

City of Bloomington Common Council

Jack Hopkins Social Services Committee

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION ON:

RESOLUTION 2025-09 – Authorizing the Allocation of the Jack Hopkins Social Services Program Funds for the Year 2025 and Related Matters

Prologue: *The following description of the 2025 Jack Hopkins Social Services Program, along with the supporting documentation attached hereto, constitutes the Report of the 2025 Jack Hopkins Social Services Committee pursuant to Bloomington Municipal Code 2.04.230. The Report of the Committee is advisory in nature.*

This is the 33rd year of the Jack Hopkins Social Services Funding Program, named after former Councilmember Jack Hopkins. Since its inception in 1993 through 2024, the City has awarded over \$6.2 million under this program to serve the needs of our community's most vulnerable residents. Indeed, since the inception of this program, annual funding has increased dramatically: from \$90,000 in 1993 to \$500,000 available in 2025. Each year the demand for funds exceeds supply, and each year the Committee works hard to develop a fair and responsive process, one sensitive to local need and one intended to foster responsible fiscal stewardship. This year, the Committee received 38 applications for funding and recommends awarding grant funds to 35 agency programs.

Resolution 2025-09 implements the recommendations of the 2025 Jack Hopkins Committee. The legislation:

- Allocates \$510,377.27 in grant funds to 35 agency programs (\$500,000 appropriated for use in 2025 and \$10,377.27 in unspent funds from previous years);
- Approves the form of the *Funding Agreement* with these agencies;
- Delegates questions regarding the interpretation of the *Funding Agreements* to the Chair of the Committee (Councilmember Asare);
- Approves the *Report* of the Jack Hopkins Committee.

Committee Members

The Committee is a Standing Committee of the Council, pursuant to BMC 2.04.210. The 2025 Committee included four Council members and three members of the public with experience in social services. The non-Council members are appointed by the Committee Chair:

- Isak Nti Asare (Chair)
- Courtney Daily
- Dave Rollo
- Andy Ruff
- Nordia McNish
- Camryn Greer
- Eddy Riou

Housing and Neighborhood Development Department Staff

While Council staff coordinates the program prior to Council action, Anna Killion-Hanson and Cody Toothman of HAND provide critical insight and assistance throughout the process. Once Council approves the recommended allocations, Mr. Toothman executes reimbursement of funds to

agencies, monitors the grants, and otherwise advises agencies post-award.

The 2025 Hopkins Process

The following is a brief summary of the 2025 Hopkins process:

- **Organizational Meeting – 21 February 2025**

The Committee met to establish policies and procedures for the 2025 program. At this meeting the Committee:

- o Reviewed and made changes to the elaboration of criteria for evaluating and awarding grants;
- o Incorporated a detailed scoring rubric to aid in assessing the merits of applications;
- o Approved solicitation materials; and
- o Established a schedule for 2025.

- **Request for Applications Issued – 04 March 2025**

The Council Office sent a solicitation letter directly to social services agencies, posted the letter and grant application on the Committee's website, and issued a press release announcing the availability of the application.

- **Technical Assistance Meeting – 14 March 2025**

A voluntary Technical Assistance meeting was held on 14 March in order to explain the program to, and answer questions from, agency representatives. Agencies were encouraged to contact the Council office with remaining questions.

- **Deadline for Applications – 21 March 2025**

A total of 38 applications were submitted to the Council Office by the deadline requesting a total of \$965,372.77.

- **Distribution of Packet of Applications – 04 April 2025**

The Council Office distributed summaries and application materials to committee members and staff.

- **Initial Review of Applications by the Committee – 15 April 2025**

The Committee met for an initial review of the applications. The Committee first announced any conflicts of interests before reviewing the applications. During its initial review, the Committee developed questions to be answered by agencies, which were shared with the agencies via email.

- **Agency Presentations – 22 April 2025**

Agency Presentations were held in a hybrid meeting format. Agencies made presentations. Agencies were then able to answer any remaining questions posed by committee members.

- **Individual Committee Member Recommendations**

Committee members submitted individual recommended allocations and comments to the Council Office using a scoring rubric. The Council Office compiled scores and comments and averaged scores for its next meeting.

- **Pre-Allocation Meeting – 06 May 2025**

Two members (Riou and McNish) affirmed that they submitted Disclosure Statements of

potential conflicts of interest and affirmed that they had no financial interest in the applicant organizations with which they are affiliated; that their relationships with the applicant organizations were not dependent on the award of grant funds; that their relationships would continue whether or not grants were awarded; and that they would receive no interest in awarded grant funds. The Committee made preliminary recommendations for funding amounts for certain applicants and requested additional information from others.

- **Allocation Hearing – 16 May 2025**

The Committee recommended funding for 35 agency applications for a total of \$510,377.27. The committee invited public comment during this meeting.

- **De-Briefing Meeting – 20 May 2025**

The Committee met to reflect on the 2025 funding cycle and to identify lessons learned to improve future processes. Several key takeaways emerged from this year's experience:

1. **Streamlined Interviews:** The Committee made a significant procedural change by interviewing only those agencies for which members had outstanding questions. This adjustment led to a far more efficient and focused process while maintaining fairness and due diligence.
2. **Implementation of a Scoring Rubric:** Following last year's committee recommendation, this year's committee piloted a formal rubric to assess applications. While the rubric was a helpful step toward greater structure and transparency, members noted that it requires refinement. In particular, the rubric lacked more refined evaluative categories, and its connection to funding decisions needs to be clarified. The committee recommends that JHSS continue to work with this rubric in following years. However, the committee recommends that this rubric be refined. Any future updates to the rubric should be reflected in all relevant program guidelines and materials (e.g. application form) to ensure alignment and consistency.
3. **Call for more flexible schedule:** The compressed timeline of the 2025 process posed challenges for both Committee members and applicants. Several members noted the difficulty of conducting thorough reviews, deliberations, and follow-up discussions within the limited time available. Greater scheduling flexibility—whether by extending the application window, adjusting meeting spacing, or starting the process earlier—was identified as a key improvement for future years. The Committee expressed interest in adding at least one more meeting to the funding cycle in future years to allow for more in-depth discussion and refinement of the rubric before finalizing the call for applications. Council staff also requested more time between meetings for preparation of necessary documentation, reports, packets etc.
4. **Priority Setting Within Broader Categories:** The Committee discussed the potential value of setting more specific funding priorities to be announced on a year to year basis within the program's broad eligibility criteria—enabling a more targeted and transparent response to emerging or urgent community needs while still maintaining flexibility.
5. **Exploration of a Universal Application:** The Committee expressed interest in working with other City and county grantmaking entities to explore the feasibility of something like a

5. **Exploration of a Universal Application:** The Committee expressed interest in working with other City and county grantmaking entities to explore the feasibility of something like a “universal application”. Such a system could allow agencies to apply for multiple City funding streams through a single application, reducing administrative burden and improving coordination across funding programs. The committee also discussed better data sharing possibilities between funds and programs.
6. **Collaboration and Support:** The committee emphasized the need for collaboration and coordination with other city departments and granting agencies. The committee affirms its support of JHSS remaining under the Common Council’s control.
7. **Demand Exceeds Supply:** This year, the Committee received 38 applications requesting a total of \$965,372.77 in funding—nearly double the available resources. The gap between need and available funding underscores the importance of increasing the size of the Jack Hopkins fund in future years to better meet community demand.

These reflections should guide future cycles as the Committee continues its efforts to ensure that the process remains equitable, transparent, and responsive to the evolving needs of Bloomington’s most vulnerable residents.

- **Council Action – 21 May 2025**

The Common Council will consider the *Resolution* approving recommendations and taking related actions regarding the program.

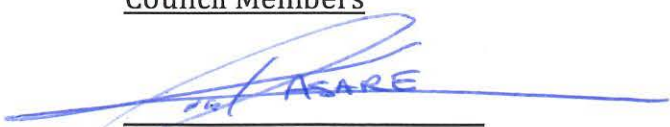
- **Technical Assistance Meeting for Grantees - Tuesday, 16 June 2025**

The HAND department has scheduled a Technical Assistance meeting to inform funded agencies how to obtain reimbursements under the grant.

The 2025 Report of the Jack Hopkins Social Services Funding Committee is signed by the following majority of its membership:

Council Members

Date


Isak Nti Asare (Chair)
Council Member, At-Large

20/MAY/2025


Courtney Daily
Council Member, District V

5/20/2025

Dave Rollo
Council Member, District IV



Andy Ruff
Council Member, At-Large

5/20/2025

Residents With Experience in Social Services


Date

Nordia McNish



Camryn Greer

5/20/2025



Eddy Riou

5/20/2025