

MINUTES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Two Civic Center Plaza 8th Floor
Community Development Conference Room

Thursday, February 9, 2006

There being a quorum; Barbara Esparza called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Welshimer
Barbara Esparza
Trini Acevedo
John Doering
Ana Duenez

MEMBERS ABSENT

Rudy Villalobos
Miguel Grijalva

STAFF PRESENT

Nathalie Prise, CD Director
Anthony Shaar, Grants & Program Administrator
Eleanor Love, Senior Grants Planner
Tom Serrano, Senior Grants Planner
Michele Ellington, Grants Planner
Rhoda Tillman, Grants Planner
Judy Sarabia, Grants Planner
Judy Emmons, Grants Planner
Connie Jimenez, Grants Specialist
Yolie Cedillo, Recording Secretary

AGENDA

1. **Discussion and Action on Steering Committee Absences – Barbara Esparza, Vice- Chairperson.**

Motion made by Trini Acevedo and seconded by Jim Welshimer to excuse Miguel Grijalva from the meeting. Motion passes unanimously.

2. **Approval of Steering Committee minutes of January 19, 2006 - Barbara Esparza, Vice- Chairperson.**

Motion made by Trini Acevedo and seconded by Barbara Esparza to approve the minutes. Motion passes unanimously.

3. Election of a Community Development Steering Committee Chairperson - Barbara Esparza, Vice-Chairperson.

Trini Acevedo nominates Ana Duenez to chair the committee but she declines. Jim Welshimer volunteers to chair the committee. Motion is seconded by Barbara Esparza. Motion passes unanimously.

4. Presentation by the Chairperson for the Children and Youth Services Collaborative, and Review by the Steering Committee of the Following 32nd Year (2006-2007) Children and Youth Services Collaborative Proposals:

Lisa Saucedo, Director for CASA Program and Chairperson for the Youth and Services Collaborative: The amount in our budget was \$327,882.00. There was \$10.00 left over and CD staff allocated that to the Sun Country program because they experienced the highest budget cut this year. With our funding we were able to fund 10 out of 11 projects to benefit the children and youth in El Paso. Hospice of El Paso was not funded by our collaborative because we felt the project did not meet the priorities of the children's and youth collaborative. Under the values for proposal consideration the project value calls for a significant number of clients and this project did not meet the required number of clients. Value #5 calls for cost effective service and collaborative members did not feel this requirement was met.

A. Assistance League of El Paso (Operation School Bell)

Michele Ellington informed the committee of the Assistance League's past and current contract performance.

Gerry Porter, Grants Committee: A hand out is provided listing locations of schools receiving their services including a breakdown on the costs of supplies. The program has been in existence for 37 years. Twenty-three schools in the CDBG area participate in our program and there are over 1,000 children that will need our services. We are an all volunteer organization.

John Doering – Do you serve any schools in the Canutillo School District and what services do you provide there?

Gerry Porter – Canutillo is not in the CDBG area. We serve children from all 132 public elementary schools in the County of El Paso. We provide 2 pairs of pants, 2 shirts, a sweatshirt, 6 pairs of underpants, 6 pairs of socks, shoes, school supplies, a backpack and hygiene items.

Ana Duenez – How many children do you serve?

Gerry Porter – We serve 3,200. Last year we anticipated clothing 775 children but we ended up clothing 1,000 children. The present funds would serve less than that but we try to obtain funding from other sources.

B. Avance – El Paso (Even Start Family Literacy)

Michele Ellington informed the committee of Avance’s El Paso past and current contract performance.

Sanjay Mathur, Director of Avance: The Family Literacy Program has been in existence for 6 years and is currently located in 2 elementary schools. The schools provide the use of 5 classrooms for our program. The program serves families below the poverty level with children younger than 5 years old. They have a desire to learn English and they don’t have a GED. They attend classes 5 days a week. We provide early childhood development for the kids in one room while the parents are in another room attending classes in English literacy instruction and GED preparation. On page 8 of our proposal it shows we have serviced a higher number of people year after year. This year alone we have served almost 11,000 people. Last year the project was available only at Lamar Elementary but this year we expanded to serve families in the Burleson Elementary School area as well. We are funded by the United Way and also by a grant that comes through the Texas Education Agency (TEA) that requires a community to come up with matching dollars before receiving funds in the amount of \$200,000.00.

John Doering - Are there other Head Start programs? Do you physically track what the adults do after completing your program? Why do you only operate in 2 zip codes?

Sanjay Mathur - Near Burleson there is L.B.J Head Start and Barcelona Head Start. Head Start is only for 4 year olds and we serve kids from a couple of weeks old through 5 years old. We try to get adults to attend Community College or into an advanced ESL class. This program is only available in 2 zip codes because of the resources required. Our budget is only \$398,000.00.

John Doering – You mention abuse on your proposal by saying there is a significant drop in abuse after adults have attended your program. How is this determined? When you observe abuse how do you report it?

Sanjay Mathur – We give the parents a pre-test with questions such as, “In the last month how many times have you had to discipline your child?” By the end of the program the parent’s responses will be “No discipline was required or discipline was only needed once.” If we see child abuse we are obligated to report it to Child Protective Services (CPS).

C. CASA of El Paso, Inc. (Court Appointed Special Advocates)

Michele Ellington informed the committee of CASA’s past and current contract performance.

Lisa Saucedo, Director of CASA program - CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocates. The program began 25 years ago in Seattle, Washington when a judge decided that the children’s cases that were coming before him were extremely difficult to deal (with). He recruited a group of community citizens and trained them in making sound decisions. We have recruited and trained citizens to perform the same function in El Paso for 20 years. A typical scenario goes this way: Someone calls a 1-800 number to CPS and the investigators from CPS determine that it is in the child’s best interest to be removed from the home. We have two judges in El Paso that deal with these abuse cases. They call our office and tell us about the removal and ask for a guardian ad litem volunteer to be appointed to the case. Once the volunteer has been given the case they go to the foster home and meet the children and they are appointed as guardians. They get to know all of the people involved with the case. Our staff trains our volunteers for 40 hours with a national curriculum and they go through an application and background check as well. In El Paso we serve 2/3 of the children that need a CASA volunteer. As our funding increases, we hope to expand our program to serve more children.

Jim Welshimer – If you only serve 2/3 of the kids what happens to the other one-third?

Lisa Saucedo – The other one-third have an attorney appointed to their case but the difference between the guardian and the attorney is that the attorney has to advocate on behalf of what the child wants. If the child tells the attorney he wants to go home then the attorney writes up a report saying so whereas our guardian can say it is not in the child’s best interest to go back home.

D. City Parks and Recreation Department (Neighborhood Youth Outreach)

Michele Ellington informed the committee about the past and present Neighborhood Youth Outreach program contract performance.

Enrique Valadez – Last year we had a reduction in funding for programs so we don't have anymore recreation leaders so we are leaving the program to the recreation centers. Also, other school based programs were affected.

John Doering – You offer citywide services?

Enrique Valadez – Yes. At this time we have 5 recreation centers but we offer 12 different school based programs throughout the city.

Jim Welshimer – Do you conduct your activities at the recreations centers or at the schools or both? What time do these activities take place?

Enrique Valadez – Both. The schools provide the space and we provide the type of recreations, equipment, food and drinks. Normally the activities take place from 3:00-6:30 p.m.

Barbara Esparza – How do you advertise your program?

Enrique Valadez – We pass out flyers.

Ana Duenez – What schools in the Ysleta area participate in your program?

Enrique Valadez – We have Culbert School and Mission Valley School. We are trying to implement the program at East Point and Cielo Vista Elementary.

Trini Acevedo – What types of meals are served and what types of events are planned?

Enrique Valadez – We try to provide healthy snacks. We take the kids to the movies or the museum. We pay for the transportation to these events. Sometimes Eastwood Recreation or Marty Robbins Center absorbs the remaining expenses.

Jim Welshimer – Do you charge a fee for field trips?

Enrique Valadez – If we take the kids to the movies they have to pay for the movie but we provide the transportation and the snack.

Barbara Esparza – How do you avoid rejecting kids from the program?

Enrique Valadez – The only time we turn kids away is when they don't sign up for the field trips because only a certain amount of kids fit on the bus.

John Doering – What do you do for outreach? What do you do about El Paso residents whose children go to Canutillo schools?

Enrique Valadez – We talk to the principals at schools where we know we will receive support. We would offer the same service to them.

Trini Acevedo – Do the parents sign some form of liability? Is all of your staff screened?

Enrique Valadez – Yes they sign a liability form. The city runs a background check prior to the employee beginning employment and they are trained for a year in customer service and other activities. The volunteers also go through background checks and training.

Ana Duenez – Is this program only for elementary children?

Enrique Valadez – No it is also for middle school children.

E. City Parks and Recreation Department (Sun Country Recreation)

Michele Ellington informed the committee about the past and present Sun Country program contract performance.

Enrique Valadez – Sun Country is a program in collaboration with the Tennis Youth Center and the Center Against Family Violence. The center serves 150 kids monthly. The core of the program is the summer camp and we offer it at 17 different recreation centers. We offer 4 hours of recreation. This year we will award 731 scholarships to attend the Tennis Youth Center for 8 hours a day, Monday through Friday. We also have a collaboration with Jesus Chapel School and they provide hot meals for the children at the sites.

Jim Welshimer – Do you have a high turnover with your recreation specialists?

Enrique Valadez – A majority of the workers return to work for us.

John Doering – How did you select your subcontractors?

Enrique Valadez – We don't select them. They asked if we could take them under our umbrella because they were not selected for funding.

Trini Acevedo – How do you select participants for the tennis program?

Enrique Valadez – 80% of the kids attended the program last year and register as quickly as possible.

Ana Duenez – Do the participants need to be income eligible?

Enrique Valadez – They do have to meet income guidelines.

F. El Paso Area Foster Parent Association, Inc. (Crisis Intervention Project)

Michele Ellington informed the committee about the past and present Foster Parent Association, Inc. program contract performance.

Dorothy Truax - Our goal with Foster Parent Association is to provide crisis intervention thus allowing the child to stay in a foster home and not be bounced from place to place. Children with the most severe problems tend to remain in foster care and are never adopted. We have an experienced foster parent on board to handle a crisis and we have not had one child removed from the home after coming in contact with our program.

John Doering – For 2005 & 2006 you had 2 grants, one from the Hope Foundation and another from the Texas Department of Family Protective Services. You don't show their support for 2006 & 2007.

Dorothy Truax – We had a project under the Hogg & Meadows Foundation and we were funded for 2 years with the idea that if our program was successful we would be able to get outside funding for our homeless youth program. The state provided funding for 3 years to work with these ex-foster youth and we received \$500,000.00 dollars worth of housing vouchers to use with the housing authority and we could provide extensive services to keep them in care. Both Hogg and Meadow extended the grant another year. We applied for funding under HUD and our application was denied because the grant reviewer felt the responsibility lies with the state not with the federal government. We applied for funding under the Opportunity Center for the Homeless and received funding under HUD. We are able to serve the hardest to deal with homeless youth.

G. El Paso Human Services, Inc. (Family Group Conferencing)

Michele Ellington informed the committee about the past and present El Paso Human Services, Inc. program performance.

Susana Reza, Director of El Paso Human Services, Inc. – Our agency has been providing support services in child protection for the last 20 years. We have provided the Family Group Counseling Program for 6 years in El Paso and it is very successful. We saw the need to work with the youth that are aging out of the foster care system and are unprepared to go out and live on their own. The family conferencing serves as a form of mediation by creating a circle of support that helps keep them off the streets and out of jail. We help them with education and training, appointments, finances, healthcare or any documents they need before they leave the system. Most of our referrals come from Child Protective Services (CPS) and Child Placing Agencies such as Lutheran Social Services.

John Doering – What type of background do your employees have?

Susana Reza – Our coordinator has a master's level. All of our facilitators have a bachelors and masters level including licensed counseling.

Trini Acevedo – Is there any duplication in what you and El Paso Foster Parent Association do?

Susana Reza – We are the only ones in the city to provide this type of service.

John Doering – The total budget cost for this program is \$51,000.00?

Susana Reza – This budget would serve 33 clients including family conferencing.

John Doering – On your project you show a salary of \$31,622.00. Is that for a licensed contractor? Is there one particular person in charge of this project?

Susana Reza – That is for several salaries. Angelica Terrazas is in charge of the project.

H. Hospice of El Paso (Hospice and Caregiver Respite Services for Pediatric Patients)

Michele Ellington informed the committee about the past and present Hospice of El Paso program performance.

Charles Roark - Hospice of El Paso provides services to patients with a terminal illness. Our patients include babies born with birth defects or referrals from Thomason Hospital. Many of the babies have heart defects that eventually cause death. The heart does not develop properly therefore it does not provide the right amount of oxygen to the body. The program is aimed at dealing with the children and their siblings or providing the parent with rest time.

I. Project Vida in Partnership with Latch Key Centers Unlimited, Inc. (School Age Child Care in the Second Ward)

Michele Ellington informed the committee about the past and present Project Vida in Partnership with Latch Key Centers Unlimited program performance.

Rosario Piedra, Director for Latch Key Program – We are a licensed daycare for 100 children. Our staff consists of 6 people. Our employees must be graduates with a focus on child development. We run an after school program in 3 schools which are Alamo, Hart and Aoy. The program is from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and we provide tutoring, activities and snacks. Parents whose children participate in the program must either work or be attending school. During the summer when the schools are closed we collaborate with the Parks and Recreation Community Centers. We do not have our own transportation but we do access any services available through other agencies.

J. Project Vida (Youth Recreation and Gang Prevention)

Michele Ellington informed the committee about the past and present program performance of Project Vida in Partnership with Latch Key Centers Unlimited.

Gloria Marmolejo – The project I am requesting funding for is located at 3607 Rivera and we serve an average of 75-80 youth on a daily basis from the ages of 6-12. We provide a computer lab, homework assistance, a reading program, arts and crafts and a history session. We collaborate with Region 19 to provide tutoring. Our hours of operation are from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The summer hours are from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and we provide meals.

Barbara Esparza – How do kids enroll in your program?

Gloria Marmolejo – Mostly from word of mouth or referrals. We also have an incentive program where we supervise computer and reading programs. For birthdays the kids receive a birthday gift and we also have a Christmas workshop.

Kids grades must be at a passing level in order to participate.

K. YWCA El Paso Del Norte Region (Teen Leadership Program)

Michele Ellington informed the committee about the past and present YWCA Teen Leadership program performance.

Rosie Mendoza, Director of Teen Leadership Program – This program encompasses boys and girls from the ages of 11-18 and through age 21 if they have a disability. We charge a \$5.00 membership fee. Our program is career based with components in health, nutrition and exercise. We teach leadership and racial justice. We also emphasize self-efficiency and empowerment through economics and try to build partnerships with our community so we teach them about jobs and careers. We try to prepare them for college so we have educational excursions. We also have recreation to make it fun for the kids. We also have intergenerational mentoring that allows students to participate in activities with the elderly at nursing homes or children with disabilities. Parents are also encouraged to participate. We focus on different areas of town but mostly in the Lower Valley.

5. Citizen Comments on Item #4

John Bibona commends the participating agencies on the excellent outreach they do throughout the community.

6. Discussion and Recommendation by the Steering Committee Regarding the Funding Distribution Under the Children and Youth Services Collaborative

Trini Acevedo makes a motion and is seconded by Ana Duenez to approve the budget for the 32nd Year (2006-2007) Children and Youth Services Collaborative Proposals. Motion passes unanimously.

7. Adjournment

Motion made by Trini Acevedo and seconded by Jim Welshimer to adjourn meeting. Motion passes unanimously. Meeting is adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

