



County of Santa Barbara
105 E. ANAPAMU, SANTA BARBARA

HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

ALLOCATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING - ACTION SUMMARY - FEBRUARY 2015 GRANT INTERVIEWS AND DELIBERATIONS

Call to Order: The Allocations Committee met the following dates and times to hear from 2015 NOFA applicants and to deliberate on funding recommendations:

- **Wednesday February 4, 2015 Noon – 5:00 p.m.**
- **Thursday, February 5, 2015 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**
- **Friday, February 6, 2015 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

Roll Call **Committee Members Present:** Committee Chair Aceves, Commissioners Mickiewicz, Keator, Fairfield, Jensen
Non-Committee Members Present for part or all: Commissioners Lindner (all), Sepulveda (Wednesday), Solomon (Thursday, Friday but not deliberations)
Staff Present: Susan Foley

Public Comment Period: NA

Review Process:

Allocations Committee members received training on the new ZoomGrants electronic system and overall guidance from County staff on January 29, 2015. All of the Committee members were given independent confidential access to ZoomGrants to review applications for Human Services funds. Committee members reviewed each application for its own merit according to very specific criteria and guidelines provided by the full Commission. Committee members scored and ranked applications accordingly. Due to Brown Act requirements, they did not discuss their individual assessments with one another until the public deliberations Friday, February 6, 2015 in the afternoon. It is important to note that several agencies applied for multiple grants even in the same tier which in essence resulted in self-competition. After interviewing the applicants, Committee members were given some quiet time to reflect on their scores and to make any adjustments. After the quiet time, staff presented the Committee with their group scores at the public meeting for all to see.

Application review, applicant interviews and Committee discussions together led to funding recommendations. The Committee did also consider what agencies were being recommended for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) federal dollars and in most cases if CDBG funds were being recommended then General Fund dollars were either not been recommended or cut way back. The exception to this was mini grants where some agencies who received CDBG funds also received mini grants.

The Committee recommended funding the highest ranked General Fund applications. However, if there were funds remaining after supporting the highest ranked applications (as there were with the basic service and the mini grants), the committee considered additional proposals after deliberating. For instance if the #5 and #4 ranked proposals were recommended for funding and there were still funds

available to support another activity and there were 10 “#3’s the committee engaged in conversation to come to a conclusion while still following the full Commissions criteria and guidelines.

Applicant Interviews and Deliberations:

All 116 applicants for the Human Services Commissions’ General Fund Program were interviewed over two and a half days utilizing a consistent format. The vast majority were more than worthy of consideration. The Board of Supervisors had asked the Commission to fund fewer programs with higher amounts to achieve greater impact. In this regard, there were 37 programs recommended for funding with 10 of these being mini grants. The 27 that were recommended for Basic Services and Best Practices funding represents a 65% cut from the 78 programs funded during the last Human Services Commissions General Fund Cycle (2011-2014). The high level of competition is the primary reason that most were not funded.

Recommendations for funding were based on the Human Services Commission Allocations Committee’s assessment of:

- ✦ The degree to which the proposed program addressed Human Services Priorities (seniors, children, access, non-English speaking services, freedom from abuse, low income)
- ✦ The degree to which the proposal demonstrated potential for significant, positive impact and showed how the lives of the target population would be improved as a result of the services
- ✦ The degree to which the proposed services addressed the County Poverty Study by serving a high need population or fulfilling an unmet need
- ✦ The degree to which the grant might assist an agency in advancing to a stronger best practices model
- ✦ Whether or not the proposal was the only program/service available serving a needy population or in a certain geographic area
- ✦ The strength of performance targets and proposed outcomes
- ✦ Agency capacity, past experience and demonstrated success in delivering the proposed service or similar services and achieving outcomes
- ✦ For Best Practices, which agencies had the strongest history of Evidence-Based Practices along with the above criteria
- ✦ For mini grants there was a greater focus on what would achieve the most impact with a one-time investment. Examples included improving agency staff capacity, expanding volunteers, purchasing software to support services, and strategic planning. Proposals that sought funding for something that would be ongoing in nature, such as adding a staff position or continuing to boost or run a current agency program were not considered.