



# Memorandum

**TO:** NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES  
& EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Jacky Morales-Ferrand

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** May 22, 2017

Approved

Date

5/31/17

**SUBJECT: HOUSING GRANTEE SELECTION AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW  
PROCESS**

## RECOMMENDATION

Accept the report on the Housing Department's grantee selection and performance review process and recommend this item for full City Council consideration at the June 13, 2017, Council meeting.

## OUTCOME

The purpose of this report is to provide the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee (NSE) with an overview of the Housing Department's process for selecting grantees and evaluating grantee performance.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Housing Department administers approximately \$12 million in service agreements with nonprofit agencies each year. These agreements support a broad range of activities that serve the City's low-income and at-risk communities such as people experiencing homelessness, senior residents, and low-income renters and homeowners. Examples of the types of services funded this past year include homeless shelter operation, homeless outreach, case management, neighborhood engagement, legal services, job training, and home repair.

This report provides the NSE Committee with information on the federal funding process, the Department's responsibilities in managing grants, and the City's reporting requirements to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD"). The emphasis of this memorandum is the process by which the Housing Department measures performance of the

agencies selected to provide these vital services. Activities pertaining to this effort occur in each stage of the grant starting with the selection of the services to be funded. Staff evaluates performance goals as part of the procurement process and incorporated into the service agreements with the agencies selected to provide services. Performance is rigorously evaluated by the Housing Department staff utilizing established reporting protocols and on-site monitoring of grantees. In some cases, Housing Department staff will require that grantees take actions to improve their performance. If grantee performance is determined to not meet expectations, the Department can choose to discontinue funding a service and or a specific agency.

During recent discussions pertaining to the approval of HUD-required documents, City Councilmembers have inquired about the Housing Department's process for both granting funds and measuring performance of grantees. This memorandum addresses those questions and provides a vehicle to elicit input from the Committee regarding the Housing Department's grant process.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City's Housing Department is tasked with administering HUD's annual federal grant awards. HUD awards approximately \$12 million to the City each year by formula through four programs—the Community Development Block Grant (“CDBG”), Emergency Solutions Grants (“ESG”), Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (“HOPWA”), and HOME Investment Partnerships (“HOME”) Program. A significant portion of these are awarded to nonprofit grantees to provide services to the community.

### **The Federal Funding Process**

In order to qualify for federal funds, HUD requires that the City submit the following documents:

1. A Five-Year Consolidated Plan (“Five-Year Plan”), which documents the City's housing needs and its strategies for meeting those needs during a five-year period.
2. An Annual Action Plan (“Annual Plan”), which details the investment strategy in each of the five years within a Consolidated Plan cycle to meet identified priorities.
3. A Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (“CAPER”), which summarizes the City's progress in meeting the objectives of its respective Annual Plans.

### **Five-Year Strategic Spending Plan**

The Consolidated Plan is a five-year strategic spending plan governing the usage of federal funds from HUD. The City Council approved the current FY 2015-20 Consolidated Plan in May 2015. Development of the Five-Year Plan requires significant community input to identify local needs and the City's resulting priorities for administering its federal funds. The current Plan was developed after the Housing Department and its consolidated planning consultant conducted extensive community outreach and data gathering.

The process resulted in the selection of the following four goals to address housing and community development needs in San José:

1. Increase and Preserve Affordable Housing Opportunities
2. Respond to Homelessness and Its Impacts on the Community
3. Strengthen Neighborhoods
4. Promote Fair Housing Choice.

### Annual Action Plan

The projects and services planned for each fiscal year in the City's Annual Action Plan advance the four goals outlined in the Five-Year Plan. The City Council approved the current FY 2016-17 Annual Action Plan in May 2016 for the second year of the 2015-20 cycle.

Each year, the Housing Department conducts outreach to solicit public input on its funding strategies and potential uses of funds. This process includes several months of community and stakeholder outreach in public meetings and through the acceptance of comments to posted drafts. The input received, along with relevant supporting data, is used to develop the draft Annual Action Plan for the following year. Staff presents the draft Annual Plan for input to the Housing and Community Development Commission and to the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee. Once approved, Action Plan authorizes the City to undertake a broad range of activities, such as infrastructure improvements, homeless services, nonprofit facility improvements, and housing rehabilitation.

Each of the federal programs (CDBG, ESG, HOME, HOPWA) has unique project eligibility requirements and regulations. The Housing Department relies on its Grants Management Team and the RFP process described below to select eligible projects and to document compliance with federal requirements for each program. After the City Council approves the Annual Action Plan, staff submits it to HUD for review and approval.

### Annual Performance Report

The Department is required by HUD to submit an annual report that summarizes the City's progress in meeting the objectives of its Annual Plan. This Plan, known as the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER), is approved by City Council and submitted to HUD in September of each year.

### Other Grants Managed by the Housing Department

In addition to these federal funds, the Housing Department oversees approximately \$4 million in General Funds directed to addressing homelessness. The Department also oversees the City's Housing Trust Fund which supports approximately \$2.5 million in agreements each year, primarily funding homeless services. As with the federal funds, a significant portion of these funds are awarded to nonprofit service providers. The process for managing these funds is the same as for the federal funds.

## ANALYSIS

The Department's grantee selection and performance measurement process is designed to select proposals that maximize the use of limited resources and support improvements in grantees' performance. Staff's work can be categorized into four activities: 1) Selection of Services and Service Providers; 2) Grant Agreement Negotiation and Execution; 3) Grantee Performance and Outcome Assessment; and, 4) Grantee Monitoring. Review and analysis of performance measurement is incorporated into each step of this process. More details on each of these activities is provided below.

### Selection of Services and Service Providers

The Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan creation processes involve extensive community outreach and data analysis to determine needs and priorities. The Housing Department utilizes the information gathered to identify priorities and select activities to receive federal funding. When considering activities for funding, staff contemplates how activities support the established five-year goals, advance other strategic goals, and meet funding eligibility criteria.

Services that are eligible for funding include those delivered by City staff and by nonprofit agencies. Code Enforcement is an example of a federally-funded service provided by City staff. However, this report focuses *only* on services provided by nonprofit agencies and how their performance is measured.

### Request for Proposals

When a service has been prioritized as a funding need, the Housing Department conducts a competitive process via a Request for Proposals ("RFP"). RFPs are developed based on information gathered from the community input process and local data. The RFP instructions outline the scope of requested services, eligibility criteria, application instructions, and the proposal review and rating process.

For example, the Housing Department recently issued an RFP for Senior Services to be supported with CDBG funding. Local data supported the need for senior services because of the high cost of living for elderly residents living on fixed incomes. After receiving input on the priorities from community members and from the City's Seniors Commission, the Department narrowed its focus to senior programs that provide shared housing, meals, and/or transportation. Staff then developed the RFP for senior services with these three areas of project eligibility.

In the past, the Department conducted annual competitions to award federal grants. Due to staff reductions, the Department lengthened its grants cycle and now issues new RFPs every three to five years. Increasing the time between competitive processes has several advantages. It provides consistent funding so that grantees can count on several years of funding. This allows the grantee to build expertise and capacity.

Periodically issuing RFPs for the same activity ensures that the City is continuously revising its service delivery models to incorporate the most current technology and best practices. It also

challenges nonprofit agencies to provide their highest attainable service delivery outcomes in order to obtain funding from the City. By doing so, the City is ensured that it is getting the maximum community benefit from its limited federal funds.

### Proposal Evaluation

After proposals are submitted, a proposal review panel evaluates and scores the proposals based on pre-established rating criteria. The panel includes staff with subject expertise within the Housing Department, as well as outside experts and individuals from interested groups. For instance, the recent Senior Services RFP panel included Housing Department staff, the chair of the Seniors Commission, and staff from the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services' Senior Health and Wellness Program.

The RFP manager provides the panel with detailed proposal review and rating guidance. Proposals are rated in several categories and the scores are compiled and averaged across all panelists. For example, the recent senior services RFP included the following evaluation criteria:

Criteria	Weight
Project Eligibility	Pass/Fail
Audit Review	Pass/Fail
Program Description	25%
Organizational and Financial Capacity and Experience	30%
Outputs and Outcomes	35%
Budget and Fee Structure	10%
Matching Funds Bonus	+2 or +4 (on 100-point scale)

The assessment of the proposal using these criteria is summarized below.

#### *Project Eligibility*

The Grants Management Team reviews each proposal to ensure the project is eligible under the funding source and the requirements outlined in the RFP. For example, CDBG eligibility criteria require that services assist low-income residents. Staff verify that the proposal will serve low-income residents prior to moving the proposal forward in the review process.

#### *Audit Review*

The Grants Management Team reviews two years of financial audits to assess financial capacity and review audit findings. If financial statements indicate open audit findings or concerns, staff reviews the agency's response to the findings or concerns to verify that the agency has resolved the issue.

#### *Program Description*

All RFP panel members review the program description. This is a narrative describing the need that the project is addressing, the geographic area to be served, the structure of the proposed program, outreach and education methods, collaborative partnerships, and the number of people

the program will serve. Applicants are scored on the robustness of their program and the proposal's strength in each of these areas.

*Organizational and Financial Capacity and Experience*

RFP Panelists review the proposal to assess the agency's ability to carry out the services proposed. This includes an analysis of their experience providing services similar to those described in the proposal, the agency's experience administering government grants and federal funding, staffing and oversight plans, and cultural competency. It also includes a review of job descriptions and the experience and qualifications of key staff to assess the quality and capacity of the staff members working on the program.

*Outputs and Outcomes*

RFP Panelists review the applicant's proposed means of measuring their performance. This includes both an analysis of the number of services provided ("outputs"), as well as the projected impact of the program for participants ("outcomes"). For example, a program might deliver services to a certain number of clients experiencing homelessness to get them stably housed; this is an *output* measure. By contrast, a client's improvement in his or her ability to, for instance, remain in their home one year after initial occupancy is the overall achievement; this is an *outcome*.

*Budget and Fee Structure*

Applicants provide a line item budget and a description of how each cost relates to the proposed program. RFP Panelists evaluate the proposed budget and budget methodology to determine cost eligibility, utilizing their subject matter expertise and instruction from the RFP Manager.

*Matching Funds Bonus*

Although most of the City's federal funding sources do not require a match from grantees, additional points are awarded to proposals that provide matching funds of 20% or more. The Grants Management Team makes this determination.

Evaluating Service Delivery Costs

After the panel completes the review and ranking process, the Department's Grants Management Team performs a cost reasonableness analysis for all proposals considered for funding. This involves an in-depth analysis of the costs for the services to be provided by the grantee.

Applicants must provide cost allocation plans to demonstrate that shared costs, such as rent and utilities, are distributed among all funding sources.

It's important to note that the Housing Department does not typically evaluate public service proposals using Return on Investment methodology to compare proposals. One reason the Department does not utilize this evaluation methodology is because services often cover a range of clientele, some of whom may require more support than others to achieve the goals of the program. For instance, the cost to move a chronically homeless individual from living on the streets to permanent housing may be much higher than assisting an individual who recently became homeless due to the loss of a job. Evaluating proposals based on cost per unit of service

methodology does not account for the differences in subpopulations served through a single contract.

### Evaluating Proposed Performance Measurements in Proposals

Specific performance measures are often not dictated in the RFP, but applicants are required to propose how they will report on their performance. For some types of services, there are uniform performance measures that are included in the RFP with the requirement that they be incorporated into the grant agreement. For example, homeless services agreements must include measures set by the County's Continuum of Care, so that they can be reported and measured via the county-wide Homeless Management Information System.

For other types of services for which there are not universally agreed-upon performance measures, applicants propose performance measures and goals. Staff gauges the appropriateness of measures and goals by periodic benchmarking against past grantees' performance. When similar services exist in other communities, they are also benchmarked against those services and service providers. The Grants Management Team staff then work with the funded agencies to refine and strengthen the measures during the grant agreement negotiation process.

### Grantee Selection and Funding Recommendations

After the evaluation panel rates the written proposal, the panel has the option to invite the applicants to present their project and answer questions via an in-person presentation and interview. Evaluation panels typically exercise this option when the scores are very close in value or when there are unanswered questions about the proposals. After the proposal ratings are finalized, the Housing Department makes recommendations for funding to the Housing Director, City Manager's Office, or City Council, depending on the dollar amount of the agreement and the contract authority. When the programs are supported with federal funds, the recommendations are generally included in the City Council approval of the Annual Action Plan.

Agencies are notified of funding recommendations and are given an opportunity to appeal the decision and/or request a debrief with Housing Department staff. The Housing Director responds to all appeals directly and Housing staff grant all requests for debrief meetings. During the proposal debrief, Housing staff explain the rating and award process and provide feedback on the panel's assessment of the agency's proposal.

### Grant Agreement Negotiation and Execution

After the awards are approved, the Housing Department Grants Management Team begins negotiating the specific terms of the grant agreements with selected agencies. Grant agreements include standard terms and conditions specific to each federal funding source, as well as City requirements. The scope of services, budget, and specific performance measures are negotiated for each project. However, each grantee agreement includes the following categories of performance measures:

1. *Unduplicated Participants* – Each agreement includes a target for the number of unduplicated participants that will be served by the program for the term of the agreement, typically one year.
2. *Services Measures/Outputs* – For each type of service, the agreement includes quarterly goals to measure the amount or level of service provided. Some examples include the number of case management sessions provided, the number of meals served, and the number of shelter nights provided. Outputs often provide Grants staff with service trends and add context to outcome results.
3. *Outcomes* – Each program includes outcomes to measure the impact of the program on the problem it is attempting to address. The outcomes are intended to measure the change that occurred over a defined period of time.

The Department often chooses to include additional or alternative performance measures from those proposed by an agency in order to more effectively measure success of the program. These may be adapted from best practice research and/or negotiation with the service provider. Staff work to ensure the measurement methodology and goals are clear and reasonable prior to executing the agreement.

### **Grantee Performance and Outcome Assessment**

After agreements are executed and the services are being delivered, grantees submit quarterly progress reports on performance goals. The Housing Department's Grants Management Team reviews the progress reports and assesses the performance. If a program is not meeting goals, staff will work with the grantee to determine the reason for nonperformance and monitor improvements over the term of the grant. Staff will also analyze the services provided in comparison to the agency's requests for payments to make sure they are compatible. If the invoiced amount is unreasonable in comparison to the type and level of services delivered, corrective actions are required by the City prior to payment.

The following examples for the People Assisting the Homeless ("PATH") Downtown Homeless Outreach Program illustrate the process in greater detail. PATH was selected from the Homeless Outreach and Rapid Rehousing RFP issued in 2015 and began this project in Fiscal Year 2015-16. They are now in the fourth quarter of the second year of the program. PATH's program provides street outreach, homeless assessments, case management, and referrals to homeless residents living in downtown San José. The program also provides a case manager at the MLK library.

Housing staff worked with the grantee to develop performance measures for Fiscal Year 2016-17. A subset of the performance measures included in the PATH contract are provided below as examples of measures included in each service agreement and to illustrate how they are utilized by staff to assess performance.

*Unduplicated Participants*

Unduplicated Participants are defined as participants who receive services at least once a year but whom may not be counted more than once in that year. The grantee is required to retain records documenting eligibility for all unduplicated participants.

*Unduplicated Participants – PATH Example*

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3		Quarter 4	Total
Goal	110	29	28		28	195
Actual	94	38	68		TBD	200

When tracking unduplicated participants, many programs that provide these types of services enroll most of their participants in the first quarter and then the numbers decrease over the term of the grant. As shown in this example, PATH fell below the goal for unduplicated individuals served in the first quarter. This raised a concern by the Grants Management Team. Through dialogue and interaction between City staff and PATH, the agency took actions to address the concern and has now exceeded the annual goal at the end of the third quarter.

*Outputs*

Output goals identify the amount or level of services to be provided. In this example, the output is related to the goal for the number of assessments PATH will conduct with homeless individuals during the term of the contract.

Using the Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (“VI-SPDAT”), PATH prioritizes the most vulnerable individuals living on the streets of downtown San José. This assessment tool helps identify individuals who should be recommended for each housing and support intervention available in the Countywide Coordinated Entry System. The tool helps identify the best type of support and housing intervention for an individual. The output below represents unduplicated individuals for whom a VI-SPDAT was completed and entered into the Coordinated Assessment System.

*Engagement and assessment (# of unduplicated engagements / VI-SPDAT assessments)*

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total
Goal	10	22	22	27	81
Actual	94	38	68	TBD	200

According to these output measures, the grantee has already met the annual output goal for assessments by the third quarter. If PATH is awarded funding for an additional year, staff will revisit this goal with the agency and will likely increase the quarterly and annual target.

*Outcomes*

Outcomes measure the impact of the program on the problem it is attempting to address. In this example, the outcome measures the percent of homeless individuals for whom assessments were completed and who were placed into permanent housing within the term of the agreement. All of the services, including outreach, assessment, and case management, are focused on meeting this goal of placing individuals in permanent housing.

<i>Permanent Housing Placement</i>				
Annual goal: 10% of clients contacted via street/encampment outreach will move from street to permanent housing destination				
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Actual	6%	6%	8%	TBD

PATH has assisted 8% of its clients to move to permanent housing destinations at the end of quarter three and it expects to house additional clients in quarter four to reach or exceed 10% of their clients. The results for this outcome typically improve throughout the year because placing an individual into permanent housing usually takes several months to years to achieve. The outreach teams begin with making outreach contacts, conducting assessments, then providing ongoing case management to reach this goal. Often, finding permanent housing placement is dependent on the assistance available at the county-wide level, such as rapid re-housing assistance or available apartments. Given PATH's status in the third quarter and the current resources available, staff judges it is likely to attain its annual goal.

### **Grantee Monitoring**

In addition to reviewing quarterly performance reports, Housing Department staff conduct annual risk assessments of all grantees and conduct monitoring visits based on the risk assessment results. The risk assessment process results in a numerical score for all grantees. The numerical score is based on multiple risk factors including those listed below:

- Amount of funding
- Timeliness and accuracy of invoices and quarterly reports
- Complexity of the program
- Length of time since the last monitoring visit
- Status of past monitoring or audit findings

After conducting a risk assessment for each grantee, staff conducts on-site monitoring visits for those agencies deemed to have the highest risk for not meeting their performance outcomes or for financial noncompliance. Grantees receiving large awards or managing complex projects are typically monitored on an annual basis. All grantees are monitored at least every two years.

### **On-site Monitoring Process**

Monitoring visits involve an assessment of financial capacity, a review of compliance with program requirements, and a review of documentation confirming the data submitted in quarterly progress reports. Additionally, Housing Department staff meet with key program staff at the grantee agency to assess staff capacity. The on-site monitoring process is guided by monitoring report forms, which are specific to each funding source. After the site visit is complete, staff complete a written monitoring report. This report identifies concerns which may result in a Corrective Action Plan ("CAP"). Staff utilize CAPs to outline additional requirements or

deadlines to ensure the grantee comes into compliance and/or improves their capacity to provide the contracted services.

An example of an issue the Housing Department raised regarding a past grantee involved a project supporting a consortium of service providers. During the review of intake forms for each of the agencies, Grants Management Team staff discovered that one agency was not consistently collecting client signatures on the forms. This resulted in a recommendation to collect all signatures and train staff on the intake process to ensure consistency. In this example, the agency is asked to respond to the finding, and then the Grants Management Team follows up within a specified period to verify compliance.

HUD periodically monitors the City's federal grant programs using a similar process to the one described above. As part of the monitoring, HUD reviews the City's process for awarding funds, assessing performance, and monitoring grantees. In the course of many federal audits, HUD has not identified any concerns with the City's current process.

#### Grant Renewals

Most of the Housing Department's public service grants are awarded for a one-year term, with an additional two to four years of funding contingent on availability of funds and on grantee performance. After the third quarter of each year, the Grants Management Team evaluates programs and makes recommendations for grant renewal for high performing grantees. Renewed grants are included in the Annual Action Plan and approved by Council in the Spring of each year.

Occasionally, the Department determines that the services could be improved by making significant changes to the program. In such instances, the Department may choose not to extend grant agreements and initiate a new competitive process for a new service delivery model and/or service provider. When this occurs, the Department re-evaluates the structure and design of the program and issues a new RFP.

For example, over the past several years, the City has funded several nonprofit agencies to provide tenant-based rental assistance and/or related supportive services to homeless individuals and families. The funding sources for these agreements had unique requirements and the programs operated slightly differently. The Housing Department realized that combining these resources and issuing a new RFP would have several benefits. First, the program design and requirements would be uniform across the various service providers and participants would be served in a more consistent manner. In addition, the Department could align the program with national rapid rehousing best practices. With the launch of the County-wide Coordinated Assessment and Coordinated Entry System, the Housing Department saw an opportunity to develop and issue a new RFP with the requirement to enroll individuals from the County-wide system.

### Process improvements

The Housing Department's goal in providing grants to local nonprofit providers is to provide essential services in the community, to develop the capacity of local nonprofit organizations, and to improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods. The Department is continually assessing how the City prioritizes services to best meet the needs in the community and evaluating our efforts in providing those services. The Department revises its grant process on a regular basis as community needs change, as new research is published, and as best practices are developed.

The Department conducts annual community outreach to help assess the success of the City's programs and projects. In addition, the Grants Management Team hosts periodic workshops with all grantees to provide training and technical assistance and to invite feedback on the City's processes. These forums are used to revise the grant process. For example, the Housing Department recently hosted a workshop related to Performance Measurement for all grantees. During this workshop, grantees identified challenges they faced when entering data into quarterly reports in the City's online WebGrants system. As a result of this input, the Grants Management Team will provide an annotated report form or template to all grantees, detailing the data or narrative information that must be entered into each field in the report form.

### EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

This item will be heard by the City Council on June 13, 2017. Staff will incorporate feedback from the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee meeting and the June 13 City Council meeting into draft agreements with the service providers identified in the Draft FY 2017-18 Annual Action Plan. The Annual Action Plan is scheduled to be heard by the City Council on June 20, 2017. Performance of awarded service providers later will be included in the CAPER, which the City Council will consider in Fall 2017.

### PUBLIC OUTREACH

This item will be posted on the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee website for June 8, 2017, and will be placed on the City Council website for its June 13, 2017, meeting.

### COORDINATION

This item has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

### COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT

This item is designed to inform the City Council on how the Housing Department measures grants-related performance, per the City Council's questions. Staff will inform the Housing and Community Development Commission ("HCDC") of this memorandum. Staff also will bring

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

May 22, 2017

**Subject: Housing Grantee Selection and Performance Review Process**

Page 13

the Annual Action Plan to HCDC on June 8, 2017, and will bring the annual CAPER to HCDC in Fall 2017. Both of those documents implement the performance measures discussed in this memorandum. Feedback from HCDC on both the Annual Action Plan and the CAPER will be integrated into those respective City Council actions.

**CEQA**

Not a Project, File No. PP10-069 (a), Staff Report.

/s/

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For questions, please contact James Stagi, Grant and Neighborhood Programs Administrator, at (408) 535-8238.