



The City of **NORMAN**

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Norman, Oklahoma 73069 • 73070

SOCIAL & VOLUNTARY SERVICES COMMISSION
Phone: 405-366-5404

February 1, 2022

To: City of Norman Finance Committee

Re: Social and Voluntary Service Committee

The Social and Voluntary Services Commission (SVSC) was founded in 1973 as an advisory body to the Norman City Council regarding the evaluation of social services. The SVSC Commission consists of nine members each serving a three year term. The current members are: Kristal Hamm, Victoria Harrison, Josh Hinkle, Kurt Lee, Loida Salmond, Angela Steinle, Ann Way, and myself. I currently serve as the chair and Kristal Hamm the Vice-Chair. We have one vacancy that is pending City Council confirmation.

Within the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 City of Norman budget funding for social service agencies was increased to \$250,000 from the previous amount of \$175,000. A formal application process was held in which qualified interested agencies were required to submit an application that included information regarding the overall mission of the agency, specific project for which funding was being requested, financial information including budget summary and projected budget, copy of most recent audit, their 990 return for 2019, and a copy of IRS tax exempt status letter. The application also required a list of the current board members and staff members of the agency.

In 2021 the Social and Voluntary Services Commission meet in person and reviewed the submitted by 32 Norman service agencies. The submitted applications totaled \$247,000 in requests for funding. For the 2020 application cycle, a \$10,000 application cap was enacted. The cap was enacted to be able to assist more agencies. The applications received for the previous cycle prior to the implementation of the \$10,000 application cap totaled \$345,000. During the review of each application, Commissioners discussed any questions or clarifications that were needed from the applicant. Staff obtained this information from the agencies and forwarded the responses to the Commissioners. All submitted applications for funding were approved although some were for less than requested.

After the initial meeting of the commission and prior to the funding meeting, each Commission member evaluated each of the applications independently and determined an appropriate funding level within the allowable total of \$225,000. These results were provided to staff and compiled into a spreadsheet. At the funding meeting the Commission reviewed the compilation of budgets and discussed the criteria that the Commission members applied to each funding proposal. The Commission evaluated multiple subjects including but not limited to: possibilities of duplications of efforts, past performance of the

agency and potential for other funding sources.

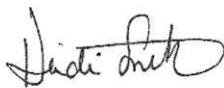
Agency project funding is administered on a reimbursement basis. Payments are made as invoices with appropriate documentation of project execution and receipts are received. Each of the funded agencies are visited a minimum of once during the fiscal year by Commission members. During the pandemic these visits are conducted virtually. We will return to physical site visits as soon as this is safe for commissioners and agency staff. During visits we inquire about future trends, any special challenges for the organizations and how partnerships with others doing work in this field can be established. The visits are not only to check for contract compliance in expending the awarded funds, but also allow commissioners to assess possible needs in our community.

It is no surprise that the pandemic has had a profound effect on the Norman Non-Profit community. As individuals and established funders have experienced the contraction of the economy, less funding has been made available than in previous years. In addition to this deficiency, many funding entities have decided to swing the focus of funding to COVID specific needs. While understandable, this creates a scarcity of normal operating funds. As agencies can only spend funds on the projects and programs specifically funded this creates a Catch 22 effect. Agencies can have hundreds of thousands of programmatic dollars to spend but struggle to pay rent, utility and administrative costs that enable them to keep the doors open. The SVSC is a funder that allows for, and during the pandemic has made known that general operational funding requests are welcome.

The Social and Voluntary Services Commission respectfully requests the consideration of a minimum of \$225,000 of funding to be included within the City of Norman FYE23 Budget. Any increase will be a necessary safety-net for the amazing agencies that make up the social safety net for our community.

If you have any questions regarding the Social and Voluntary Services Commission please do not hesitate to contact me at (405) 471-2666 or Lisa Krieg, our City staff liaison.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heidi Smith", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Heidi Smith

Chair, City of Norman SVSC

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