

PROCESS FOR AWARDING GRANTS

The Commission allocates grants to:

- Nonprofit organizations
- Public agencies
- Schools and public libraries
- Community groups
- Child care centers, family child care homes, and individual providers (Ready, Set, Read grants and professional development financial stipends only)

FUNDING PROCESSES:

The First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission is committed to fostering innovative programs that address the diverse needs of our county's children. Through careful consideration, grants are awarded to the organizations that best serve those needs.

Commission funds are allocated, whenever possible, to build on existing efforts, leverage funding, fill gaps in services, and to create a system of convenient and affordable programs for young children and families.

The Commission has worked extensively with parents, community members, experts in child development, service providers and local government to implement its Strategies through four funding processes:

1. Competitive Grants

To fund programs through a competitive grantmaking process, the Commission employs these steps:

- a) The Commission's Program and Evaluation Committee or Executive Committee determines that a competitive grantmaking process will be utilized for a particular Strategy; the full Commission discusses and votes on this process at a monthly Commission meeting.
- b) Commission staff develop a Request for Proposal or application.
- c) The funding opportunity is advertised (e.g., on the Commission's Web site, funding alert mailings, and local media outlets, etc.).
- d) An information session is held to answer questions and explain application guidelines.
- e) A review committee is convened generally comprised of at least one Commissioner, Commission staff, and community readers.
- f) The review Committee provides funding recommendations for the Commission's Program and Evaluation Committee (PEC) or Executive Committee to review and discuss. The full Commission reviews, discusses, and approves all funding decisions. (In the case of Community Grants, a PEC member participates on the review panel, so that funding recommendations go from the review panel directly to the Commission for final approval.)
- g) All Committee and Commission meetings are public meetings and include public comment.
- h) Protest periods are included in all competitive grant processes. This does not apply to community grants.

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2. Meet to Reach Mutual Agreement

The Meet to Reach Mutual Agreement (MRMA) process is a non-competitive grantmaking process that requires organizations to collaborate and work more efficiently. The MRMA process follows these steps:

- a) The Commission's Program and Evaluation Committee (PEC) determines that an MRMA process will be utilized for a particular Strategy; the full Commission discusses and votes on this process at a monthly Commission meeting.
- b) Guidelines are developed for the MRMA process.
- c) The Commission invites appropriate service agencies (nonprofit and public agencies) to develop a plan to better serve children, avoiding duplication of services and inefficiencies.
- d) The plan is submitted to the Program and Evaluation Committee for review.
- e) PEC recommends funding the plan at a Commission meeting.
- f) The full Commission reviews, discusses and approves the plan.
- g) All Committee and Commission meetings are public meetings and include public comment.

3. Community Participatory Process

The Community Participatory Process is about building community support and community involvement. Through its Community Participatory Process, the Commission works with community members or experts in a particular professional field (e.g., early childhood development) to develop programs that meet local needs.

- a) The Commission's Program and Evaluation Committee (PEC) develops the Community Participatory Process for a particular Strategy. A detailed "map" of the process is developed and presented to the full Commission to review, discuss and approve at a monthly Commission meeting.
- b) The Commission reaches out to the appropriate stakeholders to participate in the process. For example, to fund a Family Resource and Learning Center in Antioch, the outreach would extend to Antioch residents and community agencies to participate as stakeholders in the process.
- c) The Commission provides participants with a framework to determine how to implement one of our Strategies, which may include identifying appropriate agencies to operate programs.
- d) Throughout the process, the Commission provides support and/or training to ensure the process is progressing. The Commission may also provide a facilitator to help the process move forward.
- e) The stakeholder group submits its plan for service delivery to the Program and Evaluation Committee for review.
- f) PEC recommends funding the plan at Commission meeting.
- g) The full Commission reviews, discusses and approves the plan.
- h) All Committee and Commission meetings are public meetings and include public comment.

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4. Proposals by Invitation Only

While Contra Costa has a variety of programs serving children, there may only be one agency specializing in a service that no other organization is capable of providing. In those cases, the Commission will invite an organization to apply for funds to meet an identified need.

For example, to address the needs of parents with disabilities, the Commission engaged Through the Looking Glass, the national expert on parents with disabilities based in Berkeley, to apply for Parent Education and Support funds and expand its high quality services in Contra Costa County.

- a) The Commission's Program and Evaluation Committee or Executive Committee determines that a "Proposal by Invitation Only" process will be utilized for a particular Strategy.
- b) Commission staff research and identify viable agencies and provide the agencies with a framework for developing a proposal.
- c) The proposal is discussed and approved at a PEC or Executive Committee meeting.
- d) PEC or the Executive Committee recommends the proposal at a Commission meeting.
- e) The full Commission reviews, discusses and approves the plan.
- f) All Committee and Commission meetings are public meetings and include public comment.

For all grants except Family Friendly Community and Ready, Set, Read Grants, all agencies are required to provide an audit demonstrating fiscal soundness prior to going into contract with the Commission.

The Commission is committed to funding its Strategies for the long-term. The Commission's intent is to establish long-term relationships with the agencies selected to implement its Strategies, if these agencies are in contract compliance and achieving desired results. The Commission's Community Grants Strategy is the only competitive process and new projects are chosen annually.