

CSB Gateway - a new, simpler process to establish a partnership agreement

Background

In the fall of 2008, CSB staff engaged in a series of one-on-one conversations, including written survey responses, with Partner Agencies to discuss best approaches to deal with the potential for serious funding constraints and understand ways CSB could improve. The recommendation to have one-on-one dialogues emerged from the CEO dialogues that began in fall 2007. Several financial scenarios for FY09, FY10, and FY11 were shared with agencies. Agencies provided overarching to detailed recommendations about their specific agency and program situations. The following themes emerged:

- < Sustaining current funding levels is paramount to maintaining the current safety net of programs.
- < Partner agencies request continued advocacy efforts by CSB with the City, County and United Way. Partner agencies are willing to participate in these efforts.
- < CSB and partner agencies should consider the feasibility of a shared fundraising campaign with individual donors. Partner agencies are willing to have their development staff work on this type of effort.
- < Partner agencies should consider cost efficiencies of shared back-office functions (management services, human resources, payroll and communications).
- < Partner agencies should consider cost efficiencies of joint purchasing power for health care, staff training, and/or commonly used supplies in shelter and supportive housing.
- < CSB should streamline and simplify administrative processes where possible, especially the Program Review and Certification process and the new Columbus ServicePoint implementation.
- < CSB should concurrently examine, reduce and control its own internal costs. CSB should consider taking cuts before cuts are imposed on agencies.
- < Partner agencies expressed appreciation for inclusion in the dialogue about financial sustainability. Timely and direct communication is essential. Most also believe that only CSB is in a position to establish priorities for funding cuts.
- < Most partner agencies have already implemented significant cost management/reduction strategies.

CSB's trustees considered these recommendations along with the financial scenarios at its annual board retreat in November 2008. The following statements of intent reached board consensus:

- < We will advocate for a call to action for resources.
- < We are present and ready to lead and act in coordination with partner agencies to assure that no one person is without shelter in Columbus, Ohio.
- < We intend to increasingly operate more efficiently and effectively to serve more people.
- < We intend to improve our internal processes to address the reporting burden to partner agencies without reducing accountability.
- < We will prioritize program delivery over maintaining CSB's administrative costs.

CSB immediately began cutting internal costs in order to avoid cuts to Partner Agency programs (over \$150,000 this fiscal year). CSB, with assistance from Partner Agencies, was also able to secure a supplemental 2008 award from the County Commissioners. The Mayor's 2009 budget submitted to City Council recommends CSB funding at approximately current levels through December 2009 and defers cuts to 2010 (an additional \$665K will be needed for continuation funding in 2010). Since the Mayor's budget was issued, an additional shortfall of \$13 million has been announced. City Council will need to determine how to achieve a balanced budget by early

February. Assuming that the City Council does not fund CSB at levels below the Mayor’s recommendation, CSB does not need to enact any Partner Agency program cuts in FY09.

Overview of Recommendations for FY10 Financial Plan

For FY10, CSB staff has prepared a financial plan that considers the following:

- < Now, more than ever, we must preserve critical safety net services.
- < We must collectively advocate for funding to support these critical needs.
- < While we believe that tough economic times will pass, we must be fiscally prudent in order to sustain critical services during this recession.

The plan builds on the following key revenue assumptions:

- 1) Franklin County provides 2009 and 2010 funding at 2008 funding levels, specifically that a supplemental award is provided to cover any Real Estate Transfer Fee shortfalls and assure the funding prior year maximum.
- 2) The City of Columbus provides full funding in 2010 at 2008 ongoing levels.
- 3) United Way of Central Ohio funding in 2010 continues at current levels.
- 4) Private sector giving continues at current levels.
- 5) HUD awards a new grant for supportive housing that will be used for the Rebuilding Lives Leasing program.

Sources of Funds	FY09 Budget 7/1/08–6/30/09	FY10 Estimate 7/1/09–6/30/10	Variance
City of Columbus	3,740,284	3,646,873	(93,411)
Franklin County	3,330,415	3,330,415	-
Federal Funds	166,413	377,572	211,159
Ohio Department of Development	699,545	586,714	(112,831)
United Way	1,438,775	1,393,954	(44,821)
Together Rebuilding Lives	1,100,000	1,100,000	-
Available Carryover	907,829	891,066	(16,763)
Other Funds (including Satisfaction of Restrictions)	390,160	147,094	(243,066)
Total Sources of Funds	11,773,421	11,473,688	(299,733)

If at the minimum, the above-referenced funding is not available to CSB from its key funders, mid-year contract reductions may be necessary in FY10. Every effort will be made to advocate for ongoing funding.

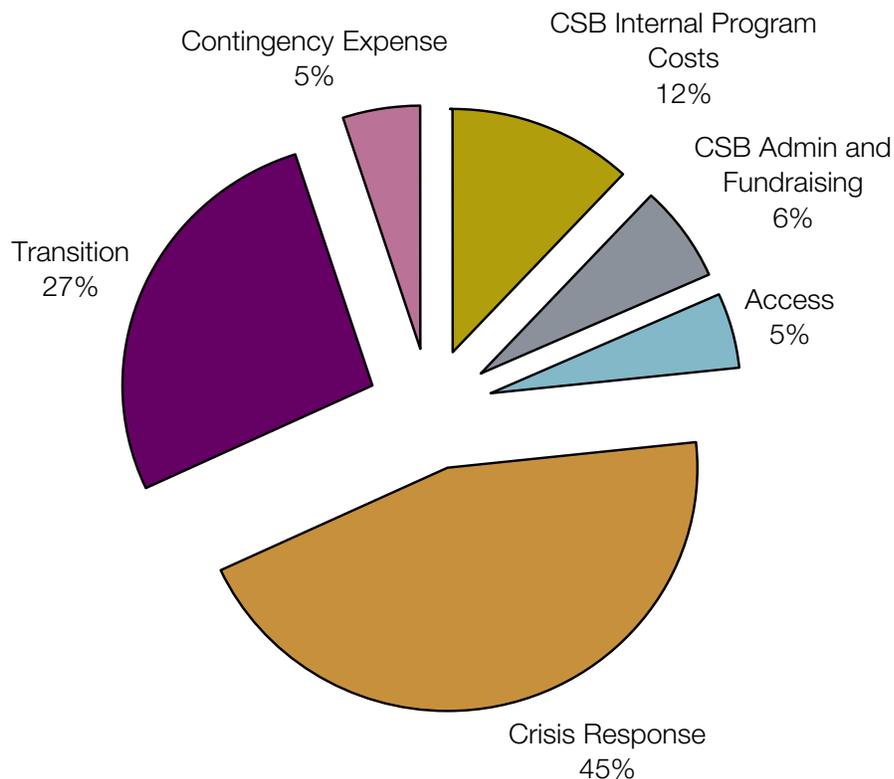
With slightly less funding overall available for FY10, CSB staff have developed an overall spending plan that considers Partner Agency input and CSB trustee guidance. A balanced budget is planned. The following describes the overall financial plan’s intent:

- 1) Make significant reductions to CSB internal costs in order to preserve programs.
- 2) Streamline and reduce administrative burdens on CSB and Partner Agencies.
- 3) Strengthen CSB safety net programs:
 - a. Preserve prevention and outreach programs to reduce shelter demand.
 - b. Strengthen and preserve emergency shelter programs.
 - c. Strengthen and preserve DCA programs to facilitate quick shelter exits.

- 4) Maintain progress on long-term solutions to chronic homelessness:
 - a. Preserve Rebuilding Lives supportive housing units and increase cost-efficiency.
 - b. Expand Rebuilding Lives supportive housing units through the new HUD award.
- 5) Manage resources to preserve funds in the event the recession worsens.
 - a. Place no additional funds in the reserve fund (aka rainy day fund).
 - b. Budget for a contingency to cover unanticipated needs and costs.

Overall Financial Plan	FY09 Budget 7/1/08-6/30/09	FY10 Estimate 7/1/09-6/30/10	Variance
Grants to Agencies & Direct Client Assistance	\$8,463,641	\$8,788,499	\$324,858
CSB Internal Costs	\$2,497,695	\$2,111,505	(\$386,190)
Contingency for unanticipated annual needs & costs (5%)	\$588,671	\$573,684	(\$14,987)
Allocation to Reserve Fund	\$223,414	-	(\$223,414)
Total Funds	\$11,773,421	\$11,473,688	(\$299,733)

FY 10 Expense Break-out



Planned Implementation

The updated Rebuilding Lives plan, released in June 2008, recommended that the community funding processes for homeless programs be streamlined to be more efficient and effective. CSB has been working to identify redundant and burdensome processes that can be eliminated. This new effort will leverage available technology through CSB's updated website as well as be derived from intentional efforts to implement a single, streamlined process for Partner Agency Agreements. The updated application and contracting process will be comprehensive of all programs that receive CSB funding, must adhere to Rebuilding Lives Funder Collaborative requirements, and participate in the local Continuum of Care funding process. As most funding (HUD and CSB) is generally based on historic funding levels, submission of applications sufficient for competitive review creates significant burden to agencies to prepare and for CSB to analyze.

CSB has coined this new process to be: **CSB Gateway - a new, simpler process to establish a partnership agreement.**

The key elements of the CSB Gateway are:

- < Simplified documents and forms
- < Single submission for all programs
- < Updated standards
- < Earlier issuance of contracts
- < Increased Partner Agency input
- < Non-competitive funding for renewal programs
- < Transparency of proposed funding levels
- < Consolidation of programs where possible
- < Compatibility with the Rebuilding Lives plan new strategy implementation

Funding

CSB intends to award funds to maintain a community system of services, shelter, and housing. Progress will continue on the new strategies contained in the Rebuilding Lives plan and endorsed by the Rebuilding Lives Funder Collaborative. Funding will continue to be linked to results that demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency.

Ongoing programs:

- < Funding recommendations for all renewal programs will be available to all agencies at the outset of the application process.
- < Current performance based contracts will remain on a performance basis.
- < Resource Specialists will be consolidated with shelter program agreements.
- < Outreach Program funding will be reviewed for efficiency and combined with shelter contract with one agency providing outreach services.
- < Most existing supportive housing programs will be expected to reduce costs to conform to community norms and/or optimize federal funding, if possible.
- < Programs will be encouraged to implement Rebuilding Lives plan strategies, wherever feasible.
- < Agencies will have the opportunity to discuss funding at one-on-one meetings and to appeal funding amounts via the CSB Board approval process.

New programs:

- < A Rebuilding Lives Leasing program will be added pending grant award from HUD. An “indication of interest” request is currently out for agency response.
- < National Church Residences’ Commons at Buckingham is expected to be a new program in late FY10.
- < A new Capacity Building granting opportunity from the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation (OHF) will be available to supportive housing provider agencies this year and may be incorporated into the CSB application. The award will be contracted directly from OHF to recipients.

Redesign of documents and form submission

The revised process will only collect information prudent and reasonable for CSB’s funding purposes and HUD community requirements. Every attachment and document for the proposal, program agreements, standards, and Continuum of Care process is being evaluated for editing, removal, or consolidation. The end goal is to reduce paperwork for Partner Agencies and CSB thus resulting in cost savings.

CSB is reviewing all documents with the following in mind:

- < Forms will be shorter.
- < Universal forms will be designed and used for all funding processes when possible.
- < Duplicated submissions will be eliminated (currently many programs submit similar information to CSB and the Continuum of Care).
- < Information available through The Columbus Foundation Power Philanthropy will be accessed when appropriate.
- < Information needed for the Continuum of Care annual community submission will be requested during the CSB Gateway process.

CSB’s website is also being redesigned with one location for accessing information and forms for all funding opportunities. The website will guide users through the application process. Applications will not be submitted online due to the cost of purchasing online grants management software.

Application elements

- < FY10 Program Descriptions will be submitted as a supplement highlighting the changes from FY09 for currently funded programs. FY09 Program Descriptions will be attached to FY10 contracts.
- < CSB will provide initial Program Outcome Plan (POP) recommendations for current programs. Agencies will be notified of the suggested POPs at the beginning of the application process. Any concerns can be further discussed at the one-on-one meeting. If an agency is still not satisfied, an appeal may be submitted.

Contracting and compliance monitoring

Every effort is being made to the reduce compliance burden while retaining accountability.

- < CSB is consulting with our attorneys to develop a shorter contract and a process that produces contracts in a timelier manner.

- < CSB is working towards alleviating the administrative burden by revamping the standards and certification process. Unnecessary standards will be eliminated and standards will be consolidated when possible.
- < Partner agencies will be given the opportunity to review, comment, and provide suggestions on the revised contracts and standards prior to implementation by CSB.

One-on-One Partnership Meetings

One-on-one meetings between CSB and each individual agency will be held during March and April. The purpose is to discuss CSB’s needs with regard to investment in each program and to discuss quality improvement suggestions. These meetings are currently being scheduled in order to ensure full participation.

Key Dates	Activities
1/27/09	CSB board review and approval of the FY10 financial plan
2/6/09	Application materials released to agencies
2/13/09	Application meeting to discuss forms
2/17/09	Release of proposed program funding levels to community
2/17/09	Recommended POPs forwarded to agencies
3/13/09	Completed proposals due to CSB
3/30-4/23/09	One-on-One meetings between CSB & Partner Agencies
May	Agency review and comment period for FY10 standards and partnership agreements
5/15/09	All appeals resolved
5/26/09	CSB Board approval of funding decisions
Early June	Partnership agreements issued