


January 23, 2023

**FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

To: Mayor and Members of City Council  
From: Sheryl M. M. Long, City Manager   
Subject: Q&A Regarding Leveraged Funding Application Process

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At the Budget and Finance Committee Meeting on Tuesday, January 18, 2023, the City Administration presented information regarding the Updated Human Services Strategies and Priorities Plan (Item #202300318), which was in response to Council Motion #202202006. This memo includes responses to questions the City Administration has received regarding the proposed application process that was set out in the report and presentation.

**1. With seven new categories for leveraged funding, how should organizations or programs/projects that cross multiple categories select a single category in the application process?**

Organizations will be asked to select the category that is the best fit / most relevant for their application, and organizations can submit information to indicate other categories that would be relevant for their application. Classification is not intended as a strict structure or a grounds for disqualification; it is intended as a way to loosely organize applicants who are generally working in the same space and to allow the City and public to easily track where it is investing dollars.

**2. How has the performance of leveraged support recipients been tracked in the past?**

All leveraged support contracts have historically required performance reporting of recipients' activities but have focused less on general financial information. Prior to the pandemic, the Office of Performance and Data Analytics (OPDA) held periodic PartnerStat meetings in which leveraged support recipients were required to provide an update to the City Administration regarding their current performance metrics as well as information related to how the City's leveraged funding was being utilized by the organization.

**3. What kind of information will administration provide to vendors looking for funding?**

The City Manager's Office will put together a communications strategy that will include notifying all current leveraged funding recipients of the new process as well as provide information to the local non-profit networks of the new process. An online application portal will be set up that will contain application information as well as instructions for the application process. Additionally, a primary point of contact will be established for inquiries.

**4. How will metrics be tracked and reported back to the City Council?**

The City Administration will require periodic reporting from all leveraged support recipients. The City Administration intends to incorporate this information in reporting to Council during the next year's budget process to help inform resource allocation decisions.

**5. Can an organization apply for both Human Services funding as well as leveraged support funding?**

Yes. Organizations may apply for both Human Services funding as well as leveraged support funding. Organizations may apply for support for multiple programs from different sources of funding. Organizations will be asked to provide information related to other sources of funding received from the City over the past three years.

**6. How is the City Administration tracking the funding decisions made for the Boots on the Ground Fund? Who are the individuals who score the applications and make final funding decisions and what process is used?**

The staff of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation (GCF) administers the Boots on the Ground Fund and provides the City with information regarding applications and grants awarded as part of their contract to administer the program. The primary contact for the City is Rasheda Cromwell, GCF's Vice President of Community Strategies who manages a team of GCF staff working on the program. More information is available here: <https://www.gcfnd.org/our-staff/>. GCF is a community foundation that administers funding for various grant programs focusing on non-profit organizations in the Greater Cincinnati area. GCF is a trusted partner of the City and has nearly sixty years of experience in underwriting grants (reviewing applications and making funding decisions) for a variety of grant opportunities. Additional information on the program can be found here: <https://www.gcfnd.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/RFP-BootsOnTheGround-final-9.30.22.pdf>

**7. How will the availability of funding be communicated especially to those organizations who have never received leveraged funding? How will the change in dollar range for awards (\$50,000 to \$500,000) be communicated?**

The City Manager's Office will put together a communications strategy that will include notifying all current leveraged funding recipients of the new process as well as provide information to the local non-profit networks of the new process.

Information about the process will be posted on the City's website, including the new funding range.

**8. Can City Council set the goals and objectives they want to see achieved?**

Yes, the City Council can set goals and objectives to be achieved through the leveraged funding process. The City Administration recommends that City Council utilize the Budget Policy Motion in the spring to identify and articulate priority goals and objectives. Through a motion supported by the majority of Council, Council can clearly communicate their top priorities to the Administration so that they can be built into the City Manager's budget recommendations to Council.

**9. Will the scoring of applications be weighted? Will there be an expectation that the more outside funding received by an applicant (total funding or a percentage of outside funding), the higher their score will be?**

There will not be a quantitative scoring process due to the impracticality of making exact comparisons amongst organizations across a broad array of policy goals and situations. For example, it is difficult to make a direct comparison of an organization working to address homelessness versus an organization working in economic development. However, the data collected from applicants, including the amount of leverage with non-City funding, will be utilized in conjunction with qualitative information by the City Administration to make recommendations to Council.

**10. Will the City ask organizations to estimate how long City funding will be needed until they would become self-supporting?**

Not at this time, as an estimation of that timeframe will be difficult in most circumstances and will likely depend on private donors or availability of other state or federal resources. Though one goal of the application process is to continue to push our partners to bring additional private resources to benefit City residents, the City Administration does not expect all leverage support organizations will become fully independent of City funding. It is intended that the City's leveraged support will continue to fill gaps or enhance services in areas where there is not sufficient private or public funding available for the work. Another related goal of the application process is intended to push partners to develop financial resiliency, given that the City is still projecting operating deficits in future fiscal years and any operating deficits will impact the level of leveraged support funding available.

**11. Will the Safe and Clean program go through the leveraged support process in the future?**

No. Safe and Clean, along with all other competitive programs either administered by a third-party for the City or by a City Department, will continue to operate independently of the leveraged support application process.

**12. Is the timeline feasible for the FY 2024-2025 Biennial Budget process?**

Yes. The Administration expects to be able to open the application portal in February 2023 with applications due in March 2023. This will provide enough time to review applications and include funding recommendations in the City Manager's FY 2024-2025 Recommended Biennial Budget, to be released in May 2023.

**13. Could an organization apply for leveraged funding in multiple consecutive years if they show continual impact from their receipt of City funding?**

Yes. Organizations can apply for funding in multiple consecutive years. Their application should reflect performance metrics detailing the continual impact. The City's goal is to invest its limited resources with organizations that can generate the most benefit for City residents. At times, this will mean long-term continual funding of the same effective and high-capacity partner organizations. This circumstance is even more likely when there are few or no other organizations in the field of a given organization.

**14. Will the City Administration set up office hours to help organizations with the application process? Will someone be reviewing applications and reach out to applicants if there are questions about the information provided or missing information?**

Yes. A primary point of contact will be established in the City Manager's Office to respond to applicants who need assistance and to ensure the completeness of submitted applications.

**15. If there are dollars left over can this process be required again? Will these parameters apply to the carryover process?**

There are not expected to be a surplus of unallocated leveraged funding dollars as part of the City Manager's recommended budget; however, if operating resources do become available during the fiscal year, such as during the carryover process, the same application process could be utilized or the information collected in the application process during the creation of that fiscal year's budget could be utilized.

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