FORT WORTH®

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

2022-2023
PUBLIC SERVICE AGENCIES REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

<u>General Information</u>

1) Is 100% of the block grant exhausted yearly?

   Yes. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding allocation is fully allocated to projects and/or programs each year.

2) Big organizations have a lot more options when it comes to money, which gives them more opportunity. Is this taken into consideration during the awarding process?

   All organizations are assessed individually and only in their respective program goal area (i.e. Aging In Place, Children/Youth Training and Mentoring, etc.). There is an intentional focus on seeking new agencies for funding. Staff is working on identifying new options to create a greater focus on funding newer and/or smaller agencies.

3) If you have two different programs within the same strategic goal, can they both get funding? And what if it is separate sites?

   Yes. If an agency has two separate programs serving two separate populations under the same strategic goal, a separate application would need to be submitted for each. If there are separate sites for the same program, this information would need to be included in the application under the Project Location section.

4) If you have two different things like a Drama club & a Learning program, is that two separate applications?

   The determination is based on the persons to be served, the schedule, and the program curriculum. If the participants apply separately for each program, have different schedules, teachers, locations, etc., it may require two separate applications. Additional details are needed to make a final determination.

5) Our agency collaborates with other agencies to deliver our program and services. How do we document that information in the application?

If there is a collaborative effort or a partnership proposed, the two entities need to first determine who will serve as the primary applicant. This is the entity that the City of Fort Worth will contract with and award funds. Within the application, in the Program Description section, there is narrative space to provide information about the partnership(s), services to be provided, etc. We do encourage partnerships among agencies.

6) Is there a requirement for each agency to be represented at the Pre-Proposal Conference if a partnership has been established between the organizations?

If partnering with another organization, the primary applicant may serve as the representative for the partner agencies. This needs to be noted in the application when answering who attended on behalf of the agency.

7) How many applications are processed each year?

For the 2021-2022 grant cycle, we received 51 applications for all three funding sources. Of those applications received, approximately twenty-three were funded. This included 14 CDBG, 5 ESG, and 2 HOPWA applications.

8) For rental and utility assistance, what Consolidated Plan Goal would this fall under?

This depends on the target population to be served. If applying for Community Development Block Grant funds, this would fall under the Poverty & Household Stabilization category. If applying for Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS funds, this would be based on the services to be provided – Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) or Short-Term Rent Mortgage Utility Assistance (STRMU).

Communications

9) Do we reach out if we are only doing a presentation?

There is not enough information to provide a sufficient answer. However, if it is regarding reaching out to Community Development Council members, it is always recommended to maintain contact and establish a relationship with both Community Development Council and City Council members.

10) Regards to timeline, if the meeting is May, when do we find out if we are awarded anything?

Neighborhood Services Department staff will present funding recommendations to the Community Development Council on Wednesday, May 11, during their regularly scheduled monthly meeting at 6:30 p.m. in City Hall, City Council Conference Room 2020, *200 Texas Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76102. The recommendations will be provided to the applicants prior to the meeting when the agenda posts 72 hours prior to the meeting. Following the meeting, applicants will be provided formal notification of the recommendations. City Council will approve funding recommendations at their August 2 meeting.*

11) Do we get a heads up about any other available grants if we are not awarded anything?

Yes. Applicants will be added to the email distribution list and notified of any additional funding opportunities for Public Service Agencies through the Neighborhood Services Department.

Community Development Council

12) When we make the presentations to the Community Development Council, what date will that be? How will we be notified? What will take place?

New agencies and returning agencies with new programs will be required to make a presentation to the Community Development Council on the second Wednesday in April at their regularly scheduled meeting on April 13 at 6:30 p.m. in City Hall, City Council Conference Room 2020, 200 Texas Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76102. Agencies will be notified prior to the meeting and provided a Powerpoint template with their application information to approve. This will be displayed during the presentation. Each agency will be allowed up to two minutes to present and up to three minutes to answer questions from the Community Development Council.

Grants Management

13) In those various categories, is there a limit of how many get awarded?

There is not a limit of the number of agencies to be funded in each goal category. Fund allocations are determined based on application scores, funds availability, and applications received.

14) Until you get awarded something, do you pretend to be a brand-new applicant?

Applicants remain new applicants until a fund award has been granted from the Public Service Agencies Request for Proposals application process.

15) If this is our first time applying and we have never received a grant, but have been funding the nonprofit from personal expenses, does that disqualify us from applying?

It is highly unlikely that the agency may be funded, however, it will be determined on a case-by-case basis. This could fall into the summary disqualification based on limited to no grant experience. We need to determine that an agency has been responsible and successful in managing grant funds, awards, etc. For those agencies that may not be ready to apply, the 2022 HUD Grants 101 training in October will provide more intense training to hopefully assist with preparing to apply.

16) Is SAM (System for Award Management) required to submit a grant application?

Registration in SAM is encouraged, but not required at this time. However, it may be a requirement for future applications. The System for Award Management (sam.gov) is an official site of the U.S. government. It is used by contractors, organizations, or individuals applying for assistance awards, those receiving loans, and any U.S. federal government agencies desiring to do business with the government. It is a centralized database for entities contracting with the federal government and is used to determine if applicant has been suspended or debarred, covered by a prohibition or restriction, or is otherwise excluded from doing business with the government. City of Fort Worth does conduct a search in Sam.gov prior to processing payments to subrecipient agencies.

Fiscal Capacity/Leveraging

17) As a new agency, our financial trail is not long. How do we get around that?

The requirement is to provide twelve months of bank statements; this is not negotiable. In particular, due to the competitive nature of the application, as well as the fiscal stability required to manage these grant funds, we must ensure the agency is stable. This is a reimbursement grant and agencies must be able to maintain normal operations for at least 90 days or more prior to receiving reimbursement. For agencies that may not be yet ready, there will be an opportunity to attend our 2022 HUD Grants Training 101 in October.

18) When submitting the twelve months of bank statements, is it sufficient to provide the first page of the statement reflecting the beginning and ending balance for each month?

Yes. Make sure that the amounts on the bank statements correspond with the table completed in the application.

19) Are printouts for QuickBooks acceptable or do you need the actual bank statements?

The bank statements are required; documentation from the financial institution providing the same information (Agency Name, Beginning Balances, Ending Balances) may suffice. Neighborhood Services Department staff will determine on a case-by-case basis.

20) How are in-kind donations reported in the application?

It is to be documented in the Fiscal Capacity/Leveraging section of the application. Also, when reporting staff, volunteers should also be reported, particularly if they are dedicated staff who are a part of the ongoing success of the program.

Scoring/Funding Recommendations

21) If we as a never-funded past applicant were mistakenly docked points that made us score lower than the agencies that WERE funded, how many of those agencies were mistakenly given points instead?

This is not likely based on the full scoring review process and the differences within the scoring between agencies. At this time, it cannot be determined. However, the scoring review team and management staff will ensure more thorough review of all applications. With the number of applications received and the number of reviewers responsible for reviewing there is an expected difference in some scores. With the ability to resume our in-person scoring meetings, we will be better able to have a more thorough discussion regarding proposal scores.

22) How can we ensure all nonprofits receive the scoring sheet prior to submission to ensure we understand how the questions we are applying to will be objectively scored?

The scoring information is included in the Pre-Proposal Conference PowerPoint for each funding year; a copy was also emailed to applicants. The information on the score sheet emailed aligns with the information on the PowerPoint presentation.

23) What checks/balances exist in the system so that nonprofits can advocate for themselves if there are errors in the scoring process? Can we receive our proposed scoring sheet PRIOR to publicizing recommendations for funding so that we can check for errors?

No, the scores cannot be issued prior to publicizing recommendations for funding due to the timeline currently established at this time. We will discuss further with our management team, Community Development Council, and attorney on the best way to be able to provide the information and allow nonprofits to advocate for themselves. We want to trust that our reviewers have made a fair review, but understand that human error is possible. There is an opportunity to make comments to the Planning team, department management, and Community Development Council regarding any concerns with scoring or the process overall. We will review the timeline and see what steps can be added to the process. Unfortunately, we may not be able to make those changes during this process as it has already been approved and is currently in process.

24) What is the purpose of the presentations if the information contained in the presentation and the viewpoints of the committee are irrelevant to the scoring and recommendations for funding?

The purpose of the presentations has been to provide the agency proposal to the Community Development Council as well as answer any staff or CDC questions regarding the program, staffing, financing, etc. It is an opportunity to share more details about the program, not necessarily to add more than what has been provided in the application. This has been done because the CDC is responsible for approving the staff funding recommendations and need the opportunity to also review the applications and familiarize themselves with the proposals prior to approval. Traditionally, no scoring was assessed *to this presentation primarily because applicants often add more information than is provided in the application; we score based on the application information. Based on this question, we are currently reviewing this process. However, again, this may not be able to be added to the current process but it will be proposed to include it as a part of the CDC scoring. The CDC will score CDBG applications on Organizational Capacity & Experience, Project Information, and Project Results.*

25) Do local RFPS or state RFPs which are grants reimbursing for services qualify toward years of grants experience?

Yes, but in addition to the number of grants, scores are also based on the types and amounts of grants. The grants management experience is needed to determine the ability of an agency to comply with the monthly reporting requirements for HUD grants and monitoring reviews. Each grant awarded has different eligibility, reporting, and compliance requirements.

26) How will newer non-profits be able to compete on a level playing ground with larger, established agencies if points are based on years of existence receiving grants rather than the number or amount of the grants received in any given timeframe?

Each year we have funded new non-profits and programs. It is a very competitive funding, particularly in the area of Children/Youth Training & Mentorship. While each year provides new challenges, we do work on scoring each application individually. Being a larger, established agency does not guarantee funding. Nor does being a newer agency guarantee not being recommended for funding. Highlighting other areas that the agency is strong in would be one recommendation, but each agency is different. Adding resumes, certificates, consistent documented success measures, and strong financial capacity, as well as an audit with no findings/concerns are some areas that may be stronger. But again this is in general, not necessarily specific to any specific agency.

27) What is the total number of community partnerships for the grant that is sufficient to receive full points? Are an agency's community partnerships only considered in relation to the program applying for this specific grant or to the agency as a whole? Is there a specific capacity or method to prove the extent of the community partnerships as it relates to points for our grant?

We are not going to be able to provide a specific number of partnerships because the score is also dependent upon the type of partnership and which agency the partnership is with; it is not solely number of partnerships. And each agency's program would determine the number of partnerships warranted. The partnerships are in relationship to the proposed program; it is under the Project Results and focuses on the measures for determining the success of the program. In determining the specific capacity or method to prove the extent of the community partnerships, we would expect an MOU, a written agreement, or some type of documentation clearly defining the partnership and what each partner is providing, how they are benefitting the clients, and what the measure of program success is.

28) What are the exact numbers/ratios/formulas to categorize the exact cost per Client that would be considered a high level of services per client or high client outcomes?

The cost per client is provided by the agency and should be justified based on reasonable costs. However, it depends on the services provided, number of clients, and proposed outcomes. It would be subjective and would need to be clarified by the agency. Our focus is maximizing grant dollars and serving as many low-to-moderate income families as feasible.

29) If points are already awarded based on past grant management experience then doesn't a second grading area related to previous funding seem to take points off twice for newer and smaller non-profits? How does the playing field stay level in this case?

This is not a second grading; it is related specifically to being funded from the City of Fort Worth PSA RFP. For those who have been funded in the past three years, they are scored based on that experience. For those who have not been funded, they are scored based on their ability to demonstrate being able to administer grants. Having an audit or a CPA conduct a financial statement review would help to add additional points. In some cases, agencies that are newer or applying for the PSA RFP for the first time may provide an audit or review to support their application and their ability to manage these funds.

30) What is considered the ideal racial makeup of an agency's Board of Directors to receive full credit as being representative of Fort Worth?

The ideal racial makeup of the Board of Directors reflects the clients served as well as diversity across all areas. There is not a specific number or percentage as the number and type of Boards for each agency varies. Additional clarification will be requested from our CDC as this Board is the one that focused more closely on this particular area. We will also be reviewing this area as a part of our future scoring process.