

Snohomish County Human Services Department

2012 and 2013 Application Workshop for CDBG Public Services and ESG Projects

November 7, 2011

Questions and Answers

Question 1: When do we need to get the Board meeting minutes in that authorizes submittal of the application? In the past we have been able to provide this after the application deadline. Concern was expressed over the short time frame to get this information.

Answer 1: This needs to be submitted with the application, by the application deadline. If your organization will not have a Board meeting prior to this time, you may submit other documentation, such as a Board resolution, which provides this authorization. If your Board has delegated the authority to act on their behalf in applying for these funds, the Board meeting minutes, bylaws, or other authorizing document that recorded the delegation should be included.

Question 2: In the evaluation criteria what does evidence-based mean (Project Soundness, Question 1)?

Answer 2: It means that there is a basis in practice that is formally published or otherwise documentable that the program method to be used is effective and addresses the problem/need presented. This evaluation criterion also provides room for innovative methods. The hope is that innovative methods would be able to provide some support through a pilot project or other documentation that the approach is recognized and effective. This criterion is not meant to exclude programs or to require extensive research behind every proposal. We do want to see that there is support that the approach to be used is effective to address the problem/need. This evaluation criterion measures the extent to which this is documented.

Question 3: For homeless projects, are you targeting a particular approach to be used?

Answer 3: No, as long as it is consistent with the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness and the 2010-2014 Consolidated Plan (see Appendix D in the CDBG-S application and Appendix C in the ESG application).

Question 4: For evidence-based approach, will you be looking at the project as a whole or just this specific question? I am not sure if I can find research on the current approach we use, but our outcomes show strong results. Also, our project has some changes from the last time we applied.

Answer 4: You can use local outcomes and draw from experience locally to help document this area. The data that is used, and how strong the evidence is, will go to the weight of the scoring. Also, as this is a new application cycle, this is an opportunity to include any project changes you wish to make in your application.

Question 5: Who will be scoring the applications using the new criteria – County Staff, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members, or both?

Answer 5: The new criteria will be used in both the staff review and the TAC review process.

Question 6: Is the evaluation scoring on a sliding scale? For example, if there are 10 points possible for a question, can you receive points anywhere from 1 to 10, such as a 6?

Answer 6: You can only receive a 0, 1, 5, or 10, based on the guidelines for scoring in the evaluation criteria.

Question 7: What is the expectation in answering the question on Project Sustainability?

Answer 7: We are asking you to anticipate and plan for the sustainability of the project and to provide information about your planning. What will happen if the project receives less CDBG funds than requested or there are further CDBG reductions? Are you exploring other sources of funding?

Question 8: In the evaluation criteria, the question regarding leveraging (Financial Feasibility, Question 2), provides points for funding secured. Should this read “secured”? Since we are applying several months before the project starts, it is unlikely that funding will be “secured” yet.

Answer 8: Existing projects seeking continued funding with an established array of funding sources that are committed to the project are considered to have “secured” funding. New projects or projects that are proposing a revised or expanded service should provide evidence that the funding being relied upon to sustain the project as proposed will actually be available.

Question 9: If we can show that funds were secured this year and applying for the same funds next year, would this be applicable to this question?

Answer 9: Yes.

Question 10: For the service area for the grant, we can no longer serve residents of Marysville with these funds?

Answer 10: That is correct. Marysville has become its own CDBG entitlement community and will start receiving its own CDBG funds. So the service area for our CDBG grant is Snohomish County, outside the cities of Everett, Bothell, and Marysville. Everett has been an entitlement community for many years and receives its own grant. Bothell partners with King County. Marysville will be undergoing a planning process this year for the funds. Not sure of the timeline for this. You might want to contact Marysville to be involved in that process as they plan for how the funds will be used.

Question 11: What about serving the homeless, if we have a project site in Marysville or Everett?

Answer 11: It is okay to have a project site in Everett or Marysville, if you can show that you are doing outreach throughout the County and are serving people from throughout the County at those sites. We cannot say how the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) might view project sites in Marysville or Everett versus project sites in the Consortium's service area.

Question 12: What is the reasoning behind the application question regarding new service or increased service (Question 7). Does it have to do with not supplanting funding?

Answer 12: Yes, the funds cannot be used to supplant existing local or state government funding for projects. There is a process where we can request a waiver for this requirement, but it is difficult to receive. However, projects may present unique or complex funding scenarios that require individual assessment of the extent to which this concern exists. If, for example, a project has been able to sustain prior service levels in spite of the PY2011 CDBG reductions by using private funds, requesting additional CDBG funds to return to pre-PY2011 funding at the same total service levels would not violate the supplanting prohibition.

Question 13: For projects that currently receive CDBG funding, what is the base level of CDBG funding we use if we want to request additional funding for new or increased services under our project? Is it our original 2011 CDBG award or our revised 2011 CDBG award which reflects the funding cut?

Answer 13: Because the funding reductions are likely to be permanent and future allocations may include additional reductions, current projects should consider their "base level" of CDBG funding to be their current PY2011 allocations.

Question 14: For homeless housing, we are in the process of re-categorizing some housing provided from transitional housing to permanent housing. Will this have an effect for this funding?

Answer 14: Under the Consolidated Plan, the service goal for homeless housing allows for the flexibility to serve people in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing. For CDBG, as long as the services provided are eligible under the CDBG grant, they can be supported with CDBG funds. ESG funds are intended to support emergency shelter for homeless people during the first stages of a continuum of care that culminates in permanent housing. ESG regulations define "emergency shelter" to include emergency shelter and transitional housing, so ESG funds can only be used for emergency shelter and transitional housing, not for permanent housing.

Question 15: Do the ESG regulations define the length of transitional housing?

Answer 15: No. But the intent of the ESG funds is to help people in the beginning stages of the continuum of care.