



**City of Bloomington
Office of the Common Council**

Jack Hopkins Social Services Funding Program

**Elaboration of the Three Criteria for Evaluating and Awarding
Grants and Other Policies**

(updated: February 2012)

Elaboration of Three Funding Criteria

In 1993 Jack Hopkins wrote a letter to the Committee outlining a set of criteria for the use of these social services funds. Aside from referring to a more recent community-wide survey, those criteria have served as the basis for allocating the funds ever since. The following is an elaboration of those criteria which has been approved by the Committee.

- 1. The program should address a previously-identified priority for social services funds (as indicated in the *Service Community Assessment of Needs (SCAN)*, the *City of Bloomington Housing and Neighborhood Development Department's 2010-2014 Consolidated Plan* or any other community-wide survey of social service needs);**

“priority for social services funds”

The Common Council has used these funds for programs that provide food, housing, healthcare, or other services to city residents who are of low or moderate income, under 18-years of age, elderly, affected with a disability, or otherwise disadvantaged.

City Residency - Programs must primarily serve City residents. Individual programs have occasionally been located outside of the City but, in that case, these funds have never been used for capital projects (e.g. construction, renovation, or improvement of buildings).

Low income - Programs primarily serving low-income populations are given a high priority.

Emergency Services – Programs primarily providing emergency services (e.g. food, housing, and medical services) will be given a high priority.

- 2. The funds should provide a one-time investment that, through matching funds or other fiscal leveraging, make a significant contribution to the program; and**
- a. “one-time Investment”**

This restriction is intended to encourage innovative projects and to allow the funds to address changing circumstances. To make funds available for those purposes, this restriction discourages agencies from relying on these funds from year to year and from using these funds to cover on-going (or operational) costs, particularly those relating to personnel.

Ongoing or Operational Costs

These costs are recurring rather than non-recurring costs. Recurring cost typically include outlays for personnel, rent, utilities, maintenance, supplies, client services, and other like ongoing budget items. Non-recurring costs typically include outlays for capital improvements and equipment.

Exceptions

While ongoing or operational costs are not generally considered a “one time investment,” they will be eligible for funding in three circumstances:

- first, when an agency is proposing start-up funds or a pilot project and demonstrates a well developed plan for funding in future years which is independent of this funding source;*
- second, when an agency demonstrates that an existing program has suffered a significant loss of funding and requires “bridge” funds in order to continue for the current year; or*
- Third, when agencies seek funds as a Collaboration Project (see below)*

Elaboration

Renovation versus Maintenance

Costs associated with the renovation of a facility are an appropriate use of these funds, while the costs associated with the maintenance of a facility are considered part of the operational costs of the program and, when eligible, will be given low priority. When distinguishing between these two kinds of outlays, the Committee will consider such factors as whether this use of funds were the result of unforeseen circumstance or will result in an expansion of services.

Conferences and Travel

Costs associated with travel or attending a conference will generally be considered as an operating cost which, when eligible, will be given low priority.

Computer Equipment

Generally the costs associated with the purchase, installation, and maintenance of personal computers and related equipment will be considered an operational cost and, when eligible, be given low priority. However, the costs associated with system-wide improvements for information and communication technologies, or for specialized equipment may be considered a one-time investment.

Scholarships and Vouchers

Scholarships and vouchers allowing persons to participate in a program are generally considered as an operational cost.

b. “through matching funds or other fiscal leveraging, make a significant contribution to the program”

In the words of Jack Hopkins, who originally proposed these criteria, investments “should be leveraged wherever possible by matching from other sources.” Agencies may demonstrate such leveraging by using matching funds, working in partnership with other agencies, or other means.

Applications from City Agencies and Other Property Tax Based Entities

Over the years the Council has not funded applications submitted by city departments. This is based on the theory that the departments have other, more appropriate avenues for requesting funds and should not compete against other agencies, which do not have the benefit of city resources at their disposal. Except on rare occasions, the Council has not directly or indirectly funded agencies that have the power to levy property taxes or whose primary revenues derive from property taxes.

3. This investment in the program should lead to broad and long lasting benefits to the community.

“broad and long-lasting benefits to the community”

Again, in the words of Jack Hopkins, “priority should be given to projects or programs where investments now will have a positive, long-term spillover effect (such as reduced susceptibility to ...diseases, decreased absences from school, reducing lost time (from work) ..., etc).

Funding of Events and Celebrations Discouraged

Historically the Council has not funded applications that promote or implement events or celebrations. It appears that this is based upon the conclusion that these occasions do not engender the broad and long-lasting effects required by this third criterion.

Collaborative Projects

The Committee wishes to encourage social services agencies to collaborate in order to solve common problems and better address local social services needs. To serve these ends, the Committee will allow agencies to submit an application for funding as a Collaborative Project in addition to submitting a standard application. Applicants pursuing such funding should declare that they are seeking funds as a Collaborative Project, demonstrate a high level of communication and coordination among participating agencies, identify goals shared by the agencies and set forth steps that address the greatest challenges to achieving those goals, along with addressing the standard criteria. In that regard, agencies should focus on how the project serves a previously-recognized community need, achieves any fiscal leveraging or efficiencies, and provides broad and long lasting benefits to the community.

Other Policies and the Reasons for Them

Agency acting as fiscal agent must have 501(c) (3) status

The agency which acts as the fiscal agent for the grant must be incorporated as a 501(c)(3) corporation. This policy is intended to assure that grant funds go to organizations: 1) with boards who are legally accountable for implementing the funding agreements; and 2) with the capability of raising matching funds which is an indicator of the long-term viability of the agency. Given its mission, the presence of a board, and its general viability, an exception has historically been made for the Bloomington Housing Authority.

One application per agency – Exception for Collaborative Projects

Except as noted below, each agency is limited to one application. This policy is intended to: 1) spread these funds among more agencies; 2) assure the suitability and quality of applications by having the agency focus and risk their efforts on one application at a time; and 3) lower the administrative burden by reducing the number of applications of marginal value. As noted above, an exception to this rule applies to agencies which submit an application as a Collaborative Project. Those agencies may also submit one other application that addresses the standard criteria.

\$1,000 Minimum Dollar Amount for Request

This is a competitive funding program involving many hours on the part of staff and the committee members deliberating upon and monitoring proposals. The \$1,000 minimum amount was chosen as a good balance between the work expended and the benefits gained from awarding these small grants.

Funding Agreement – Reimbursement of Funds –Expenditure Before End-of-the-Year

The Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) Department has been monitoring the funding agreements since 2001. In order to be consistent with the practices it employs in monitoring CDBG and other funding programs, the funding agreements provide for a reimbursement of funds. Rather than receiving the funds before performing the work, agencies either perform the work and seek reimbursement, or enter into the obligation and submit a request for the city to pay for it.

And, in order to avoid having the City unnecessarily encumber funds, agencies should plan to expend and verify these grants before December of the year the grants were awarded, unless specifically approved in the funding agreement. Please note that funds encumbered from one calendar year to the next cannot be reimbursed by use of the City's credit cards.