



January 11, 2016

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Doug Biggs, President  
Social Service Human Relations Board

Subject: Social Service Human Relations Board Recommendations  
Regarding the Public Services FY 16-17 CDBG Action Plan, and Housing  
and Community Development Needs

The Social Service Human Relations Board (SSHRB) advises the City Council regarding social service and human relations needs in Alameda. In 1997, the Council asked the SSHRB to participate in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) process by reviewing and commenting on the public service needs and funding recommendations. This letter represents our input for the annual needs process, culminating in the CDBG Needs Hearing at the February 2, 2016 City Council meeting.

This will be the second year in a row that cuts in funding will force us to say no to services. At the same time that funding has diminished the need is greater. Two homeless counts conducted by SSHRB have documented an increase in unsheltered homeless, and more troubling, an increase in homelessness as a direct result of the current rent crisis.

At our January 7, 2016 meeting, we heard a staff presentation on the CDBG process, received input from multiple service providers and reviewed the comments we provided to the Council in 2015. The input offered by the service providers informed us about what is working well in Alameda, and where potential service gaps may exist.

CDBG funding continues to be an important source of funding for agencies addressing basic safety net needs, and for those agencies working with the homeless and survivors of domestic violence. SSHRB recommends that funding should be directed to services for families and individuals who are vulnerable and in crisis, including domestic violence survivors, seniors, and other groups faced with challenges to meet basic needs, through programs that provide food and shelter for all residents, with particular attention toward programs that address providing shelter to currently unsheltered homeless.

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Funding should also address homeless prevention, including, but not limited to short-term rental assistance support, utility assistance, and support for those in need of rapid relocation as a direct result of an eviction. We realize that needs in the areas of youth services, job training, health, wellness, transportation, and economic development remain, yet current funding is not sufficient to meet any but the most critical safety net needs of the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Biggs", written over a faint, illegible background.

Doug Biggs, President  
Social Service Human Relations Board