

FAQ's from Human Services Commission Meetings

Q. What do new Commissioners do to educate themselves about the agencies and the work they do prior to the grant process?

A. New Commissioners, like veteran Commissioners, have the opportunity to perform site visits with various agencies each fall. Additionally, a book of the previous three years of site visit reports is made available to all Commissioners each year. The Commission Chair briefs new Commissioners on such matters at their new Commissioner orientation when first coming on board. Many new Commissioners read the local paper where agencies have been spotlighted for the work they do. Finally, information located on the grant applications and presentations give Commissioners an even better picture of the work that each agency performs.

Q. What is the format of a site visit? How often do they occur?

A. Each year, a list of funded agencies is compiled. Staff reviews which agencies: a) are new to the program, b) have had changes in management, or c) were not visited in the past year or two. These agencies have priority for a site visit. Each Commissioner is assigned 2-3 agencies to visit. These site visits are informal, one-on-one time for the agency to review with the visiting commissioner(s) how things are going for their funded program, what they've done with City grant funds, and successes/challenges. Many agencies and Commissioners have reported this to be their favorite part of the process.

Q. Is there opportunity for new organizations to present to the Commission about what they do and thoughts they have about pursuing funding?

A. Yes. All meetings of the HSC are open to the public and agencies are always welcome. Please keep in mind, however, that if the agency wishes to make a presentation to the Commission, this should be scheduled in advance to allow for other agenda items. The HSC normally meets on the 1st Thursday of each month at 6:00pm in the City Council Chambers. To schedule a presentation call the Community Partnership Office at 970-962-2705.

Q. As a returning grantee, how “new” should my grant application read each year?

A. The application form may change each year; many of the questions have changed for 2015. The Commission is always interested in trends agencies see as they arise in the community and how numbers served may have changed. It is always important to highlight changes in service. If your organization has decided to be closed on Fridays or expand hours of operation, the Commission wants to know.

Q. Are grant funds reserved to address community needs that may arise after the grant process has been completed?

A. Currently, no. The City attempts to maximize the impact of limited grant funds by holding one grant process. Additionally, it is difficult to justify setting aside a reserve when many agencies do not even receive funding after going through the entire process.

Q. What does the Commission look for in the grant applicant presentations?

A. The Human Service Commission will provide a short list of questions to each applicant that should be addressed during the presentation. Additionally the presentation should include some or all of the following:

- Anything that is unable to be communicated in writing on the application.
- Publications and pamphlets about the organization/program.
- Results – “With past funding....we have done....” and real stories behind the outcome measures.

Q. Why has the Commission asked agencies to focus so much on partnerships? The creation and maintenance of partnerships (and resulting funding proposals) can detract from an agency’s ability to focus on seeking adequate funding for the agency’s basic operational costs.

A. The HSC certainly does not mean to shift agency focus from the mission that directs its services; however, the intent behind the Model Partnership Award is to incent agencies to find ways to decrease admin costs, thereby freeing dollars up to increase services.