

01 November 2023

BY EMAIL

Attention: Matilda Masilela
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
C/O: Lehlohonolo.Makuzeni@gauteng.gov.za

Dear HoD Masilela

Re: Urgent Meeting Request to Discuss NGO Funding Concerns

I am writing on behalf of the Gauteng Care Crisis Committee to request an urgent meeting with you regarding the recent call for proposals. Given the gravity of the issues at hand and the limited timeframes for submission, we believe that a direct and immediate dialogue with the Department of Social Development (DSD) is essential. This meeting is requested in lieu of the fact that the briefing the DSD customarily provides prior to issuing the call for business plans did not take place this year, meaning that there was no opportunity to clarify these questions beforehand. Many of these concerns were also raised at the Provincial Summit of 1 and 2 August 2023, resulting in a series of resolutions and the nomination of representatives to a team tasked with taking these forward. However, as no response was received to our letter of 19 September 2023 requesting further information about the status of this structure, we assume it never met, again leaving our pressing questions unanswered.

One of the foremost concerns is the short timeframe that has been allocated for the submission of proposals in comparison to previous years. The time constraints make it exceedingly challenging to compile comprehensive and well-thought-out proposals. Furthermore, it would seem that the format for the new Business Plan is not yet available for organisations to complete. There have also been some changes in the conditions and requirements outlined in the call for proposals, such as the reversal of current three-year funding cycles (among other matters). Another significant concern pertains to the issue of municipal by-law non-compliance. Many organisations are struggling with these issues, some of which are not of their making.

The fate of our beneficiaries is also a matter of utmost importance to us. We believe that an open and candid discussion is essential to address the potential impact on beneficiaries of organisations' defunding, and/or receipt of funding that is inadequate for the service, or for a period less than 12 months, as is suggested in the call. We would also want to know the DSD's plans for beneficiaries receiving services in areas outside townships, informal settlements and hostels prioritised for service. Your insights and guidance on how to minimise the negative effects on the children, women, families, persons with disabilities, older persons, etc. who rely on our services would be appreciated. Additionally, the Department's funding decisions potentially affect staff, leases and the overall operation of our organisations. In this difficult economic climate clear information will be vital for effective planning and decision-making within our respective organisations over the next few months.

Like the DSD, we are committed to promoting the well-being and rights of vulnerable groups of people. An urgent meeting with yourselves around these concerns will help clarify our questions and ensure that our programmes and services continue to make a meaningful impact.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to meeting with you at the earliest available opportunity.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Vetten', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Lisa Vetten
Chairperson, Gauteng Care Crisis Committee
082 822 6725