



Memorandum

TO: NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES
AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FROM: Jon Cicirelli
Director

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: 10/24/2022

Approved

Date

11/1/22

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE BRINGING EVERYONE'S STRENGTHS TOGETHER
GRANT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the staff report on the status of the Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together (BEST) Grant Program's Request for Qualification (RFQ) requirements.

OUTCOME

The Neighborhood Services and Education Committee ("Committee") will receive an update regarding the BEST Grant Program oversight and accountability efforts, as they pertain to the upcoming BEST Grant Program RFQ, as requested at the November 4, 2021 Committee meeting.

BACKGROUND

At the November 4, 2021 Committee meeting, the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Department (Department) provided an update regarding the City's next triennial BEST RFQ, including plans to defer the RFQ release date to January 2023, pending completion of the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (Task Force) strategic plan update. Staff was directed to return to the Committee in November 2022 to provide an updated status on BEST RFQ process in anticipation of the upcoming release, including oversight and accountability efforts that will be incorporated into the BEST RFQ process.

The BEST Grant Program is the funding arm of the Task Force. Typically, every three years the Department issues an RFQ to establish a pool of qualified service providers in several different Eligible Service Areas. Through this process, qualified providers are determined based on

proposal scores, agency capacities, and alignment with the Task Force's strategic work plan. This is done with a view towards making annual grant awards based on available funding and community needs, which vary in nature and location over time. The current qualified list of 27 agencies was established in 2019 and was set to expire in August 2022. However, due to several pending projects, including the incorporation of work related to staff's responses to the City Auditor's 2018 Task Force audit recommendations and the work needed to align the RFQ with the Task Force's updated Strategic Work Plan, the Department delayed the release of the triennial RFQ to January 2023 and extended the current qualified pool term for one year. The additional year afforded staff the time to align services and criteria with the new, broader Task Force work plan scope (scheduled for Task Force Policy Team approval in October 2022). In addition, the extension provided staff with the time to complete various projects that will better-articulate BEST Grant Program requirements, improve the program's evaluation design, and achieve the intended outcomes, relative to youth development and violence mitigation.

ANALYSIS

To improve the BEST RFQ process, including the oversight and coordination of contracted agency engagement with the City's youth programs, staff is writing the BEST service area descriptions and objectives to align with the updated Task Force Strategic Work Plan. In addition, staff is implementing a performance measurement framework that will improve the Department's ability to provide quality, measurable programs that serve the highest need participants. These efforts have been a conglomeration of several individual projects and activities, which are summarized below.

Convened and Facilitated a BEST Partner Engagement Group

To support the key performance measurement and accountability components of the upcoming BEST triennial period, the Department fostered greater engagement with BEST nonprofit partners by establishing the BEST Partner Engagement Group in the 2021-2022 program cycle. Staff invited the 15 currently funded agencies as they already have a role in the administrative process of monitoring, compliance, and evaluation of the program. The group's purpose was to identify and validate procedures, tools, and metrics that would be administratively feasible for both the City and its partners in improving program performance measurement, oversight, and accountability in the upcoming triennial period. The Department convened 11 of the 15 funded agencies to obtain a diversity of perspectives and discuss activity monitoring and performance measurement improvements that could prospectively impact future BEST agencies' funded programs. The City worked in partnership with Resource Development Agency (RDA) to facilitate focus groups with the BEST Partner Engagement Group to gather input on the Performance Measurement Framework, including the participant risk screening tool. Focus groups were conducted from November 2021 to August 2022.

Aligning BEST Grant Program with Strategic Work Plan Development

The Task Force's Strategic Work Plan informs the work that is done through the BEST Grant Program. The new 2023-2026 plan outlines a framework that includes outcomes and objectives that prioritize, align, and measure Task Force efforts to reduce violence in San José. The Strategic Work Plan will be presented for approval at the Task Force Policy Team on October 27, 2022. One of the key objectives of that work plan is to reduce youth risk factors in priority neighborhoods and schools. If approved, a key result will be the expansion of BEST Eligible Services to include youth-driven and whole-family place-based strategies. The BEST administrative staff has been working with key partners, including non-profit community-based organizations, Silicon Valley Council of Non-profits, the Task Force Tech Team, etc., to identify services that conform to the BEST Grant Program's five Eligible Service Areas to the Task Force's expanded objectives under the new Strategic Work Plan. BEST administrative staff is also working with the City Manager's Office and Santa Clara County Office of Education to better understand the broader picture of resources provided to youth in San José to determine gaps and avoid duplication of services.

Developing Opportunity Neighborhoods (previously known as "Hot Spot Areas")

The Department is in the process of updating the Task Force's Hot Spot Areas which will now be called "Opportunity Neighborhoods." Opportunity Neighborhoods are determined based on an assessment of where the highest youth development and violence mitigation needs are throughout the city. This assessment used qualitative data obtained through input sessions with the Task Force's Technical Team members, including City of San José's Youth Intervention Services staff, BEST funded Street Outreach Intervention agencies, and the San José Police Department. In addition, staff created a heat map utilizing San José Police Department youth crime and gang incident data and added two data overlays including the following: 1) *Equity Priority Communities* which are census tracts that have a high concentration of underserved populations, such a households with low incomes and people of color; and 2) *The Health Places Index* which is a tool that explores community characteristics like access to healthcare, housing, and education. The new Opportunity map will be used to determine how the City can optimize its allocation of grant resources, including BEST Street Outreach Intervention services, with the objective of maximizing the City's positive programmatic impacts on youth with the greatest risk factors and need. The process used to define the new Opportunity Neighborhoods took place between September 2021 and September 2022, and is summarized below:

Table 1
Opportunity Neighborhoods Determination Process

Date	Key Step	Description
September 2021	Task Force Technical Team prioritization activity	Technical Team members propose list of neighborhoods during Division break out session and vote to determine areas with highest need based on climate and experience
October 2021	Review of proposed neighborhoods	BEST Administrative Staff and BEST funded agencies discussed proposed neighborhoods for consideration, boundaries and other considerations related to SJPD's reported crime data and observations, including graffiti and neighborhood climate checks
February – September 2022	Data Collection and Mapping	The Department worked with SJPD Research & Development Team to collect crime data to create a heat map with an overlay of Equity Priority Communities and Healthy Places Index data.
July 2022	Review of proposed neighborhoods	SJPD Captains, Technical Team members, and BEST Administrative Staff reviewed and commented on proposed neighborhoods
September 2022	Review heat map and neighborhood boundaries	SJPD Captains, Technical Team members, and BEST Administrative Staff reviewed the updated heat map with the overlay of proposed neighborhoods and boundaries and refined boundaries and/or proposed changes based on input and review of heat map
October 2022	Finalize list of 18 Opportunity Neighborhoods and boundaries	The Department is reviewing all information collected and will determine the final neighborhoods to present to Policy Team for approval on October 27, 2022.

Developing Performance Measurement Framework and Output Performance Metrics

The Department hired Resource Development Associates Consulting (RDA) to develop a performance measurement framework for the Task Force. The goal for this framework was to work within the BEST and the Youth Intervention Services programs' current logic model, while considering local priorities, previous audit recommendations, and administrative capacities, to develop a data collection and analysis approach for assessing program performance and outcomes.

During focus group meetings with the BEST Partner Engagement Group, group participants were asked questions around data collection tools, challenges with reporting process, unit of

service formulae, and expected program outcomes. Overall, participants had positive input regarding current BEST Grant Program's data collection tools, including the unit of service output tool and the quarterly report workbook. There was some input around changing the format to some of the quarterly report worksheets, but the Engagement Group generally confirmed the utility of the current data-collection systems and procedures that are already in place. With the Engagement Group's feedback and RDA recommendations, BEST administrative staff is exploring how to implement format and content changes, including better tools for collecting and assessing agencies' quarterly narrative responses about their respective programs' status and performance. This will allow the staff to recognize program successes up front and identify and address performance shortfalls regarding contracted service activity levels in a timelier way.

In addition, staff will be implementing a list of guiding questions for our partner agencies in the 2023-2024 program cycle, which will prompt agencies to identify and report out on data points such as the target participants being served; participating youths' feelings of safety and security in their programs; youths' feelings of being connected to school and/or work; and assessments about whether participating youth are more or less likely to engage in risky behavior as a result of the program. Staff will implement tools for collecting, aggregating and reporting metrics that correspond to the guiding questions. Prospectively, staff will work with RDA to pursue data sharing agreements with partners such as Santa Clara Office of Education and Santa Clara County Probation Department that will allow for ongoing sharing of data to monitor outcomes related to school engagement and involvement in the justice system.

Given that the Department and its contracted agencies will continue to provide an expanding range of violence prevention and intervention programs and services to youth residing in San José – including mentoring, arts, case management, information/referral services, etc. – consistently measuring program performance and community impacts remains a challenge among partners with varying scopes of service and levels of complexity. The framework RDA developed will provide a simpler, more consistent approach to program measurement that accommodates the current data collection capacities of both the City and its partner agencies; and, it will afford greater flexibility in accommodating creative, unique programs without significant customization. Table 2 below provides an overview of the framework.

Table 2**BEST Performance Measurement Framework**

Implementation Schedule	Guiding Question	Corresponding Metric to Guiding Question	Data Collection Tool to Collect Metric
2023-2024	Who are programs serving?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant Demographic Data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographic Workbook Intake Form

	How much service is being delivered?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Units of Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grantee Workbook
	How are Programs impacting the youth and effecting change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey Responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Exit Survey
2024-2026	For youth who are currently justice involved, did we reduce recidivism?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truancy Records • New Arrests/Probation Violation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *School Data *Police and Probation Data
	What were the risk factors that were reduced?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-post Participant Risk Screener tool

*Contingent on all parties agreeing to share highly confidential data and determine how best to secure that data.

Developing a Participant Risk Screening Tool

The Department also worked with RDA to design and pilot a brief participant risk screener tool to identify BEST and Youth Intervention Services (YIS) program participants' level of risk for gang involvement. This tool will be used to ensure that program services are being delivered to their target populations; identify areas of need/risk across program populations; and/or direct youth with higher risks for youth violence, including gang involvement, to programs that include case management services.

In November 2021, RDA began working with PRNS to refine and implement the draft screener tool with a select set of BEST-funded and YIS programs. RDA assembled all returned screener tools and ran analyses, including which agencies had higher versus lower risk client profiles. RDA then conducted interviews and focus groups with staff from these agencies to gather their insights on the ease or difficulty of tool implementation, its potential value, and their best ideas for how to improve and best use the tool. RDA incorporated feedback and recommended the final version of the tool, which will be implemented in all BEST funded and Youth Intervention Services programs in the 2023-2024 program year. This will include incorporating a post participation risk screening assessment to compare with the initial intake risk screening assessment, which will help inform staff regarding the outcomes of individually BEST- funded programs.

Summary of Next Steps

Table 3 below provides the status and next steps for each project, followed by a BEST RFQ timeline, for reference.

Table 3
Summary of Key RFQ Enhancements/Additions and Next Steps

Project	Key Deliverables that will inform the new RFQ	Status/Next Steps
Implementation of updated MGPTF Strategic Work Plan Objectives	Expand scope of BEST Eligible Service Area descriptions/criteria including the incorporation of youth-driven, whole family, place-based strategies.	New 2023-2025 Task Force Strategic Work Plan with expanded Eligible Services will be presented to Task Force Policy Team on October 27, 2022.
New Opportunity Neighborhoods Criteria and Map	Newly developed Opportunity Neighborhoods will be included in the RFQ to ensure that the BEST program serves the areas in the City with the highest needs.	New Opportunity Neighborhoods are scheduled to be presented at the next Task Force Policy Team on October 27, 2022.
Performance Measurement Framework and Output Performance Metrics	Performance Measurement Framework and tools will be outlined in the RFQ document.	Performance Measurement Framework is complete and will be incorporated into the 2023-2024 evaluation design.
Screening Tool	Develop a program participant Screening Tool process and tool to assess participant risk levels and incorporate into the RFQ document as a mandatory component.	Screening Tool is complete. The Department will continue to evaluate process and tool to identify changes with consultant and agency feedback during and following "real world" deployment.
Recruit and select a new Senior Analyst and Analyst to develop/implement BEST coordination and accountability approaches.	Develop, implement and coordinate new BEST Grant Program oversight and accountability measures, including data sharing agreements and the use of improved data collection tools.	The Senior Analyst was hired in September 2022. The Department is now conducting the Analyst recruitment to find a qualified applicant for the project. Analyst interviews were held in late October.
Selection of a new Client Management System	Implement a Client Management System to improve quality of service documentation, streamline data collection process, and create efficiencies for program oversight and accountability.	Strategic Procurement request was reviewed by the Procurement Prioritization Board on October 17, 2022 and Finance Department is projected to release the bid February 2023.

BEST RFQ Timeline

Timeline	Action Item
January 2023	Release RFQ
March 2023	Application Deadline
May 2023	Awards Notices Released
May – August 2023	Contract Negotiations and Development
September 1, 2023	Start of Services

CONCLUSION

To improve the BEST RFQ process, including the City's oversight and coordination of contracted agency engagement, staff is re-working the BEST eligible service area descriptions and objectives. Staff is also updating related contract monitoring and accountability policies, procedures and tools. The objective has been to arrive at a performance measurement framework that will improve the Department's ability to provide quality, measurable programs that serve the highest need participants. Staff has been working on a conglomeration of projects including Strategic Work Plan Development and Program Alignment; identifying new opportunity neighborhoods; and developing a participant risk screening tool. As these efforts are incorporated into the upcoming triennial period, the Department will continue to convene and facilitate the BEST Partner Engagement Group in 2022-2023. In doing so, staff will continue to engage grant funded agencies in discussions related to administrative changes and enhancements and their implementation as we collaboratively seek to make better-informed decisions that will improve BEST Grant Program performance and outcomes, relative to community impact. The BEST RFQ is expected to be released in January 2023 and services that will be provided by the newly-qualified list of agencies, as awarded, will start on September 1, 2023.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The Department will provide the Notice of Funding Opportunity and related documents once the RFQ is released in January 2023.

CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSE

The recommendation in this memo has no effect on Climate Smart San José energy, water, or mobility goals.

October 24, 2022

Subject: Update on the Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together Grant Program

Page 9

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Council Agenda website for the November 10, 2022 Neighborhood Services and Education Committee meeting.

COORDINATION

This memo was prepared in coordination with the City Attorney's and Budget Office.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT

No commission recommendation or input is associated with this action.

CEQA

Not a Project, File No. PP17-009, Staff Reports, Assessments, Annual Reports, and Informational Memos that involve no approvals of any City action.

/s/

JON CICIRELLI

Director of Parks,

Recreation and Neighborhood Services

For questions, please contact David DeLong, Division Manager, at david.delong@sanjoseca.gov.