

## Stoiber, Jennifer

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**From:** Donna Fox [donnafox@canopycenter.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 19, 2012 5:07 PM  
**To:** Stoiber, Jennifer  
**Subject:** Comments for Canopy Center Parent Stressline Program for July 23rd meeting

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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In order to be considerate of the committee's time, I would like to provide written comments for consideration. City of Madison funding for the Parent Stressline was decreased by \$10,000 for 2011 with that decrease maintained in 2012. An additional 10% cut of \$2,854 is being proposed for 2013.

As stated in the application, the program is trying to be responsive to past comments and suggestions to try to make the service accessible to more people. In response, the line is now able to utilize a language translation service to allow the line to communicate with parents who speak languages other than English.

We first attempted to provide the line for Spanish-speaking parents during specific hours each week, but of course, these parents are not stressed only during those hours. We have tried to recruit volunteers with the ability to speak Spanish, but volunteers come and go and aren't always able to take specific shifts so it is difficult to market accurately.

Even with sufficient funding we simply cannot hope to attain the ability to have a bilingual Parent Advocate on the line during all service hours and even if we could there are many parents in our city that speak languages other than English and Spanish.

We feel the best use of our resources, should we be able to secure the money requested (\$38,545), is to produce marketing materials to send to agencies and individuals throughout our community to help parents who are not English-speaking to still be able to contact the line, handle their immediate issues, and learn about area resources through the use of a translation line. This translation service costs \$1.50 per minute (far less than most and we only have to pay for the minutes we use, no service fee is charged) but is worth the cost if we are able to connect more parents to area resources before problems escalate to levels that are far more expensive.

We understand that the Parent Stressline is often the first door a parent opens when problems or stress start to get out of control. Because it is anonymous and confidential, parents feel more secure in making that phone call where they don't have to give their name, address, etc. in order to receive services.

Should funding remain at the level stated on your preliminary committee recommendation, the language line service will be marketed on a very limited basis because the agency simply can't incur additional costs for this service at current funding levels, much less with a 10% reduction. We continue to look for ways to cut costs without severely restricting the use of the line. After the initial cut in funding, the line was cut from 18-hours per day down to 14-hours (8:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.) We don't want to continue cutting hours away from the line because we want parents to know they can really count on us to be here and available to them in their times of stress.

We will continue to work with the City to provide the best service possible for the funds available. One way we are doing this is by consistent recruitment of volunteer Parent Advocates on the line. In the first two quarters of 2012, the line was answered by volunteers 86.5% of the time which is an all-time high for us. It shows that we are recruiting volunteers in record numbers, providing them with adequate training and helping them meet their needs as they help the callers.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the funding request for Canopy Center's Parent Stressline.

Sincerely,

*Donna*

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