

Meeting Summary
Sustainable Communities Planning Grant
Meeting of the Coordinating Consortium
Wednesday, November 3, 2010 9:30-11:30 AM
Neighborhood Centers Inc., Offices

ATTENDEES:

Meredith Dang, H-GAC; Gina Mitteco, H-GAC; Diana Ponce De Leon, City of Houston; Michael Kramer, City of Houston; Donna Rybiski, Center for Houston's Future; Martha Murphree, Blueprint Houston; Paul Wright, LISC; David Crossley, Houston Tomorrow; Chuck Wemple, Gulf Coast Economic Development District; Stefanie Lopez, United Way of Greater Houston; Toni Candis, Harris County Community Services; Jared Briggs, Harris County Community Services; DC Dunham, Bay City Community Development Corporation; Vince Yokom, Waller County Economic Development Partnership; David Hitchcock, Houston Advanced Research Center; Lori Schwarz, City of Galveston; Laura Solitare, Texas Southern University; Claudia Vasquez, Neighborhood Centers Inc.; Jay Blazek Crossley, Houston Tomorrow; Sungmin Lee, City of Houston; Nicholas Williams, H-GAC; Ronald Drachenberg, Fort Bend County; Jeff Taebel, H-GAC; Victoria Herrin, Houston Wilderness; Tina D. Pham, VN Teamwork, Inc.; Amar Mohite, City of Houston; Carlos G. Espinoza, City of Houston; Cheryl Mergo, H-GAC; Amanda Thorin, H-GAC; Emily Braswell, Blueprint Houston; Andrea Roberts, City of Houston Community Development Department; Sidney Bouse, Galveston County Blueprint/Pendeco, Inc.

NOTES:

Grant Award Review

- The consortium was awarded \$3.75 million from HUD for a 3-year grant period. This was less than the full grant request of \$5 million.
- This was a highly competitive process—225 regions applied and only 45 received funding.
- The full application is available online along with a press release that can be used by partners as talking points/summary <http://www.h-gac.com/community/sustainability/default.aspx>
- If partners get requests from other organizations or individuals that would like to participate as stakeholders, please direct them to the same website where they can complete a stakeholder interest form.
- H-GAC is currently in communications with HUD, but is awaiting a conference call with the specific grants administrator for this grant (our Government Technical Representative). The GTR will provide guidance on several issues including ways to revise the budget and work plan to reflect the reduced funding amount.
- Once the consortium agrees to a revised budget and work plan and H-GAC has signed a contract with HUD, H-GAC has 120 days to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with each consortium partner.

Preparing for Grant Kick-Off – Public Engagement and Bylaws

Public Engagement

- The grant proposal includes hiring a consultant to help the consortium with public engagement and outreach. This includes preparing a public engagement plan, helping with public meetings and outreach, messaging, etc.
- H-GACs procurement process typically takes three months and it would be ideal to have the public engagement consultant on-board by the time the grant kicks off.

- In order to get started on the request for proposals now, H-GAC is seeking a subcommittee of 6 to 8 consortium members to help develop the RFP and serve on the selection committee.
- The subcommittee will meet before Thanksgiving and report back to the full consortium at the next meeting.
- Anyone interested in serving on the subcommittee should contact Meredith Dang at H-GAC.

Bylaws

- The consortium needs to develop bylaws to guide elements such as meeting frequency, committee membership, mechanisms for coordination and review, and conflict resolution (including non-voting methods).
- The bylaws may also determine varying levels of formality and conduct for each of the subcommittees and technical groups.
- H-GAC will work with HUD to determine whether there are any HUD requirements for meetings, public notice, etc. that need to be incorporated into the bylaws.
- Consortium members interested in participating in bylaw development should contact Meredith Dang. This subcommittee will also meet before Thanksgiving and report back to the full consortium at the next meeting.

Agreements – Revised MOUs

- Once H-GAC has a signed contract with HUD, consortium members will have 120 days to execute a MOU with H-GAC.
- The MOUs will be similar to the MOAs that were signed for the grant application, but partners will need to document their commitment to provide match and/or in-kind contributions.
- H-GAC will send out draft MOUs within the next two weeks to give agencies adequate time to review and seek approval.

Match

- H-GAC will ask HUD whether or not we are required to provide the level of match (in-kind or cash) that was proposed in the application given the reduced funding amount.
- Where possible, H-GAC is encouraging partners to try and keep their cash and in-kind commitments at the levels that were proposed to ensure that we can maintain as many of the elements of the work plan as possible.
- The application included leveraged funds in the amount of \$3.73 million, a significant amount that was likely one of the elements that made our proposal so competitive.
- There were several questions regarding match, answers are summarized below:
 - Other federal funds can count as match
 - We cannot begin documenting match until the grant officially kicks off
 - H-GAC will develop a form for partners to document match, staff hours, etc.
 - H-GAC encourages partners to only document what they are certain they can commit to for match in order to avoid the potential administrative process of later amending commitments with HUD.

Budget Considerations

- H-GAC will talk with HUD next week to begin the process of amending the budget and work plan to reflect the \$1.25 million difference between what was requested and what was granted. Initial

conversations with HUD indicate that they have ideas on what elements they would suggest reducing or eliminating and other elements that need to be kept.

- H-GAC will present initial budget and work plan revisions to the consortium at the next meeting.
- The consortium will have 60 days after H-GAC is under contract with HUD to finalize the work plan.

Consultant Contracts

- The proposal includes several work plan and budget items that will be awarded through a competitive proposal process. A handout was provided with an excerpt from the budget narrative describing these work items. A budget summary was also provided.
- During the application and consortium selection process, it was discussed that consortium members should not be allowed to apply for consultant contracts that will be awarded by the consortium. This policy was intended to ensure that there is not a conflict of interest in consultant selection.
- Consortium members felt that this topic should be re-examined and discussed further to determine whether or not this is the way to proceed. It was also suggested that the consortium discuss the possibility of sub allocating portions of the grant to consortium partners. Points of discussion are summarized below:
 - The consortium needs to be careful at the appearance of conflict of interest, we do not want questions about the process to take away from the work product.
 - Instead of thinking about how to divide up the pie, the consortium should be exploring opportunities to make the pie larger and leverage other efforts/opportunities.
 - H-GAC is currently the only organization that is directly charging to the grant—is this the way the consortium wants to proceed?
 - The consortium was awarded the grant based on what was proposed in the application. What are the implications of changing the role, budget, and allocations at this point?
- H-GAC will pose some of these questions to HUD and will report back for a continuation of this discussion at the next meeting.

NEXT STEPS:

- H-GAC will report back via email regarding conference call with HUD representative
- Bylaws subcommittee will hold first meeting and report back
- Public Engagement RFP subcommittee will hold first meeting and report back

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday, November 30, 10:00 AM

H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor

3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Please contact Meredith Dang, H-GAC

713-993-2443

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