



DATE: October 22, 2024
TO: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mo Malakoutian, and City Councilmembers
FROM: Jaskaran Singh Sarao, Chair, Human Services Commission
SUBJECT: The 2025-2026 Human Services Fund, 2025-2026 Behavioral Health and Housing-Related Services Housing Stability Program and 2025 Community Development Block Grant Funding Recommendations

Overview

The Human Services Commission has completed its work reviewing and recommending contract awards for the 2025-2026 Human Services Fund, 2025-2026 Behavioral Health and Housing-Related Services Housing Stability Program and the 2025 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). A summary of the recommendations can be found in Attachments B and C

The Commission is grateful for the opportunity to provide funding recommendations to City Council. While this task is always challenging, the level of community need made this review process particularly difficult. 154 applications were submitted, totaling more than \$36m in requests. The Commission is pleased to recommend a total funding package of approximately \$16.8m. This includes:

For the second year of the biennium all Human Services Fund contracts and Behavioral Health and Housing-Related Services Housing Stability Program contracts will receive an inflation increase, to ensure the city is equitably funding the important work of human services agencies. This increase is subject to a mid-biennium review of fund availability and each program's 2025 contract performance.

Policy and Data Informed Processes

The Bellevue Human Services Commission based their process and funding recommendations on policy in the Human Services Strategic Plan and data found in the Human Services Needs Update, prioritizing the areas of greatest need and disparity.

Increasing Equitable Access for Agencies

The Human Services Strategic Plan identifies the following objective: “Increase the capacity of Bellevue’s human services system by providing equitable access to human services funding opportunities, to support organizations in meeting the needs of and reducing disparities among Bellevue’s most marginalized residents.” Staff took the following actions to advance the objective:

- Attended outreach and convening events to build relationships with new community agencies.
- Offered two in-person information sessions for prospective applicants.
- Invited small, first-time organizations and/or new applicants to meet one-on-one with staff to learn about application process, requirements and answer any questions.
- Offered technical assistance to any interested agency during the application process.
- Participated in equity training for all individuals involved in the application review process.
- Published the RFP in 8 languages with the opportunity for translation into other languages upon request; correspondingly, committed to acceptance of funding application in all languages.

Review Process

The foundation of our work was the *Human Services Strategic Plan* and the *2023-2024 Human Services Needs Update* which provided data that informed our review of applications and prioritization of funding recommendations.

The *Needs Update* identified the following themes:

- Changing demographics require investments into human services infrastructure that will meet community needs in culturally specific ways
- Amongst those in need of human services in Bellevue, there is a disproportionate impact by race and language
- There is a need for increased community knowledge of available resources
- Community members and agencies request an increase from the city in communication, collaboration, and convening
- There are growing challenges for human services providers
- Community members have concerns about the cost of living, availability of housing, and availability of services

The Needs Update identified the following areas of greatest need and disparity:

- Culturally and linguistically-specific services
- Shelter/housing/housing stability
- Food/basic needs
- Childcare
- Behavioral health
- Youth

The Commission conducted a systematic and thorough review process. The recommendations we are advancing incorporate three funding sources, with differing restrictions; the recommendations also advance deep investments in the areas of greatest need and disparity for Bellevue residents.

Conclusion

We wish to thank the City Council for your ongoing support of human services in Bellevue. The City's investment is crucial to supporting the city's human services infrastructure and to providing the resources necessary for all of Bellevue's residents to thrive.

cc: Human Services Commission
Michael Shiosaki, Director
Toni Esparza, Assistant Director
Ruth Blaw, Human Services Manager