

## Questions and Answers

In an effort to give consistent advice to all potential applicants, here is a listing of updated questions and answers that have been asked of grants staff during past application cycles that still apply this year. Many of the questions are from the Pre-application Conference but others were from individual telephone or face-to-face requests for technical assistance. This will be updated and released again the week before the application deadline. Staff will provide the CDBG committee with this same guidance.

**1. Can a currently funded agency also apply for a Category I “Bricks and Mortar” project?**

Yes. The 3-year grant cycle applications have to do with “Category II” CDBG Public Services and the City Social Service Agency Fund allocations. Housing and Community Development proposals are still accepted annually and are separate from the Public Service applications. The same organization could receive operating funds and funds for a housing project, a capital facility improvement, construction, etc.

**2. Can materials and office lease costs for a health service be funded?**

Yes. Any “reasonable” and “allocable” cost of an eligible project can be funded by a CDBG or City Fund grant. However, the grant will actually be written to cover the cost of service per unit. You will define a service unit (one hour of counseling, one patient visit) and identify the cost of your service for each unit. In your application you can include these costs as you calculate the per-unit or per-client cost of your service.

**3. We already provide space for a program and consider it an in-kind cost. Can we apply for funds to cover the value of the space if it were leased?**

The CDBG Policies and Procedures actually say that an initial application must fund a new or expanded service. So CDBG funds could not be used just to cover a cost that is already being handled by another revenue source or in-kind donation unless there is a quantifiable expansion of service represented by the application. However, City Fund policy does not address this specifically. Therefore, applications will be accepted but be aware that the committee may consider this same issue as it scores applications. An application to expand services would naturally be stronger than an application funds a current program without serving more clients.

**4. How would the committee and council perceive a second application from the same agency?**

This will be a very competitive grant cycle with limited funds. When council receives a draft budget, the agency is listed before the program title and there may be a tendency to think of funding agencies – but really what we are funding is services. The same agency may be selected to provide more than one service. This does not mean that there could

never be a perception of ‘greediness’ regarding an agency with multiple applications, but the scoring and deliberation process does not discourage multiple applications. Staff will emphasize this to the committee.

**5. Will the CDBG committee listen to presentations or will they score the applications first?**

The committee will have almost two weeks to review applications before the presentations meeting on March 11. They will be advised to come up with questions and take presentations before completing their scoring sheets.

**6. On the social services priorities chart, is the City looking to fill gaps first?**

Yes. The idea is to fund categories and services that are higher on the list, especially if that category is not yet fully funded. If the ‘Target’ funding amount and the project are higher on the list, the City will look for applications that fill that need. Once applications are scored, they will be presented within each category. Having said that, the committee does have the discretion to recommend funding a higher scoring application even if it falls in a lower priority category.

**7. How do we know whether to apply under CDBG or City Fund?**

For social services, if you think you will serve low income clients then you can enter CDBG. If your clientele is not necessarily low-income, then perhaps City Fund is more appropriate. However, you will not be penalized for your selection here. You can choose either one. In the end, the City determines which type of funds is more appropriate when funds are awarded.

**8. On page 18 can the City provide a list of street names that are included within the target areas? The maps are difficult to read.**

In 2006, the social services application is de-emphasizing geographic location and relation to TRAIN neighborhoods. However, there is still a question asking you to describe your service area and how it might relate to our target areas. You should now be able to discuss whether you have any geographic targeting but are not expected to know how many clients reside in our target areas. If your program does relate to a target area, feel free to call for assistance identifying our boundaries.

If your application is for a bricks and mortar project, the target areas are still very important. If you have difficulty reading the maps, please call for assistance.

**9. Some of the questions say to answer “within the space provided” and some don’t. Is it ok to use extra space?**

No. (note this answer has changed since 2005). The new application provides text boxes that your answer must fit in. On pages without text boxes, just make sure that you do not go off the page.

**10. Does the committee realize that long-term outcomes (pages 19-21) are very hard to measure?**

Yes. In fact the whole subject of performance measures gets a great deal of discussion on the committee. While we would like you to identify long term outcomes, staff will recommend to the committee that they keep this difficulty in mind. In 2005, all funded agencies met with staff and worked out measures. We realize for many of you this is the first year tracking and measuring the “long-term outcomes.”

You may want to think one step further in the last column of the logic. See Form 10 Example: “Families are Stable and Self-sufficient” is the goal. A measurement for the goal might be: “the number of families on food stamps in zip code 75057 will drop 4% over three years” or “the rate of students dropping out of middle schools will decrease by 2% per year for three years.” It is hard to isolate the cause and effect of your program in the long-term (maybe food stamp cases will drop for other reasons) so a comparative or control statistic can even be used. “... families on food stamps in zip code 75057 will drop by 4% over three years, adjusted for any increase or decrease in the number of state-wide food stamp clients” or “the rate of students dropping out of middle schools in Lewisville will be 2% less than at middle schools in Dallas each year for three years.”

While long-term is harder, we are very interested in seeing outputs and “initial” outcomes that are measurable. If awarded funding, you will be asked to measure at least some of the objectives that you report here. As you write these initial outcomes, please keep in mind the acronym SMART. They should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. Committee members are very interested in this item and are likely to ask about it. Any effort to think this through to a usable measure will be important to the committee.

**11. Our service organization (a 501c3) is thinking of applying for funds to buy a small building to house our program. The program serves Lewisville clients but has region-wide programs.**

Since the service provided out of the building would be an eligible activity, then technically the building would be eligible as well as a ‘public facility’ improvement. However, the City (and HUD) would look for the funding to be proportional to the benefit to Lewisville residents. Basically, if 10% of the total clientele were from Lewisville then you would likely only be eligible for a maximum of 10% of the project’s cost (less the 25% match requirement). Ongoing reporting would also have to demonstrate that that level continued. A commitment to increase services in Lewisville once the facility was open could help. In this case having a realistic time-line for obtaining commitments for other sources of funding would be necessary. A long-term commitment for use of the building to continue to meet a low-income clientele activity is also necessary