



Office of the City Manager

ACTION CALENDAR

October 29, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From:  Christine Daniel, City Manager

Submitted by: Jane Micallef, Director, Health, Housing & Community Services  
Department

Subject: Commission Visits to Community Agencies

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the Homeless, Human Welfare and Community Action, Housing Advisory and Children Youth and Recreation Commissions to make two half-day visits to three community agencies applying for services funding, for a maximum of one hour each, every six months in the period between issuing Requests for Proposals.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Adopting the staff recommendation would result in an additional 18-20 hours in staff time for each commission plus an additional \$270 for transportation for each commission between each funding round.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

During the most recent Community Agency Funding review process, members of the four review commissions (Housing Advisory, Homeless, Human Welfare and Community Action, and Children, Youth and Recreation Commission) indicated an interest in visiting all community agencies applying for funding for services. Due to insufficient staff resources, site visits were not included in the review process for any of the commissions. It is important to note that most philanthropic foundations that fund community services do not include a site visit as part of their process to allocate grant funds. One limited exception to this policy was the Housing Advisory Commission, which visited community agencies applying for funds to renovate their facilities. Visits were included in the process in this case because the funding would be used directly for site improvement. All other review commissions expressed an interest in being able to resume site visits in future allocation processes.

In May, June and September staff in the Health, Housing & Community Services Department (HHCS) sent a proposal for accommodating visits to community agencies providing services and currently funded by the City of Berkeley to all review commissions. Staff recommends that all review Commissions adopt the same approach to site visits. The proposal recommended:

- Site visits will be conducted from July 1, 2013 through November 1, 2014;
- Staff will schedule site visits at all of the sites reviewed by the Commissions, depending on Commission interest;
- Staff will schedule and attend two half-day site visits every six months. Three sites will be visited per session;
- The maximum time per location will be 1 hour;
- ADA accessible transportation will be provided for a subcommittee and any members of the public wishing to attend, and the visits would be considered a subcommittee meeting, open to the public and to the members of the subcommittee, and not the full Commission. (The Commission may wish to rotate participation on the subcommittee, so that all Commissioners have an opportunity to visit some of the sites.); and
- Site visits must be completed by November, 2014, prior to initiating the next Request for Proposals (RFP).

The Homeless Commission created a Site Visit subcommittee in early 2013 and discussed site visits at their March, April and May, 2013 meetings. The Homeless Commission took action on May 8, 2013 (M/S/C: Peterson/Chu. Ayes: Becker, Chu, Della-Piana, Gresher, Nado, Panzer, Peterson. Noes: None. Abstentions: None. Absent: Davis, Marasovic.) to recommend that City Council allow the Homeless Commission to conduct 18 site visits during calendar year 2014, in addition to their regular commission meetings. This recommendation was presented to City Council on July 16, 2013. Acting on the City Manager's recommendation, Council postponed its decision on this matter pending review of all the involved Commissions.

The Human Welfare and Community Action Commission (HWCAC) discussed site visits at their September 18, 2013 meeting where they took action (M/S/C: Sood/Reagan. Ayes: Sood, Davila, Flanders, Reagan, Owen, Cross. Noes: None. Abstentions: None. Absent: Woodson (excused), Ramesh (excused), Robinson, McMullan, Porter, Davis ) to approve the staff recommendation with two changes: 1) instead of visiting community agencies two times every six months, the HWCAC recommends six half-day site visits for up to six times per year; and 2) providing transportation for commissioners is optional.

The Housing Advisory Commission (HAC) discussed the staff site visit proposal at their June 6, 2013 meeting and voted unanimously to approve the staff proposal. (M/S/C: Tregub/Casalaina. Ayes: Casalaina, Feller, Kingeter, McDonald for Commissioner Soto-Vigil; Murphy, Sawicki, Skjerping and Tregub. Noes: None. Excused Absence: Wolfe).

The Children Youth and Recreation Commission (CYRC) discussed the staff site visit proposal at their September 23, 2013 meeting and voted unanimously (to approve the staff proposal, but recommended that the term "site visits" be changed to "commission visits to community agencies". M/S/C: (Gebhart/Gerstein/unanimous): Ayes:

Gallegos-Diaz; Gebhart; Gerstein; Gray; Kenney; Smith; Taplin; Waldstein; No's: None; Abstain: None; Absent: Lawrence.)

The Homeless Commission proposes that Commission members organize and oversee visits. However, the Commissioners Manual does not allow the Commission to communicate directly with outside bodies. All communications must go through the Secretary. Visits to agencies are not time-limited. Unlimited visits may create a burden for the community agencies. Adopting the Homeless Commission recommendation will also result in an undetermined number of hours needed to staff visits, since each visit is of an indeterminate length.

### BACKGROUND

Every two years the City of Berkeley issues a Request for Proposals (RFP) and solicits funding applications from community agencies providing a broad range of services to low-income Berkeley residents. Four commissions review proposals and make funding recommendations to City Council. In past years, review commissions made site visits to community agencies in order to observe sites where services are delivered, ask questions about the services clients receive, and meet staff delivering the program. Site visits were eliminated in most recent RFP round in order to reduce the tremendous amount of staff time dedicated to the community agency allocation process.

Each Commission reviews numerous proposals from community agencies. Below is a listing of the number of different sites under each commission's review:

- HAC: 10
- HWCAC: 15
- Homeless Commission: 18
- CYRC: 19

The staff proposal allows for visits to almost all sites in the sixteen-month period between RFP releases. Services sites are wheelchair accessible or accommodations can be made for commissioners or members of the public with mobility impairments.

### RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The staff proposal honors the commissions' desire to visit agencies while minimizing the impact the visits will have on City and community agency staff.

### ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

Staff considered recommending that each commission determine its own site visit schedule. Staff recommends creating the same schedule for all review commissions to create a consistency of approach for community agencies applying to the City for funding.

CONTACT PERSON

Kristen Lee, Community Services Specialist III, HHCS, 981-5427

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

COMMISSION VISITS TO COMMUNITY AGENCIES

WHEREAS, four review commissions (Children Youth and Recreation, Homeless, Housing Advisory, and Human Welfare and Community Action) review applications for funding from community agencies every two years; and

WHEREAS, in the past commissioners made visits to community agencies to review the sites where services are delivered, meet staff, and ask questions regarding the agency's services; and

WHEREAS, in the latest funding round site visits were not included in the commissions' review process; and

WHEREAS, staff of the Health Housing & Community Services Department propose that all commissions adopt the same policies for making site visits; and

WHEREAS, three of the four review commissions agree substantially with the staff proposal.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the four review commissions are authorized to conduct site visits to community agencies according to the following guidelines:

- Site visits will be conducted from July 1, 2013 through November 1, 2014;
- Staff will schedule site visits at all of the sites reviewed by the Commissions, depending on Commission interest;
- Staff will schedule and attend two half-day site visits every six months Three sites will be visited per session;
- The maximum time per location will be 1 hour;
- ADA accessible transportation will be provided for a subcommittee and any members of the public wishing to attend, and the visits would be considered a subcommittee meeting. (The Commission may wish to rotate participation on the subcommittee, so that all Commissioners have an opportunity to visit some of the sites.); and
- Site visits must be completed by November, 2014, prior to initiating the next Request for Proposals (RFP).

