

Maricopa Association of Governments  
Social Services Block Grant Explanation of Draft Allocations

Summary

- The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) has the responsibility to recommend \$4.1 million in Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funding annually.
- The MAG Human Services Coordinating Committee (HSCC) and the MAG Human Services Technical Committee (HSTC) have completed an extensive assessment of the region's needs and have ranked the services funded by SSBG.
- It is proposed to shift \$22,402 from low ranking services to high ranking services in order to maximize this resource and best meet the region's needs.
- This shift increases funding for shelter, case management, home delivered meals and 13 other services.
- This shift reduces funding of five services that exclusively benefit persons with disabilities and persons with developmental disabilities. Clients of services proposed to be reduced may be eligible for other services, including those proposed to be increased.
- Public comment is encouraged and may be submitted to [rbrito@mag.maricopa.gov](mailto:rbrito@mag.maricopa.gov), by fax to (602) 254-6490 or by phone at (602) 452-5029 by January 7, 2009.

History

MAG has been under contract with the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) to develop allocation recommendations for SSBG for more than 30 years. When the funding has increased or decreased significantly in the past, the allocation recommendations have been changed to make best use of the available dollars. While a change in SSBG funding is not expected at this time, adjustments have been proposed in response to the increased need for specific services and reductions of other funding sources. The draft allocations are being offered for public comment now through January 7, 2009.

Each year, MAG recommends allocations for \$4.1 million in SSBG funding that supports services for four main target groups; adults, families and children; elderly; persons with disabilities; and persons with developmental disabilities. HSCC, with the assistance of HSTC, has the main responsibility for developing these allocations with final approval from the MAG Regional Council.

DES contracts with nonprofit agencies and local government to provide services in the four target group areas. The allocation recommendations from MAG affect only the locally planned portion of SSBG dollars received from the federal government through the State of Arizona. The entire State receives \$31.5 million each year. All the councils of governments in Arizona hold contracts with DES to recommend the services that will be the most responsive to the needs of their particular region.

Methodology

HSTC and HSCC have completed an extensive survey of the need for services in each of the four target groups. This assessment included reports on demographics, wait lists, the impact of services, and the number of people estimated to be eligible for services. Exercises like zero-based budgeting and the ranking of each service provided different perspectives on how the

allocation recommendations could be developed. Ultimately, a funding formula was developed on the basis of the service rankings.

All services supported by SSBG were ranked and split into five groups. Services that ranked the lowest, or Group E, received a 20 percent reduction proportional to their last allocation. Services in Group D received a 10 percent reduction proportional to their last allocation. The reductions totaled \$22,402. Services in Group C were held harmless and did not receive any reductions or increases in funding. Services in Group B received one third of the \$22,402 increase proportional to their last allocation. Services that were ranked the highest in Group A received two thirds of the \$22,402 increase proportional to their last allocation. Please refer to the attached excel spreadsheet.

Five services within the Persons with Disabilities Target Group and Persons with Developmental Disabilities Target Group were reduced while nine services in the Adults, Families and Children Target Group; three services in the Elderly Target Group; one service in the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Target Group; and two services in the Persons with Disabilities Target Group were increased. While most of the previous allocation recommendations are still responsive to the region's needs, moderate shifting of funds will help meet emerging needs brought on by the downturn of the economy.

The allocation recommendations were last changed in 2002 when funding was reduced at the federal level. At that time, the services were prioritized to reflect basic needs. While services like occupational therapy were considered important, they were not funded so other services more critical to basic needs could continue to be offered. In this latest revision of allocation recommendations, services have been prioritized further to respond to reflect crisis management strategies. A crisis is being experienced by many as the economy continues to place more people in need while agencies receive less funding from funders facing incredible budget shortfalls.

Local programs report not only increased demand for services, but also greater demand from people who have never requested assistance before. As a result, services such as shelter, case management and home delivered meals have received recommendations for the highest increases in SSBG. The allocation recommendation revisions are part of an evolving effort to ensure SSBG funding is maximized to the fullest extent possible. SSBG is a flexible and important funding source. As such, it can be used in innovative ways to assist those in greatest need.

#### Public Comment

Public comment is encouraged and may be submitted to [rbrito@mag.maricopa.gov](mailto:rbrito@mag.maricopa.gov), by fax to (602) 254-6490 or by phone at (602) 452-5029 by January 7, 2009. HSTC will meet on Thursday, January 8, 2009, at 1:00 p.m. in the Saguaro Room to review the public comment received and take action on the allocation recommendations to be forwarded to HSCC for their next meeting on Tuesday, January 20, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. in the Mesquite Room. All meetings take place at MAG, 302 North 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, and are open to the public. Please contact Amy St. Peter, MAG Human Services Manager, at (602) 452-5049 with any questions.