



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

APPROVED
City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
April 8, 2019 – 4:00 P.M.
City Commission Chambers, City Hall
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

October 2018-September 2019

MEMBERS		PRESENT	ABSENT
Wanda Francis, Chair	P	6	0
Jonathan Bennett	P	4	1
Laurel Bolderson	P	5	1
Christina Disbrow (arr. 4:07)	P	4	1
April Kirk	P	4	2
Richard Morris	P	4	3
Marisol Simon	P	5	0
Noah Szugajew	P	6	0

Staff Present

Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager
Simone Flores, CDBG Grants Administrator
Jamie Opperlee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

None.

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- **Quorum Requirement – As of March 20, 2019, there are 8 appointed members to the Board, which means 5 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Francis called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present at the meeting.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 11, 2019

Motion made by Ms. Bolderson, seconded by Ms. Simon, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Lucinda Blackman, member of the public, stated that she was once a client of the Tenant-Based Rental Voucher (TBRV) program. She is now closing on her own home. She explained that being part of the TBRV program helped her to become a

homeowner, as she was able to save her own money during her time in this program. The Board recognized her accomplishment with a round of applause.

IV. CDBG APPLICATION PRESENTATION – PUBLIC SERVICES

Ms. Williams advised that each Applicant has three minutes to give an oral presentation, followed by up to seven minutes for questions and answers with the Board.

- **SoFIA / Diane Smith**

Diane Smith, Director of the Senior Companion and Respite programs from the South Florida Institute on Aging (SoFIA), and Luvornia McCray, volunteer, reported that this program provides a positive approach to the care of older adults. Senior companions provide individualized companionship and supportive services to elderly and disabled adults, as well as respite care for caregivers. Services provide a dual benefit: volunteers remain active and connected to the community, and the individuals they visit reduce social isolation. Caregivers experience reduced stress levels so they are able to continue caring for their loved ones.

In the current fiscal year, the program has added 19 new volunteers, eight of whom are Fort Lauderdale residents. Last year, 35% of elderly and disabled adults and their caregivers were residents of Fort Lauderdale, as were 35% of volunteers.

The program's funding request is for \$50,000, which would support the tax-free stipends of 16 senior companion volunteers for the year. These volunteers receive \$2.65/hour for their services and 40 cents per mile in mileage reimbursement. All volunteers are older adults of age 55 or over with low to moderate incomes. Ms. McCray stated that volunteering with the Senior Companion and Respite program is meaningful to her because many senior and disabled adults can become lonely. She added that the program is helpful to her as well, as she enjoys the interaction.

- **Turnstone Development / William Scheider**

William Schneider and Rhonda Butler, representing Turnstone Development, explained that the organization is a not-for-profit organization that owns a 105-unit building at 615 N. Andrews Avenue. Turnstone has a program called Family Support Coordinator which serves unemployed and underemployed residents of the building. The long-term benefit for these individuals and families is sustainable, stable housing.

Ms. Butler advised that a previous Family Support Coordinator held degrees in psychology, human services, and social work. This is a part-time position through which the Coordinator makes him-/herself available to residents. The program has been modified based on the residents' needs. It offers employment training, financial literacy, and needs assessments, among other services.

Mr. Morris requested clarification of the number of residents the program proposes to help. Ms. Butler advised that the Application's performance indicators reflect the number of clients they feel can realistically be met, based on current enrollment and projected need. Mr. Schneider added that in the previous year, the program did not apply for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and was still able to help 35 residents. 50 is the goal with funding. Performance measures will not include anyone who is currently being assisted in the program.

Ms. Disbrow requested additional information on outcomes in fiscal years (FY) 2016-2017. Ms. Butler replied that in 2016-2017, Turnstone's focus was on literacy and employability. The building had just opened and there was a recognized need in these areas. Turnstone retained a local principal to assist residents seeking their GEDs. They served more than 35 clients in this year and exceeded 100% of participants' goals.

Ms. Butler continued that the reimbursement program is supported by rental income. Supportive services are provided at all Turnstone properties, although some have less intensive programming. The financial literacy program will include support from local banks that can help by providing checking accounts to participants. The Coordinator will help connect residents to additional services in Broward County.

Chair Francis noted that of the building's 139 residents, only 25 are expected to need the program. Ms. Butler advised that including residents over 55 years of age brings this number to 31. She further clarified that the program is not limited to heads of household.

- **Jack and Jill Children's Center / Jiwon Tilghman**

Heather Siskind, representing Jack and Jill Children's Center, stated that the Center has supplied child care to the Fort Lauderdale community since 1942. Their request is for \$50,000 for Promising Futures Empowerment scholarships, which allow children to attend child care while their parents are working or in school. The Center focuses on helping children meet their developmental outcomes. It is one of two child care centers in the area that are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Another component of the Application addresses families as well as children by providing wraparound services. These include parent education and community partnerships that can help them train for jobs. The Center works closely with families to help them improve their lifestyles.

Ms. Simon requested additional information on the frequency of evaluation and assessments. Ms. Siskind replied that child assessments are done on a daily basis, while other assessments are conducted three times per year at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Teachers keep portfolios on every child in the program to back up the assessment data.

- **Center for Independent Living of Broward / Corey Hinds**

Ms. Disbrow left the dais at this time and did not participate in discussion of this Application due to a conflict.

Corey Hinds, Executive Director of the Center for Independent Living of Broward County, and Brian Johnson, Director of Programs, advised that the Center has been in existence since 1991. They provide a variety of services to individuals with disabilities, with housing as the core service. The program for which they are requesting funds is a housing assistance program that provides home accessibility and barrier removal for individuals with disabilities. They also assist with affordability of housing.

Mr. Johnson stated that eligible residents in Fort Lauderdale would attend an orientation at the Center for Independent Living. The Center would conduct a budget study at this orientation to identify where they can help these individuals by connecting them to resources within the community. Clients would also receive training from a community partner during the orientation to ensure they are aware of their rights as tenants. The program emphasizes empowerment and equal access to services. After orientation, participants would return for one-on-one interviews with the program's Housing Director to develop an individual living plan.

After fulfilling these components, the program will work with individuals to leverage community partnerships with entities such as the Housing Authority and Family Success. Participants will be provided with benefit counseling.

Ms. Kirk asked if the program has difficulty finding housing in Fort Lauderdale, as well as if there are times it might advise a client to move out of the City due to a lack of affordability and accessibility. Mr. Hinds confirmed that many individuals who do not have stable homes participate in the Center's programming. The Center attempts to keep these individuals close to familiar communities if possible. Mr. Johnson added that some housing may be affordable but not accessible.

Ms. Simon requested additional clarification of how the funding would be used. Mr. Hinds replied that p. 30 of the Application breaks down the budget and how funds would be used. This would include \$20,000 on home accessibility units such as ramps or railings and \$30,000 for staffing.

Mr. Bennett asked for identification of other potential funding sources for the program. Mr. Hinds explained that these include grant funds for which the program has applied but which have not yet been awarded, which are included in an attachment to the Application.

Mr. Bennett also requested clarification of how many clients the program is expected to help. Mr. Hinds replied that the program expects to help 50 clients with housing placement and 75 clients total.

Chair Francis cautioned that CDBG funds cannot be used for the purchase of medical equipment, software, or vehicles. She recommended that this restriction be taken into consideration regarding the items the program might purchase. She also noted that the program may wish to ask for more funding for equipment than for salaries and benefits.

Mr. Hinds clarified that the Housing Director will serve as the primary point of contact for the program. A portion of the requested funds would go toward the salary of a Housing Director who has been part of the Center for several years, with matching funds used to make up the difference. The remaining \$20,000 requested would go toward equipment. Mr. Hinds explained that the program uses an equipment loan program which provides refurbished equipment donated by individuals whose family members are no longer using it. They also work closely with contractors to minimize labor and installation costs.

- **Women in Distress of Broward County / Michael Barron**

Ms. Disbrow rejoined the Board at this time.

Michael Barron, representing Women in Distress of Broward County, stated that this program has served Broward County for 44 years. They were one of the nation's first domestic violence shelters. In 2018, their emergency shelter served 202 survivors who were Fort Lauderdale residents. This facility allows survivors and their children to escape to safety. They added a pet shelter in 2018, as pets can be a barrier to individuals leaving domestic violence.

In 2018 Women in Distress provided 9263 emergency shelter nights for survivors from Fort Lauderdale. Mr. Barron noted that this is a 48% increase over the previous year. Although the number of domestic violence cases in Fort Lauderdale has decreased, their severity has increased, resulting in a loss of life in 25% of the incidents.

In addition to the shelter, Women in Distress has taken 521 crisis calls in the past year and provided 2308 hours of advocacy, therapy, and counseling. Last year the organization spent \$1,338,037.99 on Fort Lauderdale residents. Mr. Barron emphasized that CDBG funding would be used as leverage to request funds from other sources.

Mr. Morris referred to the organization's monitoring report, which refers to staff training for an emergency plan. Mr. Barron explained that this plan has been redesigned to include active shooter training. Women in Distress has been funded for several years at the \$50,000 level; however, two years ago, they looked into the difficulty of spending these funds and determined it would be best to identify a base amount needed so they can raise other funds.

V. CBDO APPLICATION PRESENTATION

- **H.O.M.E.S., Inc. / Linda Taylor, Katherine Barry**

Linda Taylor, CEO of H.O.M.E.S., Inc., stated that the organization is in its 20th year, as well as in its 10th year of the Youth Self-Sufficiency Program, which has been funded with Community-Based Development Organization (CBDO) dollars in the past. The organization provides 21 bedrooms for youth who have aged out of foster and relative care in Broward County. At present, 17 young people live on the organization's campus. She reviewed statistics for young people who have completed employability skills intake, were placed in employment, work in paid internship programs for local companies and nonprofits, are attending school, and are able to pay their rent on time.

Ms. Taylor continued that H.O.M.E.S., Inc. is a neighborhood revitalization program in which young people participate in community events. The organization is an integral part of their surrounding neighborhood and trains young people in the program to live without them in the future.

Ms. Kirk asked if improvements to the surrounding neighborhood make it more difficult to secure affordable housing for participants. Ms. Taylor replied that this can be a challenge, as a thriving neighborhood can lead to gentrification. The organization's goal is to protect the affordable housing they have created in the area. In addition to units for young people, they also supply affordable housing for low- to moderate-income families.

Young people may remain in the program until the age of 24 years and nine months, although most do not stay this long. Ms. Taylor explained that it can be difficult working with young people due to the challenges they face, most often through drugs. Clients who separate from the Youth Self-Sufficiency Program are often referred to another program. Ms. Taylor estimated that most clients are in the program from nine to 18 months.

Ms. Bolderson asked what occurs in the event of a separation due to drug use. Ms. Taylor explained that the program drug tests its clients as a safety precaution. Participants do not separate immediately in the event of drug use, although they are removed from employment in order to protect the organization's relationship with that employer. H.O.M.E.S., Inc. works with a life coach to help these clients get the treatment they need. If they test negative for drugs within 90 days, they may begin the program again. In the event of a separation, the client must be gone for a minimum of 90 days before s/he may return.

Mr. Morris asked how the program selects partner agencies with which it works. Ms. Taylor advised that Children's Services of Broward County manages a continuum of care and hosts monthly life coach meetings in which the Youth Self-Sufficiency Program manager participates. H.O.M.E.S., Inc. also works with the Broward County School Board and guidance counselors to identify youth who meet the program's criteria. She characterized the program's partnerships as operating smoothly.

- **Mount Bethel Human Services / Andrea Dean, Rosby Glover**

Marie Wells, representing Mount Bethel Human Services, stated that the organization is a 501(C)3 faith-based entity. They have been in operation for 25 years. She is the coordinator of the Family Research Center (FRC) and oversees the bringing of resources into the organization for clients' needs. This includes a food pantry that serves families and the homeless population, referral services for clothing and furniture for families moving out of homelessness, and case management services.

FRC has partnerships with the YMCA, the Urban League of Broward County, and Second Chance Society. They assist in preventing homelessness through connections with the Salvation Army and private landlords.

Ms. Disbrow asked what other outreach the FRC program makes in addition to applying for funds. Ms. Wells replied that this program is specifically requesting only these funds, although she noted that most of the items for the food pantry are donated. In addition to food, the pantry provides items such as laundry detergent, pet food, and other home needs. Most partnerships with other agencies are based on the need for additional services for clients.

Mr. Bennett noted that the Application refers to a position "to be filled later." Ms. Wells explained that this is an assistant position to be filled as needed.

Chair Francis requested clarification of how the food pantry operates. Ms. Wells advised that the pantry has a receptionist with a list of available items that can be provided through the program. Participants are asked to provide documents that would enable them to be part of this program. She noted that the location of this program is central to many participants in need.

Ms. Williams stated that the Board should be aware that until today, there is no proposed amount to be awarded from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The most recent proposed budget from the President included no CDBG funding. Based on this lack of information, Staff is projecting an estimated amount based on what was received in 2018:

- Public Services: \$195,000
- CBDOS: \$200,000

Both of these amounts would be divided among their respective applicants. Ms. Williams noted that Mount Bethel Human Services is requesting \$85,000.

The Board took a brief recess from 5:25 to 5:38 p.m. while the agencies' scores were tabulated by Staff.

The final CDBG awards were determined among the Applicants:

- Center for Independent Living: \$34,440
- Jack and Jill Children's Center: \$42,780

- Impact Broward/SoFIA: \$42,340
- Turnstone Development: \$37,940
- Women in Distress: \$37,500

Motion made by Ms. Kirk, seconded by Mr. Szugajew, to offer Jack and Jill \$42,780, Impact Broward \$42,340, Women in Distress \$37,500, Turnstone Development \$37,940, and Center for Independent Living \$34,440. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

The CBDO award recommendations were determined as follows:

- H.O.M.E.S., Inc.: \$115,000
- Mount Bethel Human Services: \$85,000

Motion made by Mr. Szugajew to fund Mount Bethel at \$85,000 with the proposed \$115[000] left over going to H.O.M.E.S. [The **motion** died for lack of second.]

Ms. Simon pointed out that this allocation would provide H.O.M.E.S., Inc. with slightly more than 50% of their original request, while Mount Bethel Human Services would receive 100% of their request. Ms. Kirk agreed, noting that H.O.M.E.S., Inc. was ranked second of two applicants but would receive a greater percentage of their original request than Mount Bethel. She also advised that some of the CDBG applicants received higher scores for their applications and presentations than H.O.M.E.S., Inc. The Board members discussed prospective changes to the awards.

Motion made by Ms. Disbrow, seconded by Ms. Simon, for each of the CBDO agencies [to] receive 75% of their request, which would make Mount Bethel \$63,750 and H.O.M.E.S., Inc. \$136,250. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

VI. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Ms. Kirk thanked Staff for providing her the opportunity to attend the March 2019 meeting via telephone despite technical issues. She asserted that she is petitioning the City Commission to broadcast all meetings to the public, including this Board's meetings.

Ms. Kirk also requested an update on the status of a proposed joint meeting between the City Commission and the Board. She added that she would like the agenda of this proposed meeting to include a conversation about "tiny homes" and zoning. She also pointed out that although the Board is funding organizations that help people find affordable housing in Fort Lauderdale, the City is not helping to provide this housing or address the causes of a lack of affordable housing. She recommended crafting a communication to the City Commission at a subsequent meeting to address these issues.

Ms. Williams advised that the City Commission will consider the Board's request for a joint meeting on April 22, 2019. If approved, the City Clerk's Office will be in touch with Staff to schedule this meeting. Once a meeting is confirmed, she will communicate this to the Board members.

Mr. Morris recalled that in the past, CDBG and CBDO agencies were asked if they could use the funding they were allocated. Ms. Williams stated that this correspondence can be sent to the agencies electronically.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VIII. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

Ms. Williams reported that the May 2019 meeting will include Housing Opportunities for Person with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) allocations, any other CDBG updates, and the agenda for the prospective joint meeting with the City Commission.

Ms. Williams also noted that another City advisory entity, the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC), works directly with the Department of Housing and Community Development. This group will meet on Monday, April 15, 2019 at 9 a.m. Meetings are open to the public.

The Board recognized Ms. Williams and Ms. Kirk for their work in streamlining and improving the CDBG application.

It was noted that the Board will need to elect a new Vice Chair at the May 2019 meeting.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.