



“PROJECT ROOMKEY”

AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF ABODE SERVICES AND THE
RODEWAY INN BERKELEY CA

Where Do We Go Berkeley

510-570-8026 wheredowegoberk@gmail.com

Introduction.....	1
1. Access to food and water.....	3
2. Safety	4
3. Privacy concerns.....	5
4. Curfew.....	6
5. Housing Navigation.....	7
6. Collaboration With Outside Agencies and Programs.....	8
7. Security Staff.....	9
8. Regular Staff and Management.....	10
9. Grievance Policy.....	11
10. Resident Contracts.....	12
11. Collaboration With Local Law Enforcement.....	13
12. Removal Protocol.....	14
13. Alameda County and Abode Response.....	15
14. Conclusion.....	16

Introduction

The following report is a comprehensive analysis of the living conditions and grievances of unhoused residents currently and formerly occupying the “Rodeway Inn” hotel.

The Rodeway Inn is located at 1461 University Ave. In Berkeley California. The age of the building is unknown at this time. Rodeway Inn is currently operated under “Project Roomkey” a series of transitional living facilities whose program offers individual or shared rooms to chronically homeless individuals for a limited time until permanent supportive housing can be secured.

Project Roomkey is a program initially funded by the State Of California through intermediaries such as Alameda County. However, since 2020 most if not all funding is provided by The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

In its current form the Rodeway Inn Project Roomkey program is managed by local non-profit and contractor “Abode Services”. Abode operates several hotel and alternative shelter programs in the area as well as offering other homelessness services including outreach and housing case management in Alameda County. While Abode is currently contracted through Project Roomkey, recent developments (including a consent calendar item introduced at a recent Berkeley City Council meeting*) have shown that in coming months the Rodeway Inn program will be financed by the City Of Berkeley and UC Berkeley respectfully.

“Where Do We Go Berkeley”(WDWG) is a non-profit advocacy group based in Berkeley CA. WDWG has been in contact with the Rodeway Residents in question for over 3 years in several collaborative and supportive capacities. WDWG was instrumental in ensuring the placement of most residents by coordinating with “Lifelong Medical Street Medicine Team” who managed hotel referrals during the eviction of “Seabreeze” and “Ashby Shellmound” encampments. It is for this reason that WDWG carries the responsibility of ensuring that all who entered this Project Roomkey site are allowed the same rights and respect that any housed individual would be entitled to.

Almost immediately after unhoused residents from the I-80 Corridor were placed at Rodeway Inn, WDWG began receiving numerous complaints of misconduct and mistreatment regarding Abode staff. WDWG is bound by its mission statement and organizing documents to take each complaint it receives seriously and to attempt negotiation and advocacy for remedies that would be satisfactory to the complaining party. To that extent, WDWG feels ignoring or dismissing complaints would make them complicit and liable for any injury that may occur to their clientele during participation in a program such as “Roomkey”.

Contained in this report is a series of findings and recommendations. Some findings are based on declarations made by Rodeway Inn residents while others were witnessed directly by members of Where Do We Go Berkeley. Because of the discrimination inherent in homelessness issues, WDWG is inclined to believe allegations made by residents unless clear evidence can be provided that shows otherwise. While not all allegations have been submitted to Abode through their official grievance policy, most if not all issues have been expressed to staff and management at various times.

*"> Consent Calendar Item #4: Acceptance of Funding from University of California, Berkeley for Projects of the Rodeway Inn (accept a \$2,200,000 donation from the University of California)> Consent Calendar Item #5: Contract: Abode Services to Operate Interim Housing at the Rodeway Inn (execute a contract with Abode Services to operate an interim housing program at the Rodeway Inn... not exceeding \$3,993,397)"

1. Access to Food and Water

*****FINDINGS*****

As with most transitional housing programs, Abode staff are obligated to provide food and drinking water to residents of its program. Premade meals are provided by Abode at dedicated times regularly. Bottled water is provided by staff upon request. Water is also accessible in each residents room via a vanity sink, though the potability of this water has not been scrutinized.

Where Do We Go Berkeley has fielded several complaints from residents regarding the quality of food as well as staffs refusal to distribute food outside of the designated hours despite food being readily available in the office.

Food quality has been described as “disgusting” and “inedible”. Residents who have been incarcerated claim it is the same food they were served in jail. The source of the food is unknown, though some residents are convinced that it is distributed by a commercial kitchen contracted by the county (it is not made by abode) and that it very may well be distributed to Santa Rita Jail as well. While no information was provided by staff of where the food is from, residents have found it to be generally unpalatable.

Access to water is another concern raised by residents. Several complaints brought to WDWG say they were occasionally turned down when asking for bottles of water despite supplies being readily available and visible. Staff making remarks to the effect of “Didn’t you just have a bottle?” is part of the complaint.

These issues would be negligible if it were not for the fact that residents were not allowed to bring groceries into the program. While it is understandable that an influx of outside food may lead to hygiene issues within the hotel, having no alternative to the low quality food provided by staff may also lead to a series of health issues including malnutrition or dehydration.

*****RECOMMENDATIONS*****

For a modern program like “Project Roomkey” this is unacceptable. Healthy edible food and access to water are base necessities. To enter a program dedicated to uplifting the unhoused population our clients are entitled to sustenance befitting of someone recovering from trauma and adjusting to the stability of indoor living. “Slop” meals contribute to a prevailing overtone that they are somehow being punished or are living in a mock incarceration setting. Where Do We Go Berkeley recommends Abode to contract with a food vendor of higher quality than the current. Bottled water should be available at all times without requiring that residents ask a staff member.

2. Safety

*****FINDINGS*****

Safety complaints cover a range of subjects but a majority of which are tied to staffs inability to properly maintain stewardship of the room keys. A single incident garnered several complaints from residents regarding a male resident who had gained access to a room master key, entered a female residents room and crawled into her bed against her will. This person was never punished for his actions. It is at this same time that several residents claim to have had their rooms burgled likely by other residents who had access to their rooms key as no forcible entry had occurred.

While these incidents are deeply disturbing many residents say they could have been avoided if staff had informed the entirety of the residents that a key was missing and that the locks would need to be changed immediately.

There is another safety incident of which Where Do We Go Berkeley was involved as an advocate. A resident was being evicted from her room for “intentionally pepper spraying a security guard”. The client claimed this had happened in self defense while being attacked by another resident but Abode made several claims that they had the incident on tape with irrefutable proof of her guilt. When WDWG asked for the security tapes, Abode claimed they could not release them to an outside party.

The resident had accidentally filmed the incident with a camera she had around her neck. Her footage clearly shows her attempting to pepper spray a fellow resident who was going to attack her when the security guard got between them and accidentally was sprayed. Abode yielded by offering her a new hotel room in Oakland however her disabilities and job would not allow her to leave Berkeley. She now lives in her car on the streets of Berkeley.

A major concern has also arisen from the complaint of an individual who has special medical needs regarding a colostomy bag, the participant has been refused entry to the hotel after curfew despite urgently needing to change their colostomy bag. This shows a failure to accommodate participants disabilities and medical needs.

Another Incident we would like to highlight is that during a visit to Rodeway Inn, WDWG came across a participant who had suffered 3 seizures in the hour prior to their arrival. The ambulance had been called and they refused service from paramedics. Rather than being assisted by Rodeway Staff, the client was alone in their room suffering seizures. WDWG asked staff to call the paramedics again.

*****RECOMMENDATIONS*****

While safety seems to be the dictating cause for most of Abodes Policies, this is a clear pattern showing a failure to protect vulnerable women from other men in the program. This is something that can be addressed without removing rights or decreasing autonomy any further than it is now. These issues may more easily be remedied by listening to and believing women when they say they are feeling unsafe or are defending themselves against abusers. Additional staff trained in CPR or with some medical background is highly recommended

3. Privacy Concerns

*****FINDINGS*****

One of the core rules for Project Roomkey program at the Rodeway is that all keys shall be in possession of and control of program staff. It is a common complaint that people do not feel like they can relax when they know someone can enter their room at any time.

This concern is not unfounded, a complaint brought by nearly all residents we spoke to were unhappy with the unscheduled daily “visits” paid by Rodeway staff. Residents have made claims of being walked in on while in several vulnerable positions including but not limited to being on the toilet, in the shower, and masturbating. A common reported practice is that staff would knock and immediately walk in giving residents no time to prepare.

This has left residents with a general sense of unease. A difficult part of living on the streets is that you can not leave your possessions for too long or another person will have access to them. The idea that staff can enter your room whenever they feel like it contributes to a justifiable paranoia

*****RECOMMENDATIONS*****

Where Do We Go Berkeley understands the importance of checking in on residents to ensure that they are safe and have not succumbed to any accidents in their rooms including opioid overdoses. However, barging into a clients room after knocking twice shows an obvious disregard for privacy.

It should not be forgotten that the participants in this program are fully grown adults and that this program is designed to prepare them for independent living.

Several workarounds could be created to maintain safety while also allowing residents to “feel” safe. This starts with a fundamental understanding of how it feels to be barged in on. Alternatives we can think of are phone calls rather than knocking or checking in on a schedule rather than randomly.

A log should be kept of when staff have entered rooms particularly those which are temporarily unoccupied, and this info should be available to all residents so they may know who has been in their room. Any opportunity to alert the resident beforehand that someone will be entering their room should be acted upon by staff.

4. Curfew

******FINDINGS******

The nightly curfew in effect at Rodeway Inn is easily the most contested program rule by residents. In effect, anybody who has not returned to the Rodeway before the enforced curfew time is subject to being locked out of the program for the rest of the night.

This is one of the last hotels to implement such a program as it has proven to be ineffective at preventing crime or other issues and often only results in animosity and lack of trust between staff and program participants. Our clients have asked for “work release” forms in to allow them to earn income past curfew hours but were never provided the paperwork.

What sets the Rodeway and Abode even further apart in this instance is the absolute refusal to show any flexibility on the violations of curfew. WDWG receives countless complaints from residents who were 5 or 10 minutes late and were refused to be allowed back into their room. Residents are also not allowed to their rooms to fetch necessary medical supplies, jackets or even appropriate shoes for spending the night outside.

Being forced back onto the streets for the night without the accumulated goods necessary to survival (which were possessed prior to entering the program) can be a death sentence. In one instance a WDWG client and program participant (who will not be named out of respect for their family) passed away at a bus stop by opioid overdose. The client was presumed to be sleeping at the bus stop because they knew they would not be allowed entry into their room at Rodeway after curfew. It is WDWGs firm belief that should he have been allowed into his room he may not have been using drugs in a chaotic environment and may be alive today.

******RECOMMENDATIONS******

It is our recommendation that the curfew be abolished immediately. Security staff are present all night to enforce the curfew and therefore should be able to handle any of the supposed ill effects caused by a lack of curfew.

The way this curfew is enforced is indicative of Abodes severe lack of understanding of the clients they are serving. Opening lines of communication early on would have allowed residents to offer the myriad of reasonable explanations why they would need to be out in late evenings.

5. Housing Navigation

*****FINDINGS*****

The findings surrounding housing navigation at the Rodeway Inn have been more difficult to matrix. Where Do We Go Berkeley has no access to records of how many people have been housed since August 2021 or the amount of work put into each individuals housing case. Therefore, we can only comment based on personal experiences and declarations made by residents.

Where Do We Go Berkeley has only witnessed one personal experience between Abode housing navigators and a mutual client however it does not reflect positively on the housing navigator or program. What was found was the housing navigators had missed a time sensitive “match” which would have connected the client to a “scatter site” section 8 housing voucher. When confronted by the client on why Abode had missed this opportunity to house the client the navigator claimed “I do not have access to the (HMIS) system, our manager tells us about matches”

Other participants in the program claim Abode had initiated policy changes in which “Anyone not looking for housing will be removed from the program” meanwhile participants claimed to have had extreme difficulty connecting with the housing navigators. It was also witnessed by WDWG that participants were expected to engage in the housing process in ways beyond their means such as obtaining documentation like identification and social security cards. A noted lack of patience by Rodeway staff for missed appointments was also common which is not an effective way to assist clients.

*****RECOMMENDATIONS*****

The fact that a housing navigator for a major program such as “Roomkey” would not have access to the HMIS system, an essential tool in housing navigation is highly disturbing. WDWG recommends immediate comprehensive training on housing navigation as well as participation from full housing staff in North County “by names list” meetings.

Part of this training should recognize that the clients they are working with may suffer from severe mental health disabilities and will need assistance and patience for every step of the navigation process.

Removing participants from the program for “not seeking housing” can serve nothing more than to mask the shortcomings of the housing navigators. Therefore this policy and all like it should be abolished immediately.

6. Collaboration With Outside Agencies And Programs

*****FINDINGS*****

In a break from complaints by program participants, this section hopes to illuminate a complaint by other agencies which have not been reported to Abode services as they to the best of our knowledge have been remedied by Abode Staff.

This would pertain to accessibility to the clients by their advocates and other programs. At the beginning of the program there were complaints by a handful of organizations that they were not being allowed access to the facility to contact their clients. Contacting management directly reportedly had no initial effect on this outcome though was later remedied by management.

*****RECOMMENDATIONS*****

A clear and formal process for the allowance of other agencies should be standard. While Abode may reserve the right to have applying programs vetted, information on who and how to contact should be readily available from security staff at the front gate. If management or staff are onhand and assessment may take place there and then.

Denying clients access to services outside of the scope of Abode can be detrimental to their safety and well being.

7. Security Staff

*****FINDINGS*****

While some level of animosity is bound to exist between security staff and program participants in a transitional living situation, the amount of complaints about this particular group is what has initiated the investigation and subsequent report you have before you. Program participants allege multiple misconduct and abuse of power scenarios surrounding the security team.

As the most consistently present staff, the security team is the “face” of Abode. While Abode may make the claim that they are merely “contractors”, evidence suggests that the security staff does in fact only enforce rules, regulations, and policies administered by Rodeway management and staff.

We will touch on only a couple of the many complaints starting with bag checks and contraband regulation. Current verbally stated and possibly written policies at Rodeway appear to dictate that residents may not bring in new personal items in an attempt to fight clutter and hoarding. Security staff enforce this by looking in peoples bags and stopping those with extra goods at the door.

Much like the curfew policy, enforcement has been taken to an illogical extreme. Things are being taken from people or denied to them without first considering the context of the item. A participant who may or may not have submitted their grievance to Abode by the time this is published, claims they were not allowed to bring in medical supplies which in turn was detrimental to their well being and even hazardous to their health.

Other complaints include security staff making threats to residents and discriminatory practices in which women’s bags and belongings are more likely to be checked than men’s. As was shown in the “pepper spray incident” security staff were seemingly unable to effectively protect a resident while at the same time willing to corroborate Abode staff allegations leading to that residents removal despite the fact that they may or may not be true.

*****RECOMMENDATIONS*****

Because these alleged abuses of power seem to border on negligence and may in fact lead to injury or death. It is recommended that the current security team contracted by Abode be removed and replaced by a group more adept to approaching security in a critical problem solving manner.

It is also recommended that Abode publish more comprehensive guidelines for security staff than those which may already be published. Any new security team should prioritize building relationships with the people they are there to protect.

8. Regular Staff And Management

*****FINDINGS*****

The Rodeway management tree appears to be structured in a typical “top down” fashion. Most day to day program activities and projects are presided over by the “Manager” who also fields calls and emails about the program and serves a variety of other functions. The manager is followed by a number of supporting staff, housing managers, and security staff.

From what WDWG can understand, all programs of the Rodeway (including housing navigation see Sec 5) are supervised or engaged in by the program manager. The manager creates and prints the flyers and contracts which distribute information to the participants, they coordinate with outside organizations in providing services, they attend county meetings on behalf of their staff and engage in the creation and implementation of policy followed by staff.

Because of the Managers involvement in these many areas, they seem to be involved either directly or as a background character in most of the complaints we have received. WDWG does not have access to enough information to accurately judge how much responsibility this person can take for direct involvement in the allegations. However it is very clear that the only person who should (and often could) have addressed the issues in an appropriate amount of time would have been the Manager.

Much like the security staff, the management of Rodeway appears to have a severely disjointed and combative relationship with the program participants. In our advocacy we have generally only heard stories of power struggles between them and clients.

*****RECOMMENDATIONS*****

At this point it is difficult for WDWG to make any recommendations about reform of the program without addressing the management issue. If the same manager who created or approved the current protocol is tasked with its reform, we see a meaningful change in conduct to be uncertain at best.

WDWG is not advocating for the firing of any employees who may or may not be responsible for the grievances in this report, we do feel that relocation to another program or intensive retraining however will be necessary to avoid systemic pitfalls commonly seen in grievance processes. We also recommend that emphasis is placed on building meaningful relationships with clients to avoid an adverse or hostile work environment for employees and to avoid an adverse or hostile living environment for program participants.

9. Grievance Policy

*****FINDINGS*****

At the onset of Where Do We Go Berkeleys investigation into incidences at the Rodeway our organization made contact with Abodes higher management staff, Alameda County, and The Office Of Senator Skinner regarding our findings and how to develop a process for reconciliation.

We were informed by Abode staff that a grievance policy was already in place at the Rodeway Inn as well as all other Abode sites and that rather than our formal advocacy process we should first encourage residents to pursue their grievances through the proper channels.

Upon inquiring about the grievance policies put in place by Abode, WDWG identified several key issues with the process which may lead to exclusion of participants or underreporting of grievances within the program.

The most outstanding of which is that the highest ranking manager at the participants program site was also the offending party listed in their grievances. A commonly heard complaint from participants was that they feared “retaliation” from managing staff.

It has been mentioned by Abode that grievances could always be submitted to staff above the program managers. However, no participant in the program could name to us any higher ranking employee than the manager of their program. If this information had been disclosed to participants it was not done so in a way that would reinforce the contact information in their memory and was not readily available without outing themselves to the managing staff that they were the ones filing the complaint.

*****RECOMMENDATIONS*****

The shortcomings of Abodes grievance policy are nothing new to anybody who has ever participated in a program or worked in a job that had a grievance policy. Filing a grievance is risky and often ends with no satisfactory resolution. To expect any program participant to risk becoming a target (even if the risk is only perceived) is obviously not going to be conducive to an effective outcome and reduces the entire process to “lip service”.

As of writing this report we have not gotten a response to resolve from Abode for any of the filed grievances. The grievances were filed over a month ago.

Where Do We Go Berkeley recommends the allowance of third party advocates to participate in grievances by and against program participants, particularly when the offending party also acts as enforcement for the grievance policy itself.

10. Resident Contracts

*****FINDINGS*****

Throughout their stay at the Rodeway Inn, program participants have been asked to sign a series of contracts intermittently handed to them by Abode program managers. The complaints surrounding this seemed abnormal for a typical program. In the experience of WDWG a contract is signed only at the beginning and sometimes end of a participants stay in programs such as Roomkey. These contracts usually state the rules that must be followed, protocol for removal, length of stay, and outline other information such as the grievance policy.

According to residents these new contracts were written to reflect a series of changes in Abodes policy made after the initial contract. These contracts apparently stated either agreements to leave the program prematurely or that residents must follow a new set of rules to avoid being evicted. This new set of rules was that any resident not searching for housing (See Section 5) were subject to removal from the program.

Participants state that some residents were locked out of their rooms until they would sign the contracts. During which time at least 1 resident was not wearing shoes. Participants allegations imply that these contracts were being signed in a state of duress. Even if their room was physically locked, they felt they could not return to the room until the contract was signed. Finding and waiting for an attorney or advocate to review the validity of these contracts was not an option.

If these allegations are true then not only are these and possibly other contracts signed by the participants nullified, but the legal implications of such actions are very serious.

*****RECOMMENDATIONS*****

These are highly concerning allegations. Abode is recommended to review their protocol for how contracts are distributed and signed. It is our hope that verbiage which allows the presence of an attorney or advocate during the signing of any contract be admissible.

If true, some sort of reconciliatory compensation should be offered to the affected participants immediately.

Where Do We Go Berkeley is an advocacy organization not a law group, the legality of these alleged actions taken by Abode services should be reviewed by every interested party including but not limited to The City Of Berkeley, Alameda County, FEMA, and all state offices participating in Roomkey.

11. Collaboration with Law Enforcement

*****FINDINGS*****

Visits from local law enforcement are not uncommon in shelters and programs such as Roomkey. WDWG has reviewed several instances of police visiting rooms at Rodeway in which the occupant was refusing to leave their room. In most instances there was a level of confusion on the police officers end as to whether they could legally remove someone from a room they had been staying in over 30 days.

One very serious incident has stood out regarding a young African American couple and their baby who claim to have been subjected to harassment by Abode staff continuously.

According to these participants an Abode staff member called police on their room after “becoming concerned about the safety of the baby” The staff member allegedly informed police that the baby was being kept in unsanitary conditions. When police arrived they entered the room of the participants and found that the room was not unclean and that the baby was fine.

According to the participants they were later informed by other Abode staff that a meeting had been held on whether or not to call the police and that Abode had decided against it. Instead this staff member was a “rogue actor” who had taken the matter into their own hands. Whether this is true or not does not seem to matter looking at the facts of the incident.

Other instances of collaboration in question involve the security cameras installed on the property. Abode has informed us that they do not ever hand over security footage to the police. We were told by a participant that they were not allowed to look at footage of an incident which led to their removal from the program because Abode had “given it to the Berkeley P.D.” WDWG has not filed a Public Records Act Request to verify this allegation.

*****RECOMMENDATIONS*****

Whether this was an employee acting on their own or not is of little consequence. This was an inappropriate response to a situation which warranted no action at all except that the staff member mind their own business (See section 3 “Privacy Concerns”). WDWG recommends further education for staff regarding the dangers of calling police on people of color even if for a “wellness check”. In educating staff, Abode should refer to the 2013 death of Kayla Moore.

12. Removal Protocol

*****FINDINGS*****

Findings surrounding the protocol for removal of residents has been inconsistent over the course of collecting participants declarations. While grounds for removal from the program are outlined somewhat, the protocol surrounding the action of removal appears to the untrained eye as unorganized or possibly improvised. Where Do We Go Berkeley does not have access to information used to train Abode employees and so we cannot comment as to whether action consistent with protocol has been taken or not.

We do however have several statements made by participants who claim to have been removed from the program in a way that did not preserve their dignity and caused loss or damage of property. One client of Where Do We Go Berkeley who was also a participant in project roomkey claims that after an incident outside of the hotel which led to their arrest, members of Abode staff removed the participants belongings and placed them outside of the hotel. The items were not recovered by the participant after release from jail and they are presumed stolen.

What is concerning is that no attempts were made to contact the participants social workers who exist outside of the Roomkey program including Where Do We Go Berkeley. If this had been done the participant would not have lost their possessions. This incident also carries some markers of inconsistency as other participants who have been incarcerated were allowed to re-enter their rooms and retain possession of their belongings.

On one occasion WDWG accompanied a client to Roadway after they had received news that Abode staff were removing their possessions from their room and essentially evicting them. Upon arriving Abode management approached the client and apologized for the miscommunication. This incident came days after the client had signed a contract agreeing to leave the property at a later date (See Section 10 "Resident Contracts"

*****RECOMMENDATIONS*****

Discarding a participants possessions without contacting their family, friends, or social workers beforehand is an unsettling allegation to say the least. The risk associated with disposing of another persons possessions without their consent greatly outweighs the benefits of "making space for the next participant"

Important documents such as birth certificates, social security cards can be lost but so can even less replaceable items such as family photos.

WDWG recommends a consistent protocol be put in place regarding the handling of a participants possessions during an eviction. This includes gathering emergency contact information and identifying a safe storage area for the persons possessions until they can be recovered.

13. Alameda County and Abode Response

*****FINDINGS*****

On January 28th Abode Services confirmed receipt of a brief summary of complaints made to Where Do We Go Berkeley by people experiencing homelessness regarding Project Roomkey at the Rodeway Inn. Between March 13th 2022 and April 23rd 2022 Where Do We Go Berkeley has submitted to Abode and Alameda County multiple releases of information and written declarations from current or former participants in the program.

As of April 30th Where Do We Go Berkeley has not received an official reply or notice of action from Abode or Alameda County regarding the allegations.

*****RECOMMENDATION*****

No recommendations can be made at this time.

14. Conclusion

The preceding findings are based on statements made to Where Do We Go Berkeley between September of 2021 and April of 2022 by program participants. Findings are also based on incidents experienced directly by Where Do We Go Berkeley volunteers. Statements by participants have been substantiated to the best of WDWGs ability mostly through declarations of other participants. It is important to note that Rodeway staff have not been interviewed for this report. It is our assumption that Abode employees contributing to an investigation such as WDWGs without following the channels of their formal grievance policy is restricted.

At the time of this writing(5/3/22) WDWG has still not received a response from Abode on individual complaints. We have however received confirmation of receipt by Alameda County and Abode staff.

It is the opinion of Where Do We Go Berkeley that the findings in this report paint a picture of animosity and distrust between program participants and staff members. When the declarations are compiled in this report we see patterns of harm not uncommon for shelter and transitional housing programs. In this instance however, the complaints we had received were concerning enough to spur this uncommon investigation.

With the information in front of us WDWG can conclude that “Project Roomkey” located at “Rodeway Inn” and staffed by “Abode” in its current state can not be considered completely safe for people transitioning from homelessness into a stable environment. The concerning relationship between staff and participants is a major cause for worry as most participants are experiencing some sort of physical or mental health disability.

Where Do We Go Berkeley can not state with conviction that you shall be safe and/or comfortable at The Rodeway Inn if you:

- A. Own property
- B. Are of female gender
- C. Are engaged as a defendant in the legal system
- D. Are a family with children
- E. Require privacy
- F. Have dietary restrictions
- G. Do not function well in an institutional setting
- H. Work at night
- I. Do not have a basic understanding of contract law
- J. Require medical attention on a regular basis
- K. Suffer from any type of mental health disability
- L. Are unable to engage in housing navigation on your own.

WDWG would like to state that this report shall not reflect on Abode Services abilities or competency as an agency. WDWG members have experienced other hotels and programs operated by Abode across Alameda County and the overwhelming majority of which would be considered functional, safe, and effective at accomplishing the goal of retaining participants and navigating them into Permanent Supportive Housing.

We can only conclude that the primary source of issues at this particular program would be management staff and the security team they have contracted. Because of this, remedying these listed complaints can either be simple or complicated depending on Abodes ability to address issues internally. A non-profit organization “protecting” its workers in a way that is detrimental to participants safety may then carry the burden of assuming the reputation of its lowest functioning employees.

Where Do We Go Berkeley hereby urges Abode and all government entities who have facilitated funding to this program to address these complaints with the sense of urgency and gravity that are befitting of millions in taxpayers dollars and the lives of united states citizens.

Recommended compensatory actions are as follows:

1. Removal of current Abode staff and security team from this particular program and replacement with experienced individuals who understand the patience and dignity required for such a position
2. Financial compensation and/or housing relief for all participants who may have signed significant documents under a state of duress. The acceptance that without settling compensations these individuals may be entitled to pursue their grievances in civil court and that they may not be intimidated or harassed at any time.
3. Financial compensation and/or housing relief for any participant exited from the program for reasons extending from leaving the program due to discomfort, unjust program rules, or unproven allegations against them.
4. Introduction of food fit for human consumption, particularly foods that may nourish a person who is attempting to detox from drug or alcohol dependency.
5. A total reform of the program prior to the admittance of “Peoples Park” residents so that they may live in an environment conducive to accessible housing navigation without distress, worry, pain, or agrivated physical and mental health issues.
6. An official written program and training in recognizing and addressing clients specific disabilities and medical needs and addressing them appropriately. Recognizing ADA standards and providing reasonable accommodations as necessary.

End

