2. Quality of Applications.

There were several applications that were not completed appropriately. I think a review of the application and directions is needed to insure that applicants can better understand what they are suppose to do. Also a review of the application form should be done to determine whether the complexity of the form needs to addressed.

I think service providers by and large did a great job with the applications and efforts were made to give assistance where appropriate. We can always improve the actual application.

I think the form gave us the information we needed, there continues to be a wide variation in the quality of information presented by agencies. Given the absence of any sort of needs assessment the information contained in the applications is very important. Having the application in Excel worked well. No one came to us to request that we make accommodations because they did not have a computer or access to Excel. For the most part, given the resources we had available to us, the nuts and bolts of the application seemed to work reasonably well.

The application included a lot of information I did not need and it was very cumbersome to use in evaluating applications. But, the application is very important to me as a reviewer.

I think we are trying to have one document serve too many purposes. I think staff need to know a lot more than we get from the current application. I suspect that Committee members could use less information directly from the agency and more information from staff.

Since this was my first time "surviving" the funding process, I have nothing to compare it to. However, it was great to have the applications submitted electronically.

Could use more space to give detail of what my needs were.

3. Information provided at the Villager workshop(s) prior to the release of the application.

Going through the application electronically was helpful.

I think this was useful and that was the feedback I received from service providers.

I looked through the Q &A log that was generated as folks asked questions after the workshops. There were a lot of questions asked that were covered in the training, that is to be expected. There were a lot of agency specific questions about special circumstances, and then some fairly technical questions related to CDBG projects. For the most part it seemed people appreciated the chance to do the workshop at the computer lab and ask questions.

Very helpful to have the agencies together in a group to answer questions.

As important as it is to do the workshops, its also difficult when there are larger groups with varying computer knowledge.

4. Q & A blog as means of communication with the applicant.

It was challenging at times to not to have the ability to discuss applications directly with the agencies. This could have resulted in better contracts in the long run.

I think the blog was fine. There may be other ways to communicate.

Not sure the additional work was worth the effort. I am interested to hear agency responses.

The blog was time consuming to use.

I believe that not having the opportunity to talk with a real human being to get questions answered limited the information that could be communicated.

The Q & A blog only works when people actually use it. I think we should better organize the format of the Q & A in the future to encourage applicants to rely on the information in the blog.

this was very helpful

A standard Q & A blog is a good idea. Implementing it was a bit hectic with multiple emails coming in and people becoming impatient waiting for responses.

5. Communication received/exchanged throughout process.

Improvement is needed in informing people of the Q&A session if we plan to do that again.

Communication was often rushed, we needed more support re the production of spreadsheets and financial information.

Some of the steps in the process were not delineated well prior to starting the process.

Allow the reviewer to contact the applicants directly with simple, clarifying questions. This was not allowed and left room for misunderstandings.

We communicated a lot, but we didn't do it very effectively in my opinion. I'm not sure why we created new spreadsheets all the time.

This process and the amount of time invested by admin staff left little time to do our regular duties. I know this process is key to the survival of so many people & agencies. I hope the future funding processes allow for backup of duties that are also important to the office.

The admin support was very helpful.

6. Level of involvement in the decision-making process.

I would like to see us utilize the established goals to make more informed decisions about what we fund. Before going into the next funding cycle I would also like to determine up front whether the CDBG Reserve Funds should come into play in the 2 year process. I would also like to restructure the staff review and recommendation process. I would like to utilize the subject matter groups that have been formed to make funding decisions for each objective. The whole group could come together in the end to do a final review.

I think this remains a question to be discussed. I think staff and committees attempted to be true to the process they had designed. keeping the roles of staff vs committee vs service provider is a challenge but needs to be adhered to when disbursing public dollars through an RFP.

Staff reviews gave us an opportunity to comment on all programs. I think if we had had more time the Committees would have asked more questions of staff.

I think that staff report limited the information that committees needed.

I wanted more money for my program

7. The application process provided the information you needed.

Some of the outcomes and descriptions lacked clarity and certainly depth

For the most part.

This process is unnecessarily cumbersome and rushed. The diversity of the funding (7 program areas and 21 priority statements) means we have way too much to consider in order to do a thoughtful or informed job in making funding decisions.

Overall this application allowed agencies to provide more of the information necessary for me to assess the potential of programs.

Q&A session should be in written format. Some agencies ended up doing a presentation rather than answering questions. Not fair to the agencies who didn't have any questions to be asked who didn't speak at all.

Most of the information was someplace in the application but it was cumbersome.

I received information regarding the program applied for in the process. Not being able to call and discuss with the agency limited getting more or corrected information.

It could have more detail.

8. Decision making process resulted in good decisions.

Overall I think we came away with decent funding decisions. As I mentioned above I would like to review the staff recommendation and Committee processes. I am thinking that the Committee decision making could be streamlined to get their input but not require as many meetings.

There is still a lot of subjective decision making and need for more in-depth knowledge of the programs and their ability to adequately complete realistic goals.

For the most part.

Given the information we had, sans any needs assessment or input from community stakeholders that were not seeking funding, the decisions that were made sense.

Still seems like there is too much information for the committees to process and make rational well worked decisions, especially as they near the end of their deliberations.

I think we need to get a handle on the needs in our community, prioritize what we are trying to address and track the impact of things we fund in the community. It's nearly impossible to do all this with current staffing, current processes, doing all 7 OCS program areas every two years, etc.

I believe the committees made the best decisions that they could with the info available.

I think the second & third round funding process needs to be improved. Not sure how yet, but will be open to new ideas on how to make it smoother.

We needed more money

9. Level of transparency throughout process.

At this point I don't recall any issues that weren't transparent.

Certainly perfect intent - some problems with practice.

I saw any lack of transparency as primarily a byproduct of the overly ambitious funding process. We were dealing with too much information that had to be produced and published quickly.

I don't know it seems that transparency needs to be more that having so many meetings for people to come and speak.

The transparency was not what it should be. I was constantly getting calls from people asking me about certain attachments not being available online w/the agenda. If something is on the agenda, it needs to be attached to the file timely.

10. Staff reviews and recommendations were helpful.

The staff reviews are helpful to the Committee members. I would like to re-evaluate this form.

I am a fan of "experts" having a role in a RFP. I think this was helpful.

Staff reviews gave us an opportunity to comment on all programs. I am still torn about the concept of staff offering a slate of funding.

Liked that this was formalized and mostly consistent across CD.

1st year OCS staff did this step in a formal way. I think it's important.

I am not sure that the form got us what we were hoping for. CSC didn't seem to refer to them as decisions were made.

The staff reviews were key during some of the committee debates. The staff is a very valuable resource of knowledge.

11. Assessment of time spent on process vs. final package of decisions made.

Given the redo of the application form, the staff review form, the development of the Q & A blog, the spreadsheet, the decision making meetings etc. this process took an incredible amount of staff time for all involved. Going forward I would like to us to assess this issue and reduce the amount of time involved. Comp time became a big issue during this process as well.

Too much time. This consumed the Division and service providers. I think the decisions were mostly good but too much time involved in the process.

I think we did well with the parameters we were given. We have outgrown this structure and need to find ways to incorporate needs assessments, best practice research and increased community involvement from community stakeholders.

We have to do something better/different. Too many people involved in all the same processes/decisions. Inefficient process. I know some of that was due to a year of great changes in the process. Think some of it is due to the culture of the department.

Lot of time up front but not always useful in the long run.

The electronic submission was a great idea, but resulted in just as much paper being used & staff time being used for copying & binding the documents. I think we need to query committee members next time to see if any of them would be willing to go paperless.

too long

5

It is very time consuming both for staff and agencies.

12. Level of understanding of the process.

I understood it. Going forward I would like to see more timelines, tasks lists and an overall plan as to how the process will go during the next funding cycle. This will help to insure consistency across all of the committees. At times it felt like things were happening at different stages within the units and committees.

Mostly satisfied. Elaborate attempts to communicate. I wonder whether we "over communicated" and in doing so actually confused some folks.

Given the addition of the new program area and the need to move funds around, I think we did the best we could explaining a very complicated process.

Again, a year of changing a lot of moving pieces all at the same time. Given that, I feel like I had a good understanding of the system/process. Concerned that we were creating the process as we went through it. I'd prefer a process be defined before the process starts.

13. Overall process from start to finish.

Pretty good but needs work. I think in terms of effort and intent I was proud of those involved in the process. I know we can improve.

One of our most important processes. Time should be allocated to really make it a coherent, logical system.

This process is very long & hopefully in the future we can find ways to shorten it up.

14. Any other comments:

I think overall the process did what it was suppose to do. I think a lot of the issues that arose were because of all of the changes that we made to the process at one time. If we plan to do the Q&A format with the Committee we need to revamp the process. Also given the number of OSC contracts compared to CDBG we may need to look at different approaches to what the funding cycle should look like.

The level of effort on the part of service providers, staff and committees was incredible. There certainly was an effort to do a great job. I also think there was an intent to communicate and make the process transparent. There was also an effort to smartly/appropriately involve folks in the process. Limited resources and a high level of need will always make this a tough process but also require we always seek to improve. The total time spent on everyone's part vs the amount of dollars awarded is a question in my mind. Service providers felt this as did staff that had to devote lots of time to this process to the detriment of other duties. I want to make sure the process always has integrity.

Given that we have a lot of the agency information in digital format now, we should be able to design an application for the next process that allows agencies to just edit the information or programs that will change. It was extremely helpful in constructing this year's contracts to have the application language and information in a format that could be lifted and edited for contracts development. Creating massive binders is silly. Even though we streamlined the process of getting these produced, they are cumbersome and we kill large forests. This survey asked about staff reviews but not Committee rankings of proposals. I think having the committees rank proposals and submit their sheets was very helpful. The use of these focused the discussion and demonstrated common areas of thought. I think the Committees also appropriately did not see themselves as wed to the rankings. However, I also think the nights we had to tally those sheets, run the analysis, and get the information back to the committees was too much. Lastly, I think we should be more vocal about the concept of a slate of funding. I think it is important to prioritize within the program areas, and I think we could do a better job of explaining that we utilize those priorities in putting together funding packages.

Thanks for asking for input. I think I would have had more to say had the evaluation tool been sent out soon after the process. My brain is too full of other things to hang onto things I don't have to from a year ago. I continue to believe that a pool of funds should be kept in reserve for after the public hearing. Otherwise, the public hearing feels like a dog & pony show, we're just going through hoops. It can also be a waste of a lot of people's time. I also would like to address the issue of involvement of agency reps in committee meetings. Some agencies come to every meeting and because they are there, committee members interact with them. I think it creates unfairness and it isn't how we should encourage our agency staff to use their time.

I personally would like to get some advanced Excel training prior to the next funding process so I can better assist our providers & staff internally. I would really like to see our department push hard on the paperless review of applications. The excel application can easily be converted to a PDF which allows committee members/staff to make notes directly on the documents. However, when the CSC is meeting 10 times in 3 months, I was struggling. I know it is a tremendous amount of work for all the staff.

Good survey.....not too long and covered all the topics.

I hope we keep streamlining the process to minimize the work/time of both staff and agencies.

I didn't care for the joint public hearing between the CDBG and CS Committees toward the end of the process. It was too long.