



# DHHS | Department of Health & Human Services

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MARY JO MEYERS  
Director

September 19, 2019

Ms. Joella L. Brooks  
Interim Chief Executive Officer  
Southwest Key Program, Inc.  
6002 Jain Lane  
Austin, TX 78721

Dear Ms. Brooks:

This letter is to inform you that the Milwaukee County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) will no longer engage in or consider business opportunities with Southwest Key Program, Inc. and that all current business agreements between Milwaukee County DHHS and Southwest Key will be terminated at the earliest available time, per contractual agreements. Consider this letter to be the requisite notice of termination and disengagement and understand that this condition will continue until further notice.

Milwaukee County DHHS is a values-driven governmental agency with a mission and vision to engage our community and similarly-interested businesses and professional organizations and employ best practices to empower our residents to live safe, healthy and meaningful lives.

After much research and consideration, we have determined that Southwest Key's participation in the detention of migrant children on our nation's southern border is contrary to our mission, vision and values in their entirety.

This decision was not made lightly. We understand that the members of the Southwest Key Program, Inc. team in Milwaukee County are not responsible for decisions made and actions taken more than 1,000 miles away. However, it is our position that Southwest Key, as an institution, has allowed and, in some cases, participated in unconscionable acts against some of the most vulnerable children - those who need protection and guidance toward healing, not incarceration. We cannot, in good conscience, be a party to the cruel and inhumane family separation policies enforced in these facilities.

While we regret the impact this decision may have on Southwest Key staff in Milwaukee County, we are confident that vulnerable young people will receive topflight care in our community under the auspices of numerous other providers and programs with whom we partner.

We appreciate your time in meeting with David Muhammad, Mark Mertens and Kelly Pethke on September 17 to discuss this difficult matter, but we stand firm in our belief that we cannot maintain our integrity and participate in any way, even indirectly, in the actions referenced above being undertaken on our nation's southern border.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mary Jo Meyers", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mary Jo Meyers, Director  
Milwaukee County Department of Health & Human Services

cc: Anselmo Villareal  
Veronica Delgado-Savage  
Judy Tramonte