

Community Development Citizen Advisory Committee (CDCAC) Meeting
May 5, 2021 6:30 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

Members: Maryclare Whitehead, Rolf Blank, Carlton Newton, Ellen Eiseman, Lara Malakoff, Mike Tulley, Nicole Merlene, Risha Bailey, Steven Gallagher, Tim Denning, Walter Sargent, Jose Quinonez

Staff: Caitlin Jones

1. Approval of March 3, 2021 Meeting Minutes (Action)

The meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Report on Diversity and Inclusion Focus Groups (Discussion)

Caitlin Jones reported that over the course of March and April, staff had been working with a subcommittee of CDCAC members to develop a series of Diversity and Inclusion Focus Groups. The purpose of these focus groups was to ensure that the Community Development Fund grant making process is accessible and equitable for nonprofit organizations that serve Arlington County's low and moderate-income residents. The topics included County outreach and communications, technical assistance, post-application feedback, and evaluation criteria. Risha Bailey, Walt Sargent and Rolf Blank provided a summary of the feedback that was received during these focus groups.

Outreach: Walter Sargent moderated this section and reported that the purpose was to learn how organizations hear about funding opportunities, whether Community Development Fund outreach is reaching an inclusive audience and generally how outreach can be improved and expanded. Recommendations included:

- Where to expand outreach:
 - Ask DHS, APS and other County departments to market NOFA
 - Connect with regional organizations to assist with distributing NOFA
 - Washington Forrest Foundation
 - Arlington Community Foundation
 - Grantwatch.com
 - PTAs and smaller neighborhood groups
 - Northern Virginia Regional Commission
 - Make funding information more prominent on the website
- How to reach smaller organizations:
 - Utilize virtual technology more broadly
 - Share recordings of workshops more broadly
 - Create networking opportunities
- Additional outreach methods:
 - Explore using social media
 - Newspaper/blog articles
 - Targeted outreach to newly registered 501(c)(3) organizations in Arlington
 - Targeted outreach specific to organizations that support neighborhood strategy areas.
- Centralized grant website / portal for County funding opportunities

One CDCAC member suggested that another outreach method could be to pull the list of newly registered nonprofits that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) publishes annually of all nonprofits and

conducted targeted outreach. Another member suggested that this list could be compared to the list of organizations that have applied for a grant in the past to see what organizations are missing.

Other suggestions for organizations to share the NOFA with included the Arlington Chamber of Commerce nonprofit working group, neighborhood civic associations, Arlington Credit union community ambassador program, and the Foundation Center.

One CDCAC member suggested that she could assist in developing an article for ArlNow to cover the Community Development Fund application and would be able to get publicity for the NOFA out on an Instagram account called ArlingtonVA.

Technical Assistance and Feedback: Risha Bailey facilitated this discussion, reporting that this section was designed to better understand technical assistance needs for organizations to respond to the Community Development Fund NOFA and application. Staff and CDCAC wanted to know if there were certain resources or information that could be provided to better prepare organizations and the best way to communicate with them. In addition, staff and CDCAC also wanted to find out what type of feedback is helpful for organizations that are not successful in their application for funding.

Recommendations included:

- How to encourage participation in workshop:
 - Communicate schedule early in the year and often
 - Highlight NOFA changes in email communication
 - Add a networking component to workshop
- Workshop:
 - Detail what review committee wants to see for each question
 - Post all questions asked and responses on the website
- Organizations ability to meet eligibility criteria:
 - Mentorship program
 - Frequently Asked Questions
- Capacity building:
 - Grant writing assistance
 - County-sponsored or led racial equity training
 - Curated list of nonprofit resources that can support small organizations in building capacity.
 - Partnering with universities
- Feedback:
 - Do not require post-decision conversation with organizations not selected for funding
 - Ensure organizations understand they can request feedback
 - Provide application summary sheet to applicants post-funding recommendations

One CDCAC member recommended connecting with Arlington Economic Development (AED) to discuss the capacity building program that BizLaunch used to offer for nonprofits. She suggested that it might make sense for the County to revive this program. Another member reported that the AED/ Economic Development Commission has talked about developing a capacity building program that could support small businesses and small nonprofits. He also noted that George Mason offers a similar program currently that might be of use to Community Development Fund applicants. Another member suggested that County staff reach out to the Arlington Chamber of Commerce to discuss the capacity building assistance that they currently offer to members.

Another CDCAC member suggested that one technical assistance piece that could be of use to small nonprofits is how to design a strong fundable project, which in many ways is a step prior in development of application development. Technical assistance opportunities could be useful for this, before applicants even begin to fill out the Community Development Fund application. The member suggested that County staff consider connecting organizations to other resources to help them begin thinking about program design. Another member suggested that County staff consult with the Nonprofit Center at Community Foundation to see if this is something that they offer.

Finally, another CDCAC member offered that providing application feedback might something that CDCAC can help to develop for County staff (i.e. developing agreed-upon reasoning why proposals weren't selected).

Scoring and Evaluation Criteria: Rolf Blank moderated the final section and reported that it covered application content and evaluation criteria to ensure that some nonprofits are not disadvantaged through the existing processes. This included understanding scoring criteria, connecting proposals to the funding priority areas, developing a strong program design. Recommendations included:

- Application process:
 - CDCAC proposal presentation
 - Application questions and required content:
 - Condense and shorten application requirements
 - Better match application questions with evaluation criteria
- Notice of Funding Availability content:
 - Provide more information in NOFA and materials that describes where funds are currently being allocated and prioritized
 - More concrete examples of how to develop outcome measures
- Data use:
 - Connect applicants with data sources

Several CDCAC members suggested that the NOFA provide additional guidance to applicants about how to prepare for the proposal presentations. This included informing applicants that they do not need to provide an overview of the program and to structure their presentation based on follow-up questions that they receive. Some CDCAC members suggested that proposal presentations are more successful when the presentation is more of a conversation rather than a formal presentation.

Another CDCAC members suggested that organizations that have received funding in the past should be required to present metrics for how the program did in previous years, both recent and long-term.

2. Other Considerations from Diversity and Inclusion Focus Groups

In addition to the specific recommendations about how to improve the Community Development Fund grant process, staff also received feedback about how the County could improve outreach to smaller, more diverse groups. These suggestions were broadly applicable to increasing diversity and inclusion in County programs and outreach:

- 1) Create networking opportunities for smaller community-based nonprofits. This will ensure that smaller nonprofits have a space for information sharing and collaborating. In addition, the

County should be more intentional in inviting smaller nonprofits to the table and ensuring that all voices are heard.

- 2) Conduct targeted outreach to newly registered 501(c)(3) organizations in Arlington. Ensure that organizations are not being left out by virtue of their size or inexperience and that newer nonprofits understand what opportunities are available to them.
- 3) Improve the County website navigation so organizations know where to look for funding opportunities. Ensure that nonprofits do not have to go through several layers of the website to find information about funding opportunities.
- 4) Create centralized grant website / portal for County funding opportunities. In addition to being more transparent about available funding opportunities, this would also give County Departments a better idea of what opportunities already exist and therefore what community needs are currently being addressed.
- 5) Better utilize social media to communicate funding opportunities. Ensure staff from various Departments understand the County's policies around social media use. Better use of social media could empower County staff to more effectively communicate opportunities with community-based nonprofits.
- 6) Connect smaller organizations with resources to assist with capacity building. Capacity building can make or break a small organization. Ensure that Arlington nonprofits have the resources they need to grow. This can be done by developing and distributing list of nonprofit resources that can support small organizations or approaching universities to assist nonprofits with building capacity. The County could also consider developing a mentorship program for larger organizations to mentor or assist smaller organizations in their ambitions for growth.
- 7) Develop County-sponsored or led racial equity training for smaller organizations that do not have the resources or capacity to develop this type of programming.

Staff reported that the recommendations received will be compiled into a report and will be incorporated into the FY 2023 Community Development Fund NOFA and process. In addition, the report and findings will be shared with County leadership and the community.

3. Chair Report:

Tim Denning reported that he was recommending Lara Malakoff to be nominated as Vice-Chair of CDCAC. She received unanimous support from the rest of the committee.

4. Member Report:

Nothing to Report

5. Staff Report:

Staff reported that the County Board approved the FY 2022 Community Development Fund budget recommendations at the April 20, 2021 meeting. The programs funded through the FY 2022 program will begin receiving funding on July 1, 2021.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 pm.