaring Kansas City a Safe Haven for LGBTQ and especially transgender residents, the City of Kansas City has shown rhetorical support for its LGBTQ+ residents. To follow these initiatives with the financial backing of a project that would actively harm LGBTQ+ individuals facing homelessness would show the local community that the Resolutions and Ordinances for which we worked so hard were simply theater, perhaps to get the “100” score on the HRC Municipal Equality Index. Put simply, it is untenable for the City to declare their support for our community, only to deny ours and other agencies from being able to provide dedicated services.

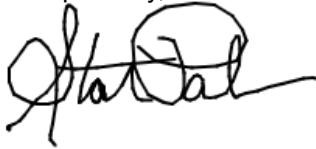
The provider chosen for this proposed reallocation also presents numerous issues. Firstly, that Hope Faith advertises itself as a “ministry” means that it will never be accessible to many members of the LGBTQ+ community who have experienced religious trauma. While serving the homeless from a religious standpoint is not itself objectionable, to allocate the entirety of the available funds to a religiously based organization means that there is less capacity on the part of non-religious organizations to provide housing to those who cannot access religious spaces. Additionally, the existing practices at Hope Faith reflect an unsafe environment—a client enrolled in our program has disclosed that he will not seek services at Hope Faith because on a previous visit he observed clients engaging in sexual behavior in a common area. In the winter of 2022, Hope Faith made local news coverage when their staff mistook an individual awaiting services for trash (see article [HERE](#)).

Kansas City Metro  
Starzette Palmer, Executive Director  
816-745-4545  
[Starzette@ourspotkc.org](mailto:Starzette@ourspotkc.org)

Aside from the important considerations of the impact this shelter would have on marginalized communities, we also object to this reallocation from an administrative perspective. The application process for this RFP was incredibly burdensome; the online platform was difficult to navigate, there were an excessive number of required attachments, and inadequate grant-related support through the online platform. Each application received by the committee represents an organization that dedicated time, effort, and staff salaries to the preparation of that application in accordance with the long list of required conventions for submission. To suddenly, without notice to applicants, propose that none of their applications should be considered is an insult to the organizations and the staff members who dedicate their time to supporting the programs that serve marginalized communities in need.

As our area experiences a surge in need for housing services, it is tempting to try and find a “one-and-done” solution in an effort to maximize impact, but it must be made clear that this push for a single agency to provide necessary non-congregate shelter will not bring the intended benefit. Instead, we will see those most vulnerable left without access or an alternative. Past plans on the part of the City to award 7-figure funding to an organization to unilaterally provide housing have resulted in those units not being produced or added to housing stock, further destabilizing the existing network of local housing providers. I implore you to reconsider and object to this proposed ordinance.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Starzette Palmer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "P".

Starzette Palmer  
Executive Director  
Our Spot KC