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**Subject:** Feedback on CBE RFP

Dear all -

Unfortunately I will not be able to attend tonight's CSC meeting. Centro's Director of Programa Bienestar (Wellness Program), our Wellness Program Manager, as well as 5 community members we have been working with as part of our Community-Based Engagement work will be present.

We are thrilled that this is a priority for the City. It is our belief that many of the gaps in disparities we are currently facing in our community stem from not enough meaningful community-based engagement to hear what they think are the real solutions. The work needs to be grass roots and grounded in the voices of the people we serve each day. It is hard work, but our goal at Centro is to always move in that direction and we feel the City of Madison is an integral partner.

CBE funds have been incredible at supporting the engagement work that we do at Centro - one of the three pillars of our mission (Empowering Youth, Strengthening Families and Engaging Community). Funds have gone to support a staff that has identified true leaders in our community, leaders who are now driving the kind of engagement work we do in the Latino community - these leaders help with outreach, are supported to lead workshops focusing on maternal and child health and food/food equity, engage in events in partnership with other orgs across the City, and have grown so much as people. They were also the voice that we brought to the table for Imagine Madison. I am incredibly proud of our work.

Developing this grassroots base has taken time - it takes a significant amount of time in communities that have often felt neglected, where trust is difficult, and where a voice has never been attributed to them.

Which takes me to some of the feedback on the current RFP:

(1) The idea of working through an 8-12 week curriculum really does not address how community-based work happens, that's more of a model for employment, maybe? This concerns me because if we were to shift as a city, to this model, we are stepping back from doing transformational change in our neighborhoods. Life Skills would be gained

through such a training, but not community engagement, nor trust building, nor the development of community citizens for change.

(2) The req curriculum seems to fit the needs of feeding a pipeline of potential staff into the City - when I'm feeling like what we need is to develop leaders (and it is important to note that this is different in each community of color, one size doesn't fit all) that will help us develop community-based programs, and be involved in programmatic and policy-level change. I would argue there is a very important place for that in the city!

(3) The funding seems fragmented to me - If the goal is to provide smaller pots of funding for community action projects - why not add more funding to a fewer larger initiatives, so that in partnership with community, the organizations selected can develop projects that are community-based. I think the very important expectation from organizations that receive these dollars should be that they are embedded in the community enough to do engagement, leadership development, and program implementation that is community involved. And this all requires a more substantial amount of time and funding... I also am not certain that more activities is what we need in our neighborhoods... we need deeper action to address our disparities, and that takes 1-1 relational, transformational community building.

I hope this feedback is helpful. I would love to see an RFP that grows the work to date, rather than takes us in another direction.

Thank you so very much for all your hard work! It is incredibly appreciated - Karen.

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