



FAQs: Well in the Desert

Q. Why didn't the City renew the Well in the Desert's Conditional Use Permit (CUP)?

A. This is not a discontinuation of service. The City extended and enhanced the services for homeless individuals at the Palm Springs Boxing Club by partnering with Martha's Village & Kitchen to open a new daytime homeless drop-in center, which now operates seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The City exhausted attempts to negotiate improved services with Well in the Desert, and a new contract with a new provider creates an opportunity to improve outcomes and minimize negative impacts.

Q. Will Well in the Desert continue to be involved in providing services to the homeless?

A. The Well in the Desert is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that has been providing services to the homeless since 1996. Those services include food assistance and distribution, and advocacy to those affected by poverty, including the working poor, seniors and veterans. Although the City is not contracting with Well in the Desert to run the operation at the Palm Springs Boxing Club, the organization is expected to continue to provide homeless services, possibly including mobile outreach to these underserved communities. There's a possibility Martha's Village & Kitchen could subcontract some services at the Boxing Club to Well in the Desert.

Q. Why was Martha's Village & Kitchen chosen to be the lead agency at the Boxing Club?

A. Martha's Village & Kitchen, founded in 1990, is one of the largest providers of homeless services in the Coachella Valley and Riverside County. The organization has been providing wrap-around services at Well in the Desert's daytime homeless drop-in center, which has included case management, assistance obtaining permanent and supportive housing, securing health, disability, Social Security and other benefits, development of computer skills, and assistance in filling out job applications. Once the operation transitions to the Boxing Club, Martha's will also be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the program's activities including collecting and analyzing statistical records, including clients' intake data, program participation, client records and demographic profiles.

Q. Is it true that Well in the Desert is not compliant with labor law, non-profit reporting and other requirements?"

A. The City's due diligence did identify irregularities with compliance and practices that required further investigation and explanation. Attempts to resolve those issues were unsuccessful, further reinforcing the need to establish a new partnership with a provider with a strong track record of compliance.

Q. Why has the Well in the Desert maintained operations after the expiration of the CUP?

A. The City issued revocation of the CUP by July 31. The Well maintained operations after this date in violation of that revocation. The City will escalate enforcement action consistent with similar land use violations until the matter is resolved and the operations at this location cease.