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DYCD Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) Concept Paper Clarifications

We appreciate the feedback we received in response to the NDA Concept Paper released on March 7, 2013. Upon review of the responses, DYCD is offering the following clarifications. All responses will be taken into account as the NDA Request for Proposals (RFP) is developed. It is anticipated that the NDA RFP will be released in the fall of 2013, following each NDA's needs assessment and identification of priorities. See the NDA Concept Paper for further details.

NDA Configuration

The NDA boundaries were configured out of the qualifying Neighborhood Tabulation Areas (NTAs) to conform as close as possible to the current NDA boundaries. As noted in the NDA Concept Paper, reliable socioeconomic data for a single census tract are no longer available,¹ which precludes DYCD from using the current criteria to update the NDAs. However, the City's Department of City Planning has begun to aggregate U.S. census data of the American Community Survey to create a geographic unit large enough to report reliable socioeconomic data, i.e., the NTA. The NTAs have features which make them suitable for use as the basis of NDAs: 1) the census data utilized for socioeconomic statistics are updated annually, making future adjustments and revisions to the NDAs easy and transparent and 2) the NTAs broadly reflect historic NYC neighborhoods, within the constraints imposed by the fact that census tracts, the building blocks of NTAs, may not perfectly align with neighborhoods which change over time.

To qualify for inclusion, an NTA had to meet the following conditions: 1) 20 percent or more of its residents are poor, defined according to the federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) statute, 42 U.S.C. 9902, as persons living below 125 percent of the official poverty threshold, and 2) has a minimum of 4,000 poor residents. **DYCD notes that while at least 80 percent of program participants must reside in the NDA the provider proposes to serve, 20 percent may reside outside the NDA.** Thus, providers may serve poor persons in the surrounding communities.

DYCD has revised the visual appearance of the maps to make them easier to read and corrected the configuration of NDA 13 in Brooklyn.² Revised maps are posted on DYCD's website.

¹ In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau replaced the comprehensive decennial survey with two surveys: 1) an abbreviated 10-year survey to collect basic demographic information on the American population and 2) a continuously administered survey, the American Community Survey (ACS), to collect more detailed information such as socioeconomic data. The ACS is administered to small samples of households and, therefore, does not deliver reliable data at the census tract level. Five years of accumulated data are required to get reliable data at the NTA level.

² NTA BK23 (West Brighton) in Brooklyn was mistakenly included in Brooklyn NDA 13 as a qualifying NTA. In NTA BK23, only 13.9 percent of the resident population lives below 125 percent of the poverty threshold. For inclusion, the cut-off was 20 percent or higher.

Some specific comments are set out and answered below.

1. *Comment: Change the boundary of Bronx NDA 8 to include the part of Kingsbridge that was excluded and all of Marble Hill.*

The part of Kingsbridge that was excluded is located in an NTA that did not meet the criteria for inclusion in an NDA. Marble Hill, located in the Borough of Manhattan for Census purposes, is included in Manhattan NDA 12. As noted above, residents of both Kingsbridge and Marble Hill may seek services in programs located within Bronx NDA 8.

2. *Comment: Use the criteria of persons living at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty standard to determine NDAs.*

The CSBG statute requires that DYCD use the criterion of persons living below 125 percent of poverty to identify NDAs.

3. *Comment: The maps showing the NDAs are difficult to read.*

More detailed maps have been posted along with this narrative.

General Program Issues

1. *Comment: Providers should have maximum flexibility in selecting outcome indicators.*

Providers do have this flexibility. A complete list of possible indicators will be provided in the RFP. Providers may select the indicator or indicators from this list that are most appropriate for their program models. Not all indicators from this list are required.

2. *Comment: Providers should be given flexibility to determine program models.*

As long as required program elements are included, providers may develop their own program designs.

3. *Comment: Providers should have flexibility in the extent to which they are expected to meet outcomes not wholly under their control (e.g., providers should receive credit for helping an applicant submit paperwork for housing; they cannot ensure that housing will be secured).*

DYCD takes such factors into account when setting outcomes and achievement targets.

Program Issues: Educational Support Program Area

1. *Comment: Programs should be funded on a twelve-month basis.*

The proposer will receive funding annually and be expected to submit a twelve-month budget. While programs will operate during the school year, funds may be used for start-up and program development during the summer.

2. *Comment: Eliminate the requirement that programming take place only during out-of-school hours.*

It is intended that educational support programs take place outside the school day. Programs will provide activities that complement, but do not replicate school-day activities, while providing a safe place for youth during hours while parents may be at work.

3. *Comment: Providers should have discretion in choosing incentives for sustained program participation.*

Providers do have flexibility in choosing incentives. The incentives listed in the NDA Concept Paper are only examples.

4. *Comment: All students in targeted NDAs should be eligible for program participation. If this is not possible, students who are at risk of dropping out of school should be eligible in addition to students who are struggling academically.*

The definition of “struggling student” is broad and may include students who are at risk of dropping out of school.

5. *Comment: Collection of participant report cards should not be required, but if so, the Department of Education should be mandated to provide access to them.*

Providing report cards should be among the program expectations for students and their parents. This expectation should be clearly communicated at the beginning of the program and could be included in a written agreement between the provider and the parent.

6. *Comment: Clarify whether parochial schools may serve as locations for services under the Educational Support program area.*

Yes, parochial as well as Charter schools may serve as locations for services under the *Educational Support program area*.

7. *Comment: Clarify which service components are required.*

Required service components will be identified in the RFP.

8. *Comment: Clarify whether all program guidelines apply to both middle school and high school youth.*

Programs for middle school and high school youth will be described separately in the RFP. Each program type will have its own guidelines.

Program Issues: Adult Literacy Program Area

1. *Comment: English as a Second Language (ESOL) instruction should be included under this program area.*

DYCD will consider the inclusion of ESOL.

2. *Comment: Require proven success in the field of adult education.*

DYCD will require proposers to describe and document successful relevant experience in the RFP.

3. *Comment: Extend hours to four nights/week for a total of twelve hours weekly.*

It is within each proposer's discretion to propose such a program design, provided the hours of service meet DYCD's required minimum hours.

4. *Comment: Job readiness skills should be included.*

It is within each proposer's discretion to propose to address job readiness skills, provided other DYCD requirements are met.

Program Issues: Healthy Families Program Area

1. *Comment: Concerned that the subcategories will compete against one another. Especially concerned that there will be inadequate funding for seniors.*

Providers may provide general family support services or may focus on immigrants, seniors, or persons in need of housing assistance, according to the program priorities which will be set by the NDA needs assessment process and reflected in the RFP. This is not a change from the previous RFP.

2. *Comment: Clarify whether funds can be used for individuals and families who are currently homeless.*

While the housing subcategory provides services to families who already have housing, homeless individuals and families may be served through other service categories within the initiative. For example, as appropriate, homeless families might be served through the General Family Support subcategory and homeless youth might be served through the Educational Support program area or through the Disconnected Youth program area.

3. *Comment: Restore Housing as a separate program area.*

Housing is a separate subcategory under the Healthy Families program area and housing services may be provided if it is a priority area of the NDA.

4. *Comment: There should be outcomes related to helping individuals retain housing benefits through recertification assistance.*

Assistance with recertification would be a legitimate program activity; outcomes will be clarified in the RFP.

5. *Comment: For each subcategory, clarify whether all services will be required.*

Required program elements will be identified in the RFP.

6. *Comment: For immigrants, other types of applications/petitions should be included in the outcomes.*

Other applications/petitions will be included and this will be clarified in the RFP.

7. *Comment: Can we apply for multiple programs under Healthy Families?*

Yes; providers may propose for multiple programs as long as they have been identified as priorities through the NDA needs assessment process. A separate proposal will be required for each program.

Program Issues: Disconnected Youth Program Area

1. *Comment: Clarify whether youth can attend both an NDA Disconnected Youth and an Out-of-School Youth (OSY) program.*

No; this would constitute a duplication of services.

2. *Comment: Broaden eligibility to youth aged 17-24.*

Disconnected youth programs would serve youth aged 16-24.

3. *Comment: Define disconnected youth.*

A disconnected youth is one who is not working and not in school.

Other

1. *Comment: Clarify how funds will be utilized when the funding level for an NDA does not lend itself to the NDA priorities. (Since there is a requirement that programs be funded at a minimum level of \$50,000, if an NDA has \$94,000 in funding, it implies that only one priority can be funded.)*

DYCD would make adjustments during the contract negotiation process. For example, two program areas might be funded at levels slightly below \$50,000.

2. *Comment: Allow proposers to propose citywide services in one proposal.*

Pursuant to the federal CSBG statute, NDA programs are intended to be neighborhood-based, community development programs serving areas prioritized by a needs assessment process that incorporates community input and which is particular to each NDA. As such, services are tailored to the neighborhoods in which they are located and citywide service proposals are inappropriate.

3. *Comment: Can we submit a proposal as a for-profit organization?*

No; only nonprofit organizations will be eligible to apply.

4. *Comment: Include funding for assistance in all areas affected by Hurricane Sandy.*

In keeping with the requirements of this initiative, providers may exercise their discretion to propose program designs appropriate for individuals and families residing in areas affected by Hurricane Sandy. For example, under the Healthy Families program area, providers could choose to focus on a population comprising persons affected by Hurricane Sandy. (See page 1 regarding NDA Configuration.)