



April 7, 2015

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Doug Biggs, President
Social Service Human Relations Board

Subject: Social Service Human Relations Board FY 2015 - 16 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Public Service Allocation Recommendations

The Social Service Human Relations Board 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 year, at the request of AHA/CDBG staff, the Board participated in the development of the RFP and scoring criteria, evaluated and scored the applications, and assumed the responsibility of making recommendations regarding funding allocations for CDBG FY 2015-16 Public Services.

At our November 20th, 2014 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 2013. The input provided by the service providers informed us about what is working well in Alameda, and where potential service gaps may exist. We prepared our letter describing the priorities for FY 2015-16 in November 2014, noting that, because funding continues to be severely restricted, we are continuing to recommend only one area of need: preserving Alameda's "Safety Net."

AHA/CDBG staff informed the Board that there was a 3.1% reduction to the FY 15-16 CDBG allocation. In order to maximize public services funding, Fair Housing will be funded from a different funding source; tenant landlord counseling and the 211 program has been taken off the top of the public services funding cap (\$178,493-\$18,556 (211) - \$7,291 (ECHO T/L). The Public Services funds available for distribution total \$152,646.

The Board evaluated and scored four applications whose requests total \$145,893, \$6,753 less than is available for distribution. The Board made the decision to approve the fund requests from the four agencies who had applied. It was noted that all four agencies provide valuable, quality services to our community, and that their total scores were almost identical. The Board voted to fund these agencies at their requested amounts:

FY 15-16 CDBG Public Services Funding Allocation Recommendations. Total Funds Available for Distribution \$152,646	
Alameda Food Bank	\$20,000
Building Futures with Women and Children	\$95,000
Family Violence Law Center	\$15,893
Legal Assistance for Seniors	<u>\$15,000</u>
Subtotal	\$145,893

Prior to the meeting of March 26, 2015, City staff informed us that they would like to designate the remaining CDBG Public Service funds (\$6,753) for rent conciliation services rather than allocate it to existing projects, which was SSHRB's intent. Staff added that this would still allow SSHRB to make recommendations to fully fund all the current applicant requests.

It is the Board's understanding that the proposed conciliation services will be part of an ordinance being brought to the City council, and that the services could include a phone conference call, an in-person meeting, the neutral third party meeting/talking on the phone with the two parties separately to resolve the dispute. It will be an informal process to attempt to resolve the dispute at the conciliation level rather than at a formal RRAC hearing.

SSHRB is keenly aware of the crisis that the current housing market has imposed on Alamedans, particularly hurting low-income residents the most. We have heard first hand of seniors and families losing their housing due to extravagant rent increases. We are therefore very supportive of efforts to protect livability for our most vulnerable residents. However we are concerned about the lack of information available about the proposed program, and hope that the implementation of the conciliation program is subject to the same level of scrutiny and oversight that the other CDBG applicants undergo.

After discussion, the Board has also approved this additional allocation on a one time basis. They did however request that, reports be brought back to SSHRB on a regular basis to determine program effectiveness in meeting CDBG goals and that if Council did not approve the ordinance establishing the rent conciliation program, the remaining \$6,753 would be allocated to AFB, BFWC, FVLC, and LAS in amounts proportional to their grants.

Sincerely,



Doug Biggs, President
Social Service Human Relations Board

CC: Social Service Human Relations Board
Community Development Director