

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For FY15, the Grants Advisory Group reviewed a total of 277 applications from 183 organizations totaling \$14,964,309. By comparison the FY 14 Grants Advisory Group reviewed a total of 225 applications from 156 organizations totaling \$11,662,411.

The number of applications reviewed increased by 23.1%, the number of organizations submitting applications increased by 17.3%, and the dollar amount reviewed increased by 28.3%.

On October 22, 2013, the Montgomery County Council adopted Resolution #17-913 which established an application and review process for funding requests from non-profit organizations for FY15. This resolution is attached as *Appendix 1* (©A1-A3).

For FY15 the Council indicated that it “is particularly interested in proposals that provide emergency and other assistance to the neediest members of our community.” The FY15 Council Grant Application and supporting materials noted this Council priority for FY15 (see *Appendix 2* ©A4-A17).

As part of the FY15 grants process the Council appointed a Grants Advisory Group to review applications and provide evaluative comments on the proposals. This is the final report of the Grants Advisory Group to the Council, and completes the Group’s work for this fiscal year.

Collectively, the Grants Advisory Group spent well over 400 hours in 48 different meetings discussing the process, reviewing applications and meeting with applicants. Three of the meetings were of the full Grants Advisory Group and 45 were in smaller teams of 3 members (nine small teams each held five meetings). Further, each of the 31 members of the Group spent approximately 20 hours independently reading applications and drafting evaluations for a total of more than 600 additional hours. In sum, the community panel dedicated over 1,000 hours to reviewing the applications received.

For the grants submitted to the Council, each small team reviewed approximately 25 similar applications. Between February 24 and April 3, each grant applicant was invited to attend a brief Question and Answer session with the Grants Advisory Group team reviewing their application. Almost all applicants accepted this invitation. In addition, a separate team reviewed the 64 County Executive-recommended Community Grants that were not previously submitted to the Council and which did not go through a competitive process in the Executive Branch. Because of the constrained time frame for review of these Executive-recommended grants, the Grants Advisory Group was not able to have Q&A sessions with these applicants.

Applications have been identified according to the following categories: Large Capital: \$50,000 or greater; Small Capital: less than \$50,000; and operating support for organizations incorporated prior to/in or after year 2006.

Applications have also been identified according to program area:

- Basic needs/Emergency services/ Housing-related services/ Legal services;
- Community Development;
- Economic Development and Workforce Development;
- Health and Behavioral Health;
- Services to Children and Families;
- Services to Older Adults and People with Disabilities;
- Youth Development;
- Other

The summary table in the next section reflects program designations. The attached summary spreadsheet reflects the program, category, description of project, and funding requested. Those grants recommended for full funding by the Executive are noted in **bold**; those recommended for partial funding are identified in *italics* with the amount recommended by the Executive in the CE column. An asterisk beside the name of the organization denotes an application submitted to the Council that was a duplicate of an application to the Community Development Block Grant program, a County government competitive grant program.

I. Summary Information and Tables and Summary Worksheet

The attached summary spreadsheet beginning on page 6 has three parts:

1. **Council grant applications reviewed by the Grants Advisory Group.** The summary spreadsheet for these applications begins on page 6. Evaluative comments for these applications begin on ©1. (As noted previously, on the spreadsheet those recommended for full funding by the Executive are noted in **bold**; those recommended for partial funding are identified in *italics* with the amount recommended by the Executive in the CE column)
2. **Executive-recommended Community Grants not previously submitted to the Council and reviewed by the Grants Advisory Group.** The Grants Advisory Group also reviewed 64 Executive-recommended Community Grants not previously submitted to the Council. The summary spreadsheet for these 64 grants not previously submitted to the Council begins on page 23. Additionally, one grant for Mercy Health Clinic and three grants for The Muslim Community Clinic recommended by the County Executive were reviewed by a Council committee along with similar requests. Where the County Executive-recommended Community Grant is for additional or different funding elements of the same program reviewed in a Council grant application, or for general operating support for an organization that submitted a Council grant application, the Council grant evaluation is referenced. Evaluative comments for all grant applications reviewed by the Grants Advisory Group, including these grants, are listed alphabetically beginning on ©1.

The Executive recommended a total of 151 discretionary Community Grants (compared to 123 in FY14) in the Community Grants Non-Departmental Account, plus thirteen more that are contained in the capital budget. (These figures do not include Arts and Humanities Grants.) For a complete listing of all Executive-recommended discretionary Community Grants, and Community Development Block Grants, see *Appendix 3* ©A18-23.

3. **Council Grant Requests not reviewed by the Grants Advisory Group.** These requests include applications reviewed by Council Committees, (page 21). In addition, the County Executive recommended full funding for five of the Council Grant requests that were duplicates of Community Development Block Grant applications that underwent a competitive process in the Executive Branch. As directed by the Council, there are no separate evaluative comments for these grants.

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Program Areas

The Council directed that grant applications should be sorted according to the program area of the application. Staff sorted the applications into the following program areas: basic needs/emergency services/ housing-related services/legal services; community development; economic and workforce development; health and behavioral health; services to children and families; services to older adults and people with disabilities; youth development; and other.

The table on the following page shows the number of applications in each program area and the total amount of requested funding in each program area.

Table 1: Program Areas

| Program Area | Number of Applications | Percent | Dollar Value | Percent |
|---|------------------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Basic Needs/Emergency Svs./Housing Related Svs./Legal Svs | 74 | 26.7% | \$4,157,237 | 27.8% |
| Community Development | 13 | 4.7% | \$469,500 | 3.1% |
| Economic and Workforce Development | 23 | 8.3% | \$1,493,975 | 10.0% |
| Health/Behavioral Health | 26 | 9.4% | \$1,523,121 | 10.2% |
| Svs. To Children and Families | 11 | 4.0% | \$543,684 | 3.6% |
| Svs. To Older Adults/People with Disabilities | 46 | 16.6% | \$2,270,033 | 15.2% |
| Youth Development | 62 | 22.4% | \$3,217,597 | 21.5% |
| Other | 22 | 7.9% | \$1,289,162 | 8.6% |
| Total | 277 | 100.0% | \$14,964,309 | 100.0% |

For Table 1, the “Other” category refers to applications that did not fall into one of the identified program areas. They were for conflict resolution, agriculture, cultural activities, nonprofit capacity building, animal welfare and the environment.

II. Evaluative Comments

The Grants Advisory Group compiled one-page summaries of evaluative comments for each application reviewed. The summaries are attached on ©1-©277. As directed by the Council, the report of the Grants Advisory Group does not rank, score, or tier the applications. As previously noted, on the summary spreadsheet those grants recommended for full funding by the Executive are noted in **bold**; those recommended for partial funding are identified in *italics* with the amount recommended by the Executive in the CE column. An asterisk beside the name of the organization denotes an application submitted to the Council that was a duplicate of an application to the Community Development Block Grant program, a County Government competitive grant program.

The group evaluated each application on the following criteria established by the Council:

Cost-benefit analysis

- a. What is the cost of the service or activity and number of recipients?
- b. What is the impact on the recipient relative to the cost?

Public benefit

- a. Is the need clearly identified and demonstrated?
- b. Is the target population clearly described and well served by this proposal?
- c. Is there justification for the program?

Strength of organization

- a. How long have these services been delivered by this agency and for how long has this program received public funds?
- b. What efforts have been made to recruit/utilize volunteers in the program and/or leverage community resources?
- c. What other partner organizations is the applicant working with to address the needs of those served?
- d. Has the organization leveraged other non-county government funding for the proposal or other programs?
- e. Based on the budgetary information, does the organization have the capacity to carry out the proposed program, particularly with the severe downturn in the economy?

Strength of proposal

- a. Does the proposal clearly describe what the project proposes to do and what recipients will get out of it?

- b. Does the proposal outline the anticipated outcomes of the program and are the outcomes measurable and relevant?
- c. If the proposal requests funds for an existing program, does it describe the results/outcomes achieved to date? Evaluate the results achieved to date.
- d. If the proposal requests funds for a new program, does it provide information on success of program in other jurisdictions, evidence of best practices, etc.?
- e. Are there specific plans for integration/coordination with other existing nonprofit organizations and County services?
- f. Does the proposal contain a sufficiently detailed program budget to be able to assess whether project budget is in line with proposed project?
- g. Does the proposal address plans for continuing support after the grant ends and the availability of other resources?
- h. Are there any major concerns with the budget?

III. Appendices

The following documents are attached for reference and review:

- Appendix 1: Resolution #17-913 establishing FY15 Community Grant process (©A1-A3)
- Appendix 2: Council FY15 grant application form and instructions (©A4-A17)
- Appendix 3: Complete list of Executive-recommended Community Grants and competitive Community Service Grants and Community Development Block Grants (©A18-23)