

## Housing & Human Services NOFA: Frequently Asked Questions

### **Eligibility Requirements:**

- Does this need to be a new or expanded program?
  - It only needs to be a new program or expansion of services if the City is not currently funding the program (i.e. if the City awarded the program funding in the last NOFA round (2019) and this is a continuation of that program, that qualifies as eligible). Also, related to the COVID-specific opportunity, that must be new or expanded programming with explicit information about how/why other funding that has been used to-date to meet the need (if any) is not available. We cannot replace funding for pre-existing programs.
- You say you took the priorities straight from the Consolidated Plan. It's a large document with lots of goals, strategies, priorities, etc. Are they aggregated in one spot?
  - Yes. The Priorities are pulled from pages 50-53 of Section 4 of the Consolidated Plan. Not every priority is listed in the Housing & Human Services NOFA, but all those that relate directly to housing or human services ought to be. There is an abbreviated summary of priorities in Section 1, page 6 as well.  
<https://cob.org/services/planning/consolidated-plan>
- Our services do not squarely fit with the program goals outlined in the NOFA. What should we do?
  - You should select the goal that is closest to your main program goal, even if it is not an exact match. If you need help to determine which is most closely aligned, reach out to the City staff contact.

### **Completing the Application:**

- On the common application, it asks to limit responses to 2 pages for the first 5 questions, and another 2 pages for the second 5 questions. On the training video, you make a general reference to the page limits and then also that each answer must be limited to a word count of 250. Or is it 250-word count if you're submitting online and just a 2-page limit if you're submitting it in hard copy?
  - There is some discrepancy between the online word count limits and the hard copy page limits (because obviously an exact word count on applications submitted in hard copy cannot be enforced). The online web form only allows for character limits. 1,500 characters is equivalent to 1/2 page, or 250 words. Since providing a short answer to one question won't save you space on the next question on the online application, to make it more fair we chose a per-question limit of 1,500 characters on the online submission form. (So technically if all your answers were on the longer side you could have a total of 2.5 pages to answer five questions.)
- Is this a 1,500-character limit with spaces or without spaces?
  - The character limit does include spaces (and punctuation) for the online submission form. The software can't tell the difference between letters, spaces, etc.

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- There are no page limits given in Part 2 of the application (City Addendum). Is there an approximate length (words/pages) you are looking for, or can we take as much space as we need?
  - If you fill out the online application form, you'll see that the questions in the City Addendum also have a 1,500-character limit (about 250 words). Most of the questions in the Addendum are multiple choice, though a few are narrative; this only applies to the narrative questions. Please stick to these guidelines for the Word version as well (if you do not submit through the online portal).
- Is the 2018 Community Health Assessment the most recent?
  - This process is ongoing, but the last report was published in 2018, so that should be the most recent. See links below:  
<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/35972/2018-Whatcom-County-Community-Health-Assessment>  
<https://wa-whatcomcounty.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/38844/Community-Health-Snapshots-Executive-Summary-2018>  
<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/2929/Community-Health-Assessment>
- How tightly should we define our beneficiary "target population"?
  - A good rule of thumb is, if a client must belong to a specific population to be eligible for your services, that is your "target population." Please select only that target population, even if your beneficiaries may happen to also belong in other categories. If your program has broad eligibility standards (for example, any low-income households or individuals), then you could select all the categories that are reflected in that population served.
- Funding and partnerships: Not sure what parameters to put around this response. What do you recognize as "major" funding sources? What time frame are you looking for? In 2020, for the last 5 years, etc.?
  - What counts as a major funding source really depends on your organization's budget. For some organizations, \$5,000 dollars might be a major funding source. For others, that would be minor. At minimum, please include the other funding partners that provide (or are projected to provide) the predominance of the program budget.
  - We don't have a specific timeframe in mind. You should answer this based on what is typical for your organization. If 2020 is a good representation of that, you can just speak to where most of your funding came from last year. If it was atypical, then give a summary of where most of your funding usually comes from.
- For Exhibit C - Goals and Outcomes, the only goal to choose is "Address and Prevent Homelessness." If we are not addressing homelessness, do we just fill in our own goal, or do we just fill in the "Beneficiaries Served by Income Levels" at the bottom of the page?

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- We are limited to a specific set of HUD goals. Please leave the goal as “Address and Prevent Homelessness” as it is generally connected to the outcomes of these programs. Please fill out the Beneficiaries Served by Income section. Do not fill in your own goal.

### **Contract & Funding:**

- Is this a one-year or a two-year grant?
  - Please see NOFA, Page 2, Section I: <https://cob.org/wp-content/uploads/services-nofa-2021.pdf>. The budget should reflect your 1-year ask (annual budget), and we plan to offer 2 years of funding, provided the dollars are available in year 2 as expected.
- Is this funding given on a reimbursement basis, or are we given a lump sum and then draw down?
  - Funding is distributed on a reimbursement basis. Please see the contract terms here: <https://cob.org/wp-content/uploads/contract-requirements.pdf>
- Are audited financials a requirement? (Is this something we should budget for?)
  - The audited financial statements required will vary depending on the size of your organization’s budget. Larger organizations usually do a full audit ever few years, while smaller ones might contract with a CPA to do a financial review periodically. Very small organizations might have a board member who is not typically involved with finances do an independent review. You can find a description of our financial review expectations at <https://cob.org/wp-content/uploads/financial-review-expectations.pdf>.
- How much additional COVID funding is available?
  - We expect to make about \$500,000 of COVID-specific CDBG funding available, in addition to what is typically available for services grants.
- Will you be elaborating on program impacts from COVID and how we should address these?
  - Impacts from COVID must be reasonably attributable to the effects of the pandemic, and you must be able to justify that cause-and-effect. Agencies may be able to show increase in demand for their service comparing pre-COVID to now, or they may have very specific information about the economic impacts to the clients they serve (for example, reduction in pay/income). Please describe the impacts and make the link to how they are reasonably attributable to the pandemic.
- If the maximum funding request is \$50,000, how does the COVID funding contribute to that?
  - Actually, there is no maximum request. The typical range of funds given is between \$8,000 and \$50,000, and applicants should be aware of that. The COVID funding request should be part of your total funding request. City staff will determine which programs are eligible for which sources of funding. Applicants should focus on clearly explaining your funding need – and if any is directly related to increased expenses due to COVID.

### **Next steps:**

- Will the United Way also be reviewing these applications?

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- No. The review processes are completely separate. Whether you apply to the Community Impact Fund or not won't affect your NOFA grant application.
- Will the United Way receive a copy of Part A of my application, the Common Application?
  - No. If you intend to apply to the United Way's Community Impact Fund, you will need to send a complete application to them by the due date. The City will not be sharing the Common Applications submitted to the City with the United Way for purposes of their grant round review.
- How important is it to attend and offer testimony on behalf of our programs at the Public Hearing on 3/11, or mail in support for the written comments in March? Does that affect funding much?
  - It is not required that you attend the public hearing or offer testimony. This will not be part of your score, nor will it impact the likelihood of your program being funded one way or another. This is the public's opportunity to weigh in on the overall housing and services budget and priorities, and see the programs/projects seeking funding in the community.