City of Madison
Community Services Commission
September 10, 2008
Funding Process Review

The following are four areas in which Office of Community Services Community Resources staff has identified evaluative questions or areas of potential improvement related to the 2009-2010 Community Resources application process. Over the next year we would encourage the Commission to explore the questions raised and make recommendations or determinations for our next funding process.

The Priority Setting Process
Questions:
1. Does the current program area structure reflect the current reality of community need, our contracted programs and their relationships to our stated priorities?
2. What information was the most useful in identifying community needs? What information was lacking?
3. Is it realistic to think we can get a community wide needs assessment every two years, or might we take a more targeted approach, i.e. develop structure/plan that conducts needs assessments by program areas or neighborhoods on a rotating basis?

Application
Questions:
1. Does every agency/program have to apply every two years? Might we have a separate more comprehensive application for new programs or agencies and a simplified version for continuing funding?
2. The quick turnaround time on these applications limits the amount of analysis staff can complete before the applications go to the Commission. Does this current timeline still make sense given that we are no longer engaged in a "joint" process with other funders?
3. Does the current application give Commissioners the information they need to make informed decisions?
4. Can we move to a digital application (not necessarily on line)?

Community Services Commission Review of Applications
Questions:
1. Do Commission members understand the format of the application well enough so that they can evaluate the content of the application?
2. In this last process, what was expected in terms of staff input was not clear or well defined. Are there standardized questions that staff should respond to about the strengths/weaknesses of every application or agency, performance issues, and their roles in key networks or communities?

The Role and Execution of the Public Hearing component of the CSC Process
Questions:
1. Does the Public Hearing as currently structured give the Commission information it can use to inform decision-making? Would a structure that incorporates agency presentations as a part of the application process be more informative, useful, and fair?
2. Can we explore avenues of public input and feedback that are not so closely tied to specific funding for specific programs?