



DECISION MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 12, 2024
TO: Members, Champaign County Mental Health Board (CCMHB)
FROM: Lynn Canfield, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Agency Request for Release of Held Payments

Background:

[CCMHB Funding Requirements and Guidelines](#) are incorporated into contracts and posted at co.champaign.il.us/mhbddb/PublicDocuments.php and ccmhddbrds.org. These include details on CCMHB responses in the event any requirements are not met. When an agency’s annual independent audit is not submitted by the deadline of six months past its fiscal year end, payments are automatically withheld for three months and not released until the audit is completed, approved by the agency board, shared with CCMHB staff, and any related issues resolved.

Update:

When The Well Experience PY2022 audit was delayed past December 31, 2022, CCMHB staff withheld payments on the agency’s PY2023 contract. The Board authorized release of the January and February 2023 payments. The agency acknowledged loss of eligibility for CCMHB funding and did not apply for PY2024 funds, so the total held is \$33,336, for March, April, May, and June of 2023. A letter from the agency’s director is attached, providing context and requesting release of these payments.

Decision Section:

Motion to authorize CCMHB staff to release payments for The Well Experience contract MHB23-068 for The Well Family Care Program, totalling \$33,336.

- _____ Approved
- _____ Denied
- _____ Modified
- _____ Additional Information Needed



Date: 6/07/2024

Dear Members of the Board:

I am writing with a request I hope you will consider. I would like to request the release of the funds you are holding until the audit is complete. After paying the expenditures allocated to the funding, we were left trying to recover those funds through donations and fundraising, which has presented a challenge for us.

I know the audit has been a lengthy process, which I did not anticipate. Although we knew the first audit would take longer, I never imagined it would take this long. I have learned a lot and plan never to be in this predicament again. I have provided updated information on where we are in the audit process and how it will look as we move forward.

As you know, we started preparing our books while working with a company we trusted almost two years ago. When we did not receive what we expected from them, we worked with a few bookkeepers to prepare our books for the audit. Our first and second bookkeepers did not stay long after they realized the amount of work that would be required, and honestly, the pay was not competitive. Neither of them had experience in nonprofit processes and was not looking for serious bookkeeping work. After losing them, we contracted with someone who was never available to dedicate the time we needed to finish the bookkeeping tasks and start the audit. This put me in a position where I had to learn more about bookkeeping processes as quickly as possible to ensure we could maintain the books. This was very challenging.

With the help of our board of directors, we are now blessed to work with Andrea Singh, a certified public accountant (CPA) who has already jumped in to help us complete the audit. We are finally seeing progress. We are grateful to have her on board and look forward to completing this soon.

Katie, our auditor at CLA, has been very understanding and supportive throughout this process, and we are grateful for her. She is now communicating directly with Andrea and has significantly narrowed down the items we need. With this team, we hope to complete the audit soon. When we are done with 2022, Katie is ready to start on the 2023 audit immediately. Andrea is helping us implement processes to prevent this from taking this long again.

As the executive director of The Well Experience, I consider our organization's financial health and sustainability paramount. Our organization has been working on improving our financial stability for quite some time now. We know that the support we provide to families is second to none, and the success of our organization is vital to this community.

I completely understood the importance of the audit and the need for our organization to comply with financial regulations. We did face some challenges concerning completing the audit, but this was due

to factors beyond our control. We had spent a significant amount of money on a company to do work that was never done, leaving us with little funds and work to show for it. We are working on addressing this issue, but we did not have the luxury of time to battle it out with them when we had many pressing matters to attend to. As a result, we had to hire others to do the work needed for the audit, and our Board member personally recommended Andrea to work alongside us, for which we are grateful.

I am aware that I may have lacked knowledge about the financial needs of a nonprofit organization when I first came in as a service provider with a passion for supporting youth and families. However, I have since learned a lot and will continue to do everything I can to ensure that my organization can sustain itself in all areas moving forward.

I value the integrity of The Well Experience and myself, and we take pride in providing support services with fidelity. We have connected with people who can give us the knowledge to build financial stability for The Well Experience. I hope we do not lose support from funders along the way, as The Well is young, and we are doing what we can to build a solid foundation. Whatever happens, we are committed to moving into a good place to secure the future of this amazing organization.

I can provide you with regular updates until the audit is done and submit documentation to confirm the progress of the process. Please consider releasing the remaining payments while waiting for our audit to be completed so we can stay open while we take care of this.

I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,
Stephanie

With Families in Mind



Stephanie Stewart-Cockrell, PhD, LSW



Executive Director | Founder
Well Family Care Counselor & Supervisor
Child/Parent Psychotherapist (CPP)
Positive Parenting Program Clinician (Triple P)

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Healing. Engaging. Restoring. Empowering... at The Well.