



Memorandum

TO: NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES
AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FROM: Jon Cicirelli

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: October 18, 2021

Approved

Date

10/26/21

**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) Request for Qualifications (RFQ) requirements and gender-responsive programming.

OUTCOME

The Neighborhood Services and Education Committee ("Committee") will receive an update regarding BEST RFQ and gender-responsive programming as requested at the August 12, 2021 Committee meeting.

BACKGROUND

At the August 12, 2021 Neighborhood Services and Education Committee meeting, the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Department (Department) was directed to return to the Committee in November 2021 to provide an update on the BEST RFQ requirements and for a discussion on gender-specific programming and systems available to respond to sexual assault. The BEST Grant Program issues an RFQ to establish a pool of qualified service providers in several different Eligible Service Areas with a view towards making grant awards each year based on available funding and community needs which vary in nature and location over time. This list is typically established on a three-year, or triennial basis, with qualified providers determined based on proposal scores, agency capacities, and alignment with the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force strategic plan. In the most recent BEST RFQ, conducted in 2019, the Department established a list of 27 qualified agencies in five eligible service areas. Most recently, of the 27 qualified agencies, the Department is awarding grants to 15 agencies for the 2021-2022 program year.

With the last RFQ, considerable effort was made to improve the grant program. For example, in 2018-2019, the Department evaluated the outputs of six eligible service areas, relative to how the funding was allocated in past years. In that, staff engaged stakeholders to evaluate where the BEST Grant Program is able to achieve the greatest “bang for the buck” and subsequently reduced the number of Eligible Service Areas from six to five areas, combining Substance Abuse Prevention with Personal Transformation Through Cognitive Behavioral Change and Life Skills Education, and keeping the remaining Eligible Service Areas in place: Street Outreach Intervention Services; Vocational/Job Training Services; Parent Awareness/Training & Family Support; and Case Management. In addition, staff outlined Logic Models for each Eligible Service Area in the RFQ with a view towards setting, communicating, and obtaining specific outcomes. In line with this, the Department required all applicants to submit their own Logic Model(s) for proposed services, by which staff was better able to evaluate these services with the BEST Grant Program and the Mayor’s Gang Prevention Task Force, in general.

ANALYSIS

Prospectively, staff plans to build upon this work by exploring various avenues for measuring the BEST Grant Program’s performance and in conjunction with the Task Force’s Strategic Work Plan update. Consequently, staff is opting to postpone the next triennial RFQ by another year (from January 2022 to January 2023). This will ensure that the framing of BEST services and outcomes remain in alignment with the broader Task Force Strategic Work Plan, which is just getting started. Postponing will also ensure that appropriate levels of analysis and stakeholder engagement take place to advance key administrative efforts, which pertain to evaluating the BEST Grant Program’s outcomes, relative to youth development and violence mitigation.

Strategic Work Plan Development

The Department has established a Steering Committee to guide the development of the next Task Force Strategic Work Plan. The Task Force Strategic Work Plan provides a framework and goals for the Task Force to work towards and measure success. In general, the next Strategic Work Plan will guide staff and our partner organizations in aligning our respective approaches as we deploy resources to address youth violence. For this reason, it is important that the BEST RFQ conform to the Task Force Strategic Work Plan, which is currently scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2022.

Evaluate Units of Service as a Measure of Performance

The Department continues to receive feedback from its BEST providers that the use of Units of Service to measure program outputs does not sufficiently measure success. This conclusion is also supported by the recent City Audit #19-04 findings. To address this, the Department has partnered with an evaluation consultant, Resource Development Associates (RDA), to develop a performance measurement framework that will reflect the BEST Program’s Theory of Change

and align with the Task Force's Strategic Plan. A key deliverable for the project will be to present alternative options for measuring program successes in terms of outputs by service providers, relative to stated outcomes for the community. The evaluation consultant's work will include administrative research and engaging BEST agencies, which will include working with staff to hold a series of jointly facilitated focus groups with BEST partners. This project will commence in October 2021 and continue through March 2022.

Update the Gang Hot Spot Areas

The Department is in the process of updating the Task Force's Gang Hot Spot map, based on an assessment of where the highest needs are throughout the City. This work will be used in the future to efficiently allocate resources, including BEST grantees Street Outreach services. To that end, this year's exercise to determine updated Hot Spot locations will include an evaluation of both qualitative and quantitative data sets, including input sessions with the Task Force's Technical Team and Community Crisis Intervention Team, San José Police Department crime data, poverty data, school dropout rate, and other data available that describe risk factors for priority areas in need of intervention services. This process is slated to be completed and approved by the Task Force Policy Team in January 2022.

Gender Specific Violence

The Department recognizes that youth violence is experienced differently for different genders, which is why it has included gender-specific programming in both City-led and BEST provider-led services. For the last two years, over half of the participants in the BEST program were female, with 61% of participants in 2018-2019 identifying as female, and 56% of participants in 2019-2020 identifying as female. In addition, the Youth Intervention Services team has deployed a Female Intervention Team for the last 5 years, providing gender-specific programming to work with our female-identifying youth. The intersection of gang-violence, gender-based violence, and overall youth-violence will be an important discussion as part of the development of the Strategic Work Plan.

In the Committee's August 2021 meeting, a question was raised regarding whether the Community Crisis Response Protocol used by the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force could be replicated to address sexual assault, in particular. In response to the Committee's question, Department staff met with the County of Santa Clara's Office of Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Office of Women's Policy to better understand the County's existing sexual assault response protocol and how community-based organizations are involved.

Notably, there is a Sexual Assault Response Team which has a membership governed by State regulations. It includes the San José Police Department and other law enforcement representatives (including crime labs), medical professionals, and community-based advocacy organizations and meets every other month to discuss cases. There are workgroups, such as survivor engagement, which work in tandem with the Child Advocacy Center. Additionally, there are over \$1.5 million in prevention grants being allocated by the County's Office of

Gender-Based Violence Prevention for prevention, intervention and innovation programs. While the Department does not believe that there is a need for a separate sexual assault crisis response team given the existing, well-functioning process at the County level, staff has invited the County’s Office of Gender-Based Violence Prevention to give a presentation at a future Mayor’s Gang Prevention Task Force Technical Team meeting to raise awareness of the programs, services, and grant opportunities.

Timelines

In view of the pending work discussed above, the Department will delay the release of the BEST RFQ until January 2023 in order to thoughtfully consider modifications to the scope, objectives, and methodologies used to measure success and ensure accountability. In the meantime, staff will continue to administer and track grant awards using the current list of Eligible Service providers and existing eligible service area logic models to provide services to at-risk youth through August 2023.

The chart below outlines key projects that will inform the development of the RFQ and how BEST evaluates and implements services:

Timeline	Action Item	Key Deliverables that will inform the new RFQ
January 2022 – April 2022	Recruit and select a new Senior Analyst and Analyst to develop/implement BEST coordination and accountability approaches (contingent upon City Council approval of the 2020-2021 Annual Report).	Develop, implement and coordinate new BEST Grant Program oversight and accountability measures, including data sharing agreements and the use of improved data collection tools.
January 2022 – June 2022	Selection of a new Client Management System (contingent upon City Council approval of the 2020-2021 Annual Report)	Implement a Client Management System to improve quality of service documentation, streamline data collection process, and create efficiencies for program oversight and accountability.
October 2021 – March 2022	Evaluation of Output Performance Metrics (Units of Service)	Incorporate updated performance measurement framework in the requirements of the BEST grant program.
August 2021 – January 2022	Selection of New Hot Spot Areas	New hot spots included in the RFQ to ensure that the BEST program serves the areas in the City with the highest needs.

August 2021 – Fall 2022	Development/implementation of an updated MGPTF Strategic Work Plan	New strategic goals used to align resources in addressing youth violence, including those administered under the BEST Grant Program. Inclusion of gender-specific violence issues as part of the Strategic Work Plan development.
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Based on the need to incorporate the action items above, staff is extending the previous RFQ timeline by exactly one year:

Timeline	Action Item
January 2023	Release the BEST Program funding opportunity RFQ
March 2023	Application Deadline
May 2023	Award Notices Released
May - August 2023	Contract Negotiations
September 2023	Start of services

This postponement will enable staff to complete the performance metrics evaluation project, update of the City’s current Hot Spot map, and engage key stakeholders about how to use the products of these efforts in conjunction with the updated Task Force Strategic Work Plan. This will lead to measures that are more intentional, and less reactive than what would have likely occurred if staff maintained the original RFQ timeline. The result will be better approaches to accountability, oversight, and coordination in the BEST Grant Program’s new triennial period.

CONCLUSION

At the August 12, 2021 Neighborhood Services and Education Committee meeting, the Department was directed to return to the Committee in November 2021 to provide an update on the BEST RFQ requirements and for a discussion on gender-specific programming and systems available to respond to sexual assault. Staff is opting to postpone the next triennial RFQ by another year (from January 2022 to January 2023) in order to complete key projects that will inform the development of the new RFQ. The Department will provide additional information on the BEST Program RFQ requirements once they are established to solicit feedback from the Committee.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The Department will provide additional information on the BEST Program RFQ requirements once they are established to solicit feedback from the Committee.

CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSE

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

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Council Agenda website for the November 4, 2021 Neighborhood Services and Education Committee meeting.

COORDINATION

This memo was prepared in coordination with the City Attorney's 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, Interim Division Manager, at david.delong@sanjoseca.gov.