

Advisory Information

Agenda Item: Community Participation Program Guidelines and Allocations

Title: Community Participation Program Guidelines and Allocations

Action Discussion Informational

Date: July 12, 2016

Prepared By: Robert Thompson

Attachments: CPP Guidelines CLEAN
CPP Guidelines REDLINE

Requested Action

For discussion and recommendation to City Council

Background

NCR is providing draft Community Participation Program (CPP) Guidelines and the proposed three year allocations for 2017-2019 for your review and recommendation to City Council:

- CPP Guidelines. A draft of the CPP Guidelines was presented to the May 17, 2016 meeting of the NRP Policy Board. The attached redline document shows changes made to the draft guidelines presented after the May 17 meeting.
- NCR is recommending \$12.32 million in allocations for the three years 2017-2019. The allocations combine funding for the Community Participation Program as well as funding for the “Neighborhood Investment Fund” that was rolled into the CPP Guidelines starting in 2012 in the form of Neighborhood Priority Plans. The Neighborhood Investment Fund was one of three programs identified in the 2008 Framework for the Future.

The overall goal of these revisions was to make the Guidelines more readable and useful, and to provide clearer expectations for funded neighborhood organizations. Following is a summary of the major changes in the draft guidelines from the 2014-2016 CPP Guidelines:

1. Updates to program purposes to reflect NCEC input and adoption of Blueprint for Equitable Engagement. The update to the language also recognizes and encourages neighborhood organization use of creative placemaking.
2. Moved the “Standards and Expectations” section to a new section later in the document, and significantly revised and expanded the Standards and Expectations to more directly address issues frequently addressed by NCR:
 - Identified general standards and expectations for governance, transparency, inclusion, membership and participation.
 - Provided specific standards and expectations for participation in meetings, conflicts of interest, and notice of meetings.

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- Provided specific standards and expectations for annual meetings and board elections, including requirement that an alternative to photo-id must be provided for residency verification.
 - Provided standards and expectations for financial policies and reports.
 - Identified publicly available standards that NCR will use as reference when needed to provide further interpretation of standards and expectations.
3. Revised the application section. The intent of revisions is to clarify language and make the application more readable.
 4. Clarified the section on “Neighborhood Priority Plans.”
 5. Added a new section on the process the NCR Department will follow to review neighborhood organization compliance with the Guidelines in absence of a grievance.
 6. Clarified the grievance section.
 7. Updated Appendix A to reflect updated data used in the funding formula.
 8. The allocation request also will include a base amount to cover the cost of Directors and Officers insurance policies organized by NCR. The additional allocation for D&O premiums will be provided directly to neighborhood organizations.

The Community Engagement Process

On February 8, 2016, NCR staff sent a notice to all funded neighborhood organizations that NCR was proposing revisions to the Community Participation Program Guidelines for the 2017-2019 funding cycle, and would be hosting two informational meetings (on February 24 and March 29, 2016). The notice included clean and redline versions of the draft Guidelines showing NCR’s proposed changes for review.

The feedback from the informational meetings, and meetings with neighborhood organizations resulted in further revisions to the Guidelines.

On May 6, 2016, NCR staff sent the updated draft CPP Guidelines to all funded neighborhood organizations for a formal 45-day review and comment period. As of the deadline on June 20, 2016, NCR had received eight written comments on the Guidelines. NCR also reviewed the revised document with the NCEC on June 28, 2016. Comments from neighborhood organizations and NCEC were incorporated in the most recent revised CPP Guidelines.

The redline document of the CPP Guidelines shows the following changes to the document previously reviewed by the NRP Policy Board on May 17:

- Page 1: The third program purpose, “increasing involvement” was revised to stress inclusive planning and use of tools such as creative placemaking based on NCEC and neighborhood organization comments, and to reflect adoption of the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement.
- Page 3: Revised the language of the fourth bullet under Eligible Expenses section to clarify that ADA compliance and translation expenses were eligible expenses.
- Page 9: Added requirement for neighborhood organizations to provide for alternative to photo ID to verify residency, consistent with election rules and MN Nonprofit Statute 317A.441 following conversation with Council Members.
- Page 10: Struck language under first bullet to avoid confusion that neighborhood organizations could screen board candidates using criteria other than membership criteria.
- Page 10: Added new fourth bullet under section C. Support for Funded Neighborhood Organizations to identify that NCR will provide technical assistance and education to neighborhood organizations on ADA compliance.

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Pages 14-15: Updates to Appendix A: Determining Funding Levels

- There will now be a minimum allocation of \$25,000 per neighborhood organization.
- Each neighborhood organization will receive an additional allocation for Directors and Officers insurance, not to exceed \$900 per organization. The allocation amount will be based on policies organized by NCR.
- The allocation formula reflects the use of updated data sets.

Summary of Comments Received

In addition to comments from the NCEC, NCR received written comments from 8 neighborhood organizations and individuals during the formal 45-day review and comment period. While not all comments led to additional changes to the CPP Guidelines, many of the comments merit additional follow up from NCR as they represent legitimate concerns.

- At least three of the eight comments indicated broad support for the draft Guidelines with no recommendations for revisions. Others expressed support, with requests for clarification or further information.
- Comments on the program purposes expressed either support for the program purposes, or questioned the purposes without specific recommendations for changes. The comments addressed apparent contradictions between program purposes and expenditure restrictions or level of resources and support provided.
- One comment included several recommendations for clarification of language, providing definitions and providing references to best practice guides.

Typically, NCR has provided clarifications as sidebars in the final publication rather than as text in the actual guidelines; we will include sidebars in the final published CPP Guidelines. Additionally, some of the clarifications requested can be referenced through the publicly available standards referenced in the guidelines.

- Some comments expressed disappointment we cannot fund food and entertainment.

Past legal opinions state that these expenses are not eligible using the current source of funding as a matter of state law. Even substituting City General Fund dollars for the current source (tax increment revenues) would involve significant restrictions and additional reporting requirements for neighborhood organizations.

- Two neighborhood organizations provided written comments on Neighborhood Priority Plans, one regarding potential obstacles to implementing projects, and the other regarding the need for additional funding to support NPPs.

When Neighborhood Priority Plans were added to the CPP Guidelines in 2012, NCR discussed with NCEC that approval of Neighborhood Priority Plans would not always lead to implementation of projects, but would open a feedback loop on why a project might not be implemented, or may not be implemented in the way a neighborhood organization requested. During these same discussions, NCR made the recommendation to incorporate programming and funding for the Neighborhood Investment Fund as identified in the Framework for the Future into the CPP Guidelines. As a result, the overall allocations to neighborhood organizations was increased above the \$3 million annually that was identified as a base in the Framework for the Future.

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- One comment stated that there is no protection for neighborhoods from unethical treatment by NCR.

A new section to the CPP Guidelines (Section VI.D. on page 11) was included even in early versions of the Draft CPP Guidelines reviewed by neighborhood organizations and the NCEC to address such concerns.

- Comments on the funding formula included support for and questions about the minimum \$25,000 allocation.

NCR proposed the minimum allocation at the request of some neighborhoods that typically fell below that allocation level.

- Other comments on the funding formula suggest changes to the variables in the allocation formula.

Previous discussions with neighborhood organizations and the NCEC indicated a desire to maintain the same variables to keep funding for individual neighborhood organizations relatively stable, while also updating the underlying data sets each funding cycle with the most currently available data.

- Several comments questioned how the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement, Neighborhoods 2020 input and the Neighborhood Evaluation were used to inform the revisions to the CPP Guidelines.

As noted previously, NCR staff reported at the April 21, 2016, meeting of the NCEC on how feedback from neighborhood organizations and Neighborhoods 2020 Committee were incorporated into the draft Guidelines. The Blueprint for Equitable Engagement and the Neighborhood Evaluation were still in progress during early development of the CPP Guidelines.

- One neighborhood organization noted they were having difficulty accessing American Community Survey data for neighborhoods.

The source of American Community Survey data used by NCR staff can be found on the Minnesota Compass website at this link:

<http://www.mncompass.org/profiles/neighborhoods/minneapolis-saint-paul#!community-areas>.

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