

A Framework for Community Benefits Funding

COMMUNITY BENEFITS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

MAY 8, 2018



Community Benefits Advisory Committee

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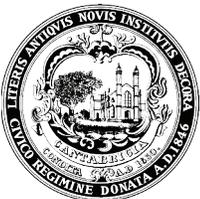
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City of Cambridge

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1 Context & Purpose

The Community Benefits Advisory Committee is engaged in a process to act on the Guiding Principles for Community Benefits Funding to address the unmet and pressing needs of Cambridge residents, and is currently seeking feedback on its approach to the distribution of these funds.



Overview

The Community Benefits Advisory Committee (the “Committee”) welcomes feedback on its proposed framework for distributing Community Benefits Funds. Over the past ten (10) months, the Committee has identified a target population and established strategic priorities based on the Community Needs Assessment Report. At this stage in the process, the Committee would like to solicit input and comments from nonprofit representatives and community members on all aspects of its proposed framework, and specifically on the following:

- the proposed funding approach and process
- the proposed funding levels
- the proposed criteria for grant selection

Additional questions to consider include:

- Are the Committee’s expectations on partnerships clear? Are they too narrowly defined?
- Are the criteria for planning and implementation grant selection clear? Are they feasible?

The Tiered Needs

The Community Needs Assessment developed a framework to prioritize needs and inform future funding. This approach recognizes that needs vary based on **breadth** (the amount of individuals and neighborhoods affected), **impact** (the degree of challenges imposed on individuals and neighborhoods), and **urgency** (the combination of severity and time).

Knowledge of the service context in Cambridge can also inform thinking on **feasibility** (the extent to which organizations have the capacity to address relevant needs with additional resources), and **synergy** (the extent to which directing resources to these needs has the potential to address other needs).

The Community Benefits Advisory Committee

Prior to the formation of the Committee, the City of Cambridge (the “City”) conducted a comprehensive needs assessment for an in-depth understanding of the City’s most pressing needs and service gaps, and to enable the City to make informed decisions on the investment of Community Benefits Funds. The Community Needs Assessment was completed in January 2017 and adopted by City Council in May 2017.

The Committee was subsequently formed and, in accordance with the Community Benefits Ordinance (*Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2.127, established December ‘15*), was charged with “soliciting and evaluating applications” from local nonprofit organizations for the provision of services to Cambridge residents, and with establishing “rules, regulations, and guidelines” for the proper administration of community benefits funding. The Committee’s recommendations are informed by City Council’s Guiding Principles for Community Benefits Funding, which were originally established by the Ordinance, then adopted and expanded in the Community Needs Assessment.

The Committee includes the diverse perspective of residents, representatives from the local nonprofit community, businesses, and universities, and works with City staff to make recommendations to the City Manager for the award of Community Benefits Grants.

What Are Community Benefits Funds?

Community Benefits Funds refer to any funds offered to and received by the City from developers in connection with the enactment of an amendment to the City’s Zoning Ordinance, or other agreements, which provide funds to the City and are held by the City to be expended for community benefits purposes.

Between 2010-2018, mitigation funds designated for community benefits purposes were pledged to the City through these amendments and agreements. While over \$23 million has been pledged to this fund, \$7.5 million has been received by the City to date. Upon completion of various stages of development, additional monies will be deposited into the Community Benefits Fund to further assist in the expansion of services to better address the unmet needs of Cambridge residents.

How Did The Committee Develop This Approach?

The Committee developed its funding approach and supporting materials based on its review and application of:

- the Ordinance and the Guiding Principles for Community Benefits Funding
- the Community Needs Assessment
- analysis of additional demographic data
- review of pertinent research
- conversations with local, subject-matter experts
- the expertise and wisdom of Committee members

The Tiered Needs represent complex and interrelated issues requiring an approach to the provision of services that prioritizes partnership and coordination, an integration of services, and a commitment to broader engagement of the community and available resources.

The Committee’s proposed approach includes an integrated focus on the Top Tier Needs identified in the Community Needs Assessment, with the recognition that moving the needle on any of these needs will require addressing more than one.



The Tiered Needs (cont.)

Top Tier Needs

- Affordable Housing & Homelessness
- Financial Security
- Behavioral Health: Mental Health & Substance Abuse

Middle Tier Needs

- Food
- Civic Engagement & Social Capital
- Education
- Employment

Lower Tier Needs

- Safety
- Transportation
- Arts, Culture, and Recreation
- Health
- Built and Natural Environment

The Guiding Principles

First established by the Ordinance, and further articulated in the Community Needs Assessment, the Guiding Principles for Community Benefits Funding fall into four categories:

Frame Needs Thoughtfully

- Fund programs or services that directly benefit Cambridge residents.
- Emphasize funding priorities, established by the City Council, informed by the outcomes of the Needs Assessment.
- Prioritize support for vulnerable and under-served populations.
- Consider neighborhood(s) impacted by development projects.

Build on Existing Assets and Programs

- Consider other public resources allocated to a neighborhood in order to better understand unmet needs.
- Promote awareness of and connection to existing programs and services.
- Prioritize approaches that leverage other private and public resources.
- Encourage an asset-based approach that recognizes and builds on the resilience of Cambridge residents and communities.

Promote Holistic Approaches, Innovation, and Collaboration

- Recognize the inter-connectedness among community needs.
- Emphasize holistic and creative ideas that promote prevention and coordination across systems and organizations.
- Remain open to bold and innovative approaches to challenging issues.
- Recognize that addressing community challenges takes time, and provide the latitude for longer-term interventions.
- Prioritize funding for nonprofit applicants that promote collaboration, partnership, and collective impact.
- Encourage and incorporate program evaluation to identify which strategies work best.

Simplify the Application Process

- Establish a transparent, inclusive, and collaborative process.
- Provide support and technical assistance to nonprofits in the application process to ensure equal opportunity and access.
- Provide opportunities for renewable grants to returning nonprofit providers that have an excellent performance evaluation record and programmatic success.

The Committee has accounted for all of the Guiding Principles equally.

Frame Needs Thoughtfully

Build on Existing Assets and Programs

Promote Holistic Approaches, Innovation, and Collaboration

Create A Transparent and Supportive Application Process

The Committee's Response

In response to the Guiding Principles for Community Benefits Funding, the Committee is prioritizing an approach to community benefits funding that will:

- consider race and class disparities
- tap into the expertise and experience of nonprofit providers
- have the potential to respond to the interconnections among the Top-Tier Needs
- lead to change at the individual and family level, and in the broader systems and structure that impact individuals and families
- encourage creative and collaborative approaches from grantees
- engage the community and leverage other community-based resources

A young girl with braids is smiling brightly while sitting on a swing. She is wearing a grey tank top with colorful butterfly and heart patterns. A pink hat is visible on the swing seat behind her. The background shows a brick wall and a window with a green frame.

2 The Framework

The Committee's proposed framework to community benefits funding is a convergence of the Community Needs Assessment, the most current data on demographics, pertinent research and case studies on a number of social and health concerns, and the expertise and wisdom of experts and stakeholders throughout the City.



Our Approach

Strategic Priorities & Target Population

The Committee seeks to maximize the potential impact of available funds to address the Top-Tier Needs, and has identified a priority target population that will be the focus of this initial round of funding:

- families with children that are low-income or in poverty, particularly those headed by a single woman

Toward this end, its approach requires partnership, coordination, and integration of services from grantees, and anticipates change happening over time:

- **Short-Term Goals:** enhanced housing stability, enhanced economic stability, and/or enhanced family well-being, including improved access to enhanced provision of mental and behavioral health supports and counseling services
- **Long-Term Goals:** housing and economic stability, and enhanced child and adult resiliency

Poverty & Low-Income Limits

The following are the income limits for individuals living at or below the poverty threshold...

Household Size	Household Earnings*
1 Person	\$12,060
2 Persons	\$16,240
3 Persons	\$20,420
4 Persons	\$24,600
5 Persons	\$28,780

* 2017 Poverty Guidelines

...and for individuals living at or below the “low-income” threshold.

Household Size	Household Earnings**
1 Person	\$37,750
2 Persons	\$43,150
3 Persons	\$48,550
4 Persons	\$53,900
5 Persons	\$58,250

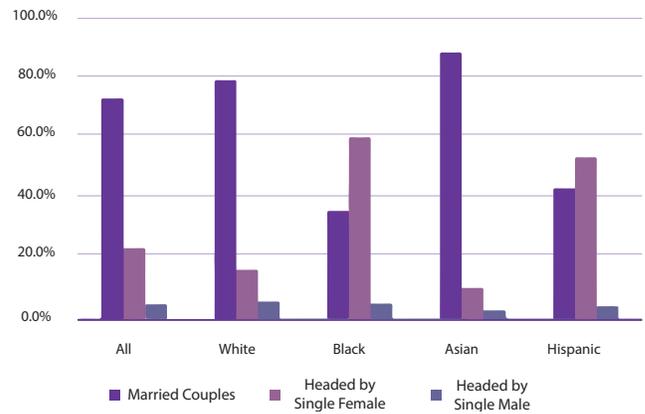
** 2018 HUD Income Limit (50% AMI)

Family Income by Race: 2011-2015



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census; 2006-2010, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

Families with Children: 2011-2015



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011-2015

The Community Needs Assessment included data that illustrated the disparities across racial and ethnic groups based on family income and composition. The U.S. Census Bureau defines **family** as “a group of two or more individuals related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together”.

Inclusion & Racial and Economic Equity

The Committee aims to create a fair and equitable funding program that addresses economic, educational, and racial disparities in a meaningful way that brings about real change. Based on data reported through the American Community Survey, the share of individuals living below the poverty threshold skews heavily towards those who do not identify as White. As a result, the Committee has agreed that the focus of funding and services towards the target population should be mindful of the following:

- that individuals who identify as Black, Latinx, Asian, or are born outside the United States are disproportionately represented among low-income families, and proposals should include service provision to families that reflect this disproportionality
- that citywide needs vary in impact across neighborhoods:
 - assess vulnerability related to real estate development and of neighborhoods impacted by high levels of poverty
 - buffer families that are vulnerable in some way(s) that limit the ability to build capacity
 - build on assets that are unique to each neighborhood, including relationships among neighbors



“...a fair and equitable funding program that addresses economic, educational, and racial disparities in a meaningful way...”

Resiliency – What Is Resiliency? How Does It Apply To The Committee’s Work?

The concept of *resiliency* – which the Committee defines as *the capacity of individuals and families to respond to or cope with adversities and barriers caused by social, economic, political, and environmental factors* – has been integrated into this proposed framework for community benefits funding. As recommended in the Community Needs Assessment, by addressing unmet needs and service gaps through a *strengths-based approach*, one that recognizes and builds on the capital that already exists in the Cambridge ecosystem, we can better assist in strengthening the resilience of Cambridge residents and communities. This approach provides an opportunity to build future capacity through a unique point of intervention that targets families with children whose immediate capacity to respond to and cope with adversities and barriers are primarily impacted by affordable housing and homelessness, behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse), and financial insecurity.

The Committee’s proposed framework includes short- and long-term goals that respond to two critical levels of capacity needed to build and sustain resiliency. The first level of capacity address the *coping measures* that families use to overcome immediate threats through resources that are directly available. This aligns the with Committee’s expressed short-term goal of enhancing housing and economic stability, family well-being, and connecting individuals with supporting services unique to their needs. The second level of capacity refers to the *adaptive measures* that families employ to learn from past experiences, anticipate future risks, and adjust their livelihoods accordingly. By realizing a more permanent, self-sustaining level of housing and economic stability, families can be in a better position to build on their own welfare and resiliency, and that of their community.

The Approach To Funding

With the \$7.5 million already received by the City, the Committee envisions a 5-year time horizon for the distribution of this amount, and anticipates allocating no more than \$4 million for the funding of up to five (5) planning and implementation grants in the initial round of funding. A second round of funding may begin in the next 2-4 years, at the Committee’s discretion, and based on community learning and impact from the first found of funding.

The Committee’s proposed approach calls for a two-phase process that includes a planning phase of possibly 3-5 months (to be determined at a later date by the Committee), with grants of up to \$30k, and an implementation phase of 3 years, with grants of up to \$750k over the three years.

In order to be considered for the implementation grants, grantees, especially lead organizations*, must have successfully completed the planning phase. As a result of this being a competitive process, not all proposals will receive planning grants, and not all proposals who receive planning grants may receive implementation grants. The Committee will deliberate on submitted proposals based on the **Plan for Implementation** and additional requests for information, as they are deemed necessary.

The Planning Phase

During the possible 3-5 month planning phase, grantees may use the funds for process facilitation, to compensate staff involved in planning, and to compensate clients/potential clients involved in planning. Separate from this \$30k, the Committee will provide support for evaluation to assist with the development of a logic model and related metrics. The deliverable for Phase 1 grantees is a **3-year Plan for Implementation**. In consideration of the Top Tier Needs and how they differ for each family, grantees should propose services appropriate to each family that can assist in coping with and overcoming adversities and barriers, and that can build families’ capacity to adjust to future challenges.



2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Round I					
<i>Planning Round I</i>		<i>Implementation Round I</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • up to 5 grants awarded • ~\$30k/partnership • 3-5 months planning 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • up to 5 grants awarded • 3 years of funding • range of funds up to \$750k (over the 3 years) • focus on learning among/across the partnership groups, with and for the community 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuation of funds (renewal grants) may be available to existing grantees 	

Round II**

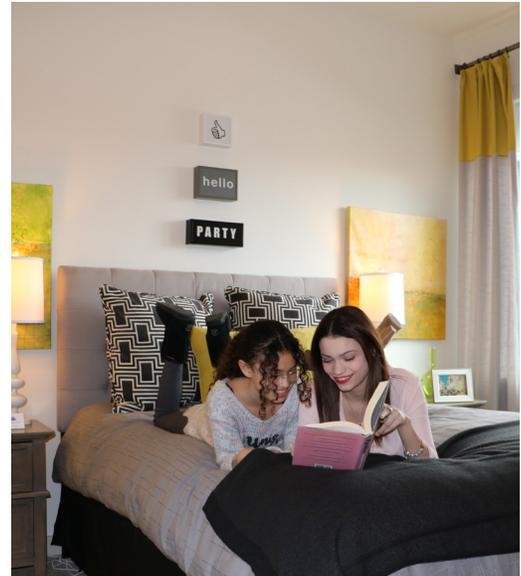
<i>Planning Round II</i> TBD	<i>Implementation Round II</i> TBD
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****expected to begin within the next 2-4 years**

The **Plan for Implementation** should include:

- roles and responsibilities of each partner, including a lead organization*
- theory of change and program model
- proposed outcomes and metrics
- number of families to be served
- implementation budget
- community engagement and input from families

**Lead Organizations must be a service-providing 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Cambridge and may only serve as lead on one proposal. These organizations should have demonstrated experience in the following: addressing needs created or impacted by affordable housing and homelessness, behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse), and financial security; working with Cambridge families; and in leading partnerships (including the capacity to manage supporting organizations).*



The Implementation Phase

At the completion of the planning phase, recipients of the planning grant will be eligible for consideration for three (3) years of implementation funding for up to \$750k over these three years. Separate from this \$750k, the Committee will provide support for evaluation. The Plan for Implementation will be reviewed by members of the Committee, and up to five (5) grantees will be recommended for funding. Criteria for selection may include:

- success in completing Phase 1 deliverable (i.e. the Plan for Implementation)
- demonstration of consensus on plan and articulation of power dynamics/equality among partners involved
- likely ability to impact families and community



Next Steps

The Committee will be hosting Listening Sessions in May, to solicit feedback from the nonprofit community on this proposed framework for community benefits funding. Following these sessions, the Committee will review and respond to feedback received, and develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) that will be released to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations currently providing services to families living in Cambridge. Proposals will be reviewed by members of the Committee and up to five (5) grantees will be recommended for planning grants of up to \$30k. Criteria for selection for the Planning Phase may include:

- How does the partnership (lead and supporting organizations) intend to make an impact? What is the strategy?
- What past experiences have partners had with partnership/collaboration?
- What are the intended outcomes and proposed timeline/activities and potential data points to reach goal(s)?
- Who are the families this partnership is positioned to reach?
- What relevant prior experiences/successes have partners had in advancing change in the Top Tier Needs with these and/or similar families?

Thank You!

Question? Comments? Please contact Wendell Joseph at communitybenefits@cambridgema.gov.

For more information and process updates, please visit the Community Benefits Advisory Committee's webpage at: www.cambridgema.gov/communitybenefits.