

Walley, Laura

From: Ken Swanson <krazedkeeshond@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 21, 2013 11:58 AM
To: Community Development
Cc: Gomez, Janel
Subject: Comments regarding Lake County CDBG Initial Grant Recommendations
Attachments: CDBG Appeal Letter.doc

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments regarding the initial recommendations for Lake County CDBG Public Service funding. As the President of the Board of Directors of COOL Ministries, I am requesting reconsideration of COOL's score and the resulting zero funding recommendation for the 2013 program year. Please find my letter attached. If you have any questions for me, please contact me either by email or phone at any time.

Best regards,

Kenneth L. Swanson
President of the Board of Directors
COOL Ministries
www.coolministries.org

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January 21, 2013

Mr. Ray Rose, Chairman
Community Development Commission
500 West Winchester Road, Unit 101
Libertyville, IL 60048

RE: Lake County CDBG Public Service initial funding recommendations

Dear Mr. Rose,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments regarding the initial recommendations for Lake County CDBG Public Service funding. As the President of the Board of Directors of COOL Ministries, I am requesting reconsideration of COOL's score and the resulting zero funding recommendation for the 2013 program year.

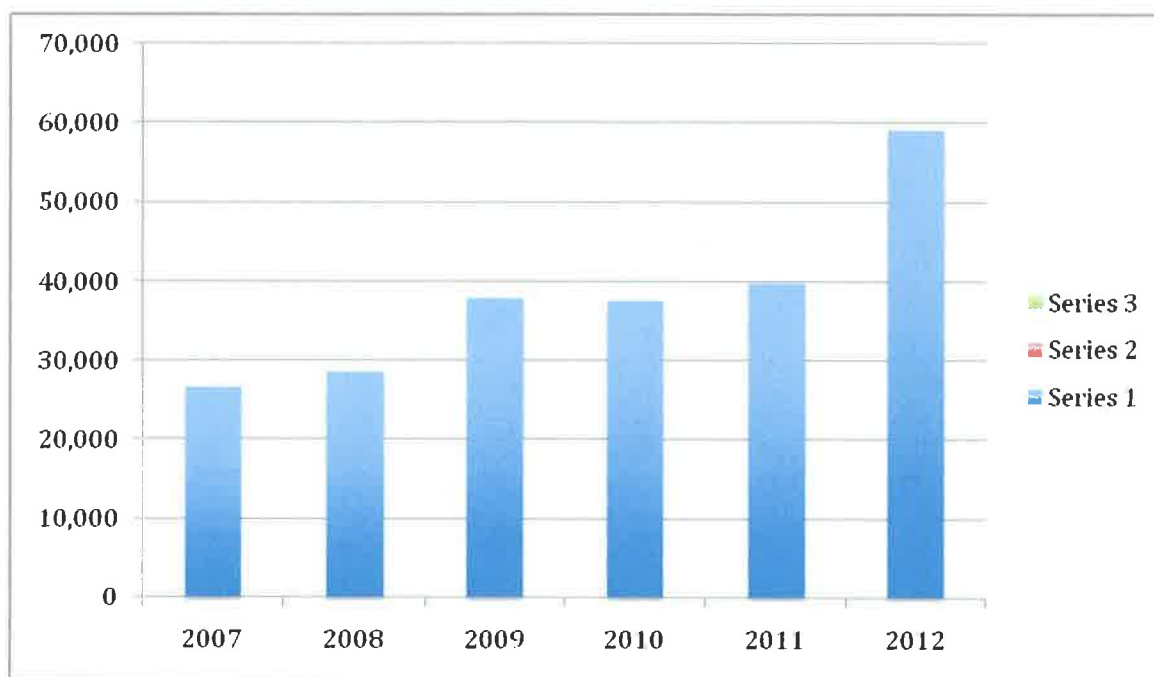
Our Goal category is 3.2.1 – Basic Food & Nutrition Needs (there seems to be some errors in the Goals column of the 2013 Applications Recommendations Table we received). Of particular concern are COOL's scores in the 'Community Need' and 'Lake County Impact' categories.

Let me be clear: the primary activity of COOL Ministries is the operation of our two food pantries in Waukegan and Ingleside. We also operate a family housing program for families with children who have become homeless, and we consider this program quite important. But COOL's first program in 1983 was a food pantry, and serving our pantry clientele remains our number one focus in time, energy and finances. We are committed to providing not just food, but nutritious and balanced meals; we provide four days worth of breakfast, lunch and dinner for each member of a household, including specialty foods for those with food allergies and those requiring cardiac or diabetic diets. Under Goal 3.2.1, the need described includes both reducing food insecurity *and* improving healthy eating.

The CDBG grants are awarded under the details of the five-year Consolidated Plan, and COOL also operates using a five-year Strategic Plan. While each of our

pantries serve residents from anywhere in Lake County, we recognize that our pantries are located in the northern half of the county (Waukegan in the northeast and Ingleside in the northwest). One element of our strategic plan is to open a third pantry geographically located in the southern half of the county. However, before we take this step we must be assured that we can fully provide for the needs at our existing pantries – and those needs have grown dramatically over each of the last few years.

In 2011, the COOL Food Pantries served a record number of people and meals: 39,709 persons with food enough for 476,508 meals. In 2012, our pantries served 59,109 persons providing more than 709,000 meals. We broke our 2011 records by early September, and set a record for a single month by serving over 6,000 persons in October. The growth in need for food assistance is both dramatic and continuing at a high rate, as demonstrated by our numbers served since 2007:



Persons served by year: 26,650 in 2007; 28,497 in 2008; 37,877 in 2009; 37,578 in 2010; 39,709 in 2011; and 59,109 in 2012. **Note:** the "Five-Year Measurable Goal" of the Consolidated Plan calls for serving the basic food and nutrition needs of 100,000 Lake County residents. The COOL Food Pantries nearly met that goal in 2011 & 2012 alone (98,818).

In 2012, the COOL Food Pantries had an increase in persons served of 48.8% over 2011 – a difference of 19,400 more people! There was a huge increase in the amount of food COOL distributed in 2012 as well. In fact, 404,643 more pounds of food were distributed in 2012 as compared to 2011. This represents an increase in food issued of more than 98% over the prior year. In other words, in 2012 COOL

managed to feed more people than ever before and at the same time gave our visitors more food with every visit than in previous years.

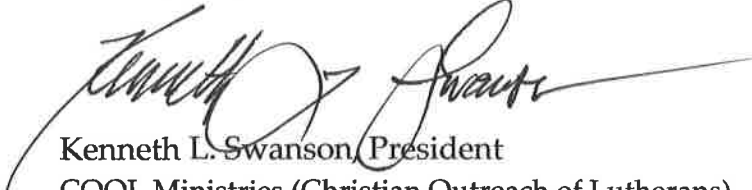
One of the reasons we have thus far been able to keep up with the increased demands is our strategic partnerships – in particular our partnership with the Northern Illinois Food Bank. We have been chosen by them to receive donated bakery and produce items directly from retailers in our areas, rather than it going to their warehouses and being redistributed. This arrangement gets fresher, healthier food products into the hands of our guests, minimizes spoilage, and also minimizes the costs for both organizations. We have great respect for what NIFB does, and a tremendous working relationship with them. However, we are confused by the fact that an organization working to serve the same goals as COOL was recommended for an award when we were not.

I think it is important to point out two facts in this regard. First, the COOL Food Pantries directly assist those individuals in need. Providing basic food and nutritional support for families in need is our principal purpose. By contrast, for all their wonderful work, no individual in need can go to the NIFB and receive direct assistance.

Second, despite the donations of food from churches, food drives, and even from retailers, COOL still must purchase a great deal of food (especially meat) in order to distribute balanced meals. The vast majority of this food is purchased from NIFB. Therefore, of any CDBG money granted to the COOL pantries, a large portion would benefit not only COOL but also indirectly NIFB since it would be used to purchase food from them. On the other hand, grants to NIFB would not provide any traceable benefit to COOL's pantries.

Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" At COOL Ministries, we feed the hungry and assist families in need. We respectfully ask you to reconsider the recommended award for COOL, and grant us funding to assist the low- and moderate-income residents of Lake County meet their basic food and nutrition needs.

Best regards,



Kenneth L. Swanson, President
COOL Ministries (Christian Outreach of Lutherans)

Draft 2013 Annual Action Plan
Public Comment
Highland Park Community Nursery School & Day Care Center



Dear Lake County Community Development:

On behalf of Highland Park Community Nursery School & Day Care Center I am submitting this written public comment for reconsideration of our request for funding. We had requested funding under 3.3.3 Security of Family and Social Stability.

When considering our request it seemed the fact that we are located in Highland Park was a detriment to our efforts to secure funding. At the review of our proposal it was mentioned we needed to serve a larger population. The number of clients we serve is mandated by the Department of Children and Family Services. If we have openings, we serve families and children on a first come first served basis. While we continue to, and have had a continuous waiting list for the past 20 years attests to the fact that a need exists in our community for affordable care for low income working families. A majority of our clients live and/or work in Highwood (population 5,405; 56.9% Hispanic) in service industry jobs that are low paying. About 80.3% of Highwood residents work in the service industry. Because these are minimum wage jobs, parents cannot afford to pay the actual cost of care whether it is provided in Highland Park, Round Lake or Waukegan. The location of the center should not interfere with the fact there is an extreme need for services by the very residents the Community Development Block Grant was intended to serve.

Highland Park and Highwood are part of the Lake County service area. We provide much needed services to the Lake County community and improve the livelihoods of its residents. Families who have used our services have been able to move out of low paying service jobs to start their own businesses with the skills they have acquired, and send their children to college who are now a vital economic presence in the County. Childcare services enable parents to work to improve their economic situations while at the same time prepares their children for academic success that leads to economic security.

By serving a economically diverse population, mentoring of our clients is possible, thus expanding what they think they are capable of and how to accomplish these goals. With this awareness, parents come to believe their children can attend college and have a better and brighter future. Without this diversity, families may not be aware of all the possibilities and the potential for growth that exists. As a first generation college student myself who was raised from a poor working family, I speak to you from personal experience and hope that you will reconsider our request.

I also invite you to visit our program to experience the collaboration that takes place between families and our communities.

Sincerely,
Lisa Adelmund,

Highland Park Community Nursery School & Day Care Center