



Date: October 29, 2020

To: Mayor Robinson and City Councilmembers

From: Timothy Ma, Chair, Human Services Commission

Subject: Human Services and CDBG Funding Recommendations for 2021-2022

Overview

The Human Services Commission has completed its work reviewing and recommending grant awards for the 2021-2022 Human Services Fund and the 2021 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). We look forward to presenting our recommendations to you at your Study Session on November 2, 2020. A summary of the Human Services funding recommendations can be found in Attachment B. A summary of the CDBG recommendations is provided in Attachment C.

As in prior years, our task was challenging because we received nearly \$2.9 million more in requests than we have funding available in the Human Services Fund budget, and \$128,000 more in requests than the estimated CDBG budget. The Commission is pleased to recommend a total funding package of \$5,187,368 for 2021:

- \$4,154,368 from the Human Services Fund in 2021, based on the funding formula adopted by Council in 2002 (base funding + inflation + population growth) plus approximately a quarter of Amazon's \$1 million donation to the City; and
- \$1,033,000 in estimated 2021 CDBG funds, which includes \$200,000 in estimated program income generated by repayments of major home repair loans.

For the second year of the biennium (2022), all Human Services Fund contracts will receive a cost of living increase, currently projected to be 3.44%. This increase is subject to a mid-biennium review of each program's 2021 contract performance. The increase does not apply to the CDBG-funded programs.

Human Services General Fund

Emphasis on Equity

The Eastside cities Human Services Commissions were committed to an equitable application process that removed as many barriers as possible for smaller agencies that represent underserved populations. Bellevue participated in the following efforts:

- Created a streamlined application that only required information necessary to make funding decisions to reduce the burden of applying.
 - Invited small, grassroots organizations to attend an evening information session to learn about application requirements well in advance of the application period.
 - Contracted with Communities Rise to offer grant writing technical assistance to communities impacted by systemic oppression, including communities of color, immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ communities, and persons with disabilities
 - Provided equity training for Commissioners before applications were reviewed.
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Review Process

The Commission conducted a systematic and thorough review process which emphasized the City's policy of allocating funds across the continuum of human service needs (Comprehensive Plan Policy HS-4). The foundation was the *2019-2020 Bellevue Human Services Needs Update*, which provided the data that informed our review of applications. The *Needs Update* identified the following gaps in services:

- Affordable housing and services to prevent people from becoming homeless.
- Services for those who are unhoused.
- Affordable transportation options.
- Culturally responsive services and information in languages other than English.
- Affordable and accessible childcare.
- Employment services that lead to living wage jobs.
- On-demand behavioral health services for adults, youth and children.
- Free/low-cost civil legal services, especially regarding immigration and domestic violence.
- Services to allow older adults and adults with disabilities to remain independent.

The Commission reviewed and discussed a total of 102 applications over ten virtual meetings, including 30 applications for programs not currently funded by the City. Five of the new programs recommended for funding focus on Black, Indigenous and People of Color, or people with disabilities:

- Bridge Disability Ministries - Meyer Medical Equipment Center
- Bridge of Promise - Bridge Academy
- MAPS-MCRC – Information, Referrals & Resources
- Youth Eastside Services – Latinx Programs
- Placeholder Agency – Latinx Cultural Navigator (an application was not received for this gap in services. An RFQ would be issued in early 2021 to find a nonprofit to provide this important service)

Commissioners noted the impact of the pandemic on all service areas, particularly those related to basic needs such as housing and food, while also maintaining the network of prevention and intervention services that are a critical part of the continuum. We also acknowledged the importance of shelters and day centers serving single adults, families with children, and youth experiencing homelessness, and increased funding for those services to the greatest extent possible to allow them to continue operating 24 hours a day.

Funding was also recommended to address the following service gaps exacerbated by the pandemic:

- Affordable childcare and its impact on the ability of parents and caregivers to work.
- Behavioral health services, especially for youth experiencing additional stressors.
- Legal assistance to address evictions and landlord-tenant conflicts that will follow the end of the current moratorium.
- Domestic violence programs to address the rising need for these services.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The Human Services Commission's 2021 CDBG funding recommendations are based on an estimate of the City's 2021 entitlement amount and estimated program income from loan paybacks. The detailed recommendations are in Attachment C. Because the exact CDBG budget will not be known until sometime next year, the Commission's recommendations include a Contingency Plan (Attachment D) outlining how an increase or decrease in funding would be allocated.

The Commission is recommending one new program for CDBG funding: Seattle Business Education HUB Business Technical Assistance and Financial Literacy Training. The majority of SBEHUB's clients are women, minorities, and limited English-speaking immigrants. This program has strong Eastside ties and addresses a strategy in the City's draft Economic Development Plan to expand access to technical training for small business owners with a focus on those of diverse backgrounds, filling gaps that Startup425 does not address. Support for low-income business owners will be an important part of workforce development.

Conclusion

We wish to thank the City Council for your ongoing support of human services in Bellevue. The City's funding is crucial to the ability of our nonprofit agencies to help all of Bellevue's residents achieve their full potential.

cc: Human Services Commission
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