

2006-2007 Fiscal Year Budget Recommendations Central Citizens Budget Advisory Committee

Process

In general, the Citizen Budget Advisory Committees (CBACs) thought it was a better process this year. The inclusion of a CBAC member on most of the outcome teams was a crucial and beneficial addition to the process. It allowed for citizen input from the start of the process. The process this year also gave the CBACs more information and allowed them to give better informed and more thoughtful input.

We appreciated each of you meeting with the Central Citizen Budget Advisory Committee early in the process to discuss your priorities, issues, and concerns on the budget. It gave us good information and other points of view to consider.

We also saw some improvement in program descriptions and outcome measurements. We are pleased to see this. There is still a lot of room for improvement, and we recommend a continued focus on improvement in this area. One way we recommend to improve this is to include benchmarking data within the outcomes (i.e., how do the outcomes stated measure against what is known regarding “best practice” outcomes). This gives everyone a better measurement when comparing program effectiveness.

One of the things we expected to see this year was more joint program offers. It was disappointing that a greater focus was not made in this area. This is an area where we believe there are a number of efficiencies to be gained. Departments working together to eliminate duplication of services and using best-known practices would show that the County is doing everything it can to deliver services effectively and is using its limited resources efficiently.

Overview

The Central Citizens Budget Advisory Committee (CCBAC) submits our recommendations on the 06-07 budget with the knowledge that tough choices need to be made. The realities of the current fiscal situation make choices more difficult and more important.

Recommendations

Specifically, we recommend that the Board fund both offers for funding the Office of Citizen Involvement. Currently, there is a large imbalance of funding for public awareness versus public involvement. While the Public Affairs Office has been growing, the Office of Citizen Involvement has been cut. The small amount of funding necessary to fund one additional person to the Office will allow the office to run more efficiently and create greater public involvement at this critical time. Greater public involvement is crucial to gaining citizen trust and support for County government.

Other specific recommendations are to move forward with the East County Justice Facility and move out of the Hansen Building. We would also like to see an emphasis on supporting community justice alternatives.

With the ITAX going away, a number of programs will be left without funding. We consider some of those programs to be vital. The most vital of these are mental health services and the long-term care needs of elders and the disabled. It is difficult to see how this can be accomplished with the limited general funds available, especially with all of the other important programs delivered by the County. Rather than pitting the needs of elders versus younger, which is a slippery slope creating a number of problems in the future, we suggest that the County seek other funding for programs.

The Central CBAC knows that Multnomah County delivers vital programs to the citizens. With a greater emphasis on departments working together to most efficiently and effectively deliver those programs, the Central CBAC is open to supporting greater funding for those programs from the public. We prefer that other sources be sought first, but we know that there may be more funds needed than can be raised in other ways.

Thank you for considering our input to this year's budget adoption.

The Central Citizens Budget Advisory Committee

Brad McLean, Chair

Michele Biehler, County Management & Community Services

Len Freiser, Non Departmental

Dean Gisvold, Library Services

Jim Lasher, Sheriff's Office

Joe Marrone, Community Justice

Xander Patterson, Office of School and Community Partnerships

Bob Pung, District Attorney

Alan Scally, Sheriff's Office

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Jay Thiemeyer, Health Services

Bob Thomas, Community Justice

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Dick Wegner, District Attorney

Helen Williams, County Management & Community Services