



**Baltimore City Children and Youth Fund
Report to Mayor and City Council
July 2019
(Submitted August 20, 2019)**

This report covers activities conducted in July for the Baltimore Children & Youth Fund (BCYF).

The BCYF consultant team prioritized preparing for the end of the grant cycle on August 31, seeking approvals for the Year 2 grantmaking strategy and transition planning into the permanent intermediary, and providing technical assistance to grantees.

Year 1 Closeout

The BCYF Year 1 grant cycle is currently scheduled to end on August 31, 2019. The team has recommended offering grantees a 60-day no-cost extension to complete their grant activities given the delays around contracting and disbursements. Grantees on schedule to complete their activities by August 31, 2019 would still close out on time and submit their final report on September 30, 2019. We expect approximately 35 grantees will request the no-cost extension which extends their grant cycle to October 31, 2019, with the final report due November 15, 2019.

Grantees' difficulties with completing accurate expense reports and providing documentation of expenses has slowed the review and approval of quarterly reports. As of July 31, we were still working with 39 grantees whose first and/or second quarter reports required revisions. Adding the technical assistance specifically around expense reports and the wrap up of the City audit, thus freeing team resources, resulted in the approval of 11 grantees' first and second quarterly reports and disbursements.

As noted in earlier reports, the challenges are not limited to small organizations that may be unfamiliar with the documentation required for a public grant. The 39 grantees include mid-sized nonprofits that have previously received grant funding, large well-resourced organizations, and fiscal sponsors. Organizations frequently cite lack of capacity as the reason for delays in revising expense reports. One fiscal sponsor indicated that the organization issued as many checks in the first six months of 2019 as it had in the prior two years combined. Another organization had staff turnover in a few key positions and remarked that unless a compliance officer from the Fund could come and complete the reports, it would be several weeks before they would be able to make the revisions. These challenges will likely have a significant impact on the timing of the closeout of the Year 1 portfolio. (It is important to note that other government grant programs have found similar challenges with grantees in Baltimore, especially around the need for capacity building.)

Grantmaking Strategy and Transition Planning

The MOU between the City and ABC calls for BCYF to transition to a permanent institution, reflecting the recommendation of the BCYF Task Force to form an independent organization with an independent governing body. The BCYF consultant team continued to work with the City and ABC's Board of Directors to gain approval for the Year 2 grantmaking and transition strategy.

The recommendation is to extending continuation grants to all Year 1 grantees, except those deemed non-compliant through administrative review. Given the fairly significant delays in the timing of first disbursements for many grantees, due in large part to the time required to bring grantees into compliance with contractual requirements for funding (i.e. requisite levels of insurance coverage, background checks, and fiscal sponsorship arrangements), the majority of grantees delayed the start of their programs until late 2018/early 2019. A one-year continuation grant would afford grantees the opportunity to perform and demonstrate the impact of their work under more optimum conditions, while also affording BCYF more time to learn from the performance and results of its first portfolio.

The continuation grants would be complemented by a Year 2 impact/programmatic evaluation (focused on grantees of the core portfolio), as well as the roll-out of capacity building and other more targeted grants opportunities in 2020. The outcomes of the Year 2 impact evaluation and Year 2 portfolio performance would heavily inform the assessment and design of the long-term grantmaking strategy of the Fund. To continue offering wide-reaching RFPs similar to Year 1 would establish the Fund as simply another pool of dollars for organizations to tap, defeating the intention of the BCYF Task Force for the Fund to provide much-needed capacity building to organizations.

Technical Assistance Update

Five small group workshops were offered to BCYF grantees in July 2019 focused on data and program evaluation to support identified capacity needs. These workshops included: Program Theory of Change and Logic Model, SMART Metrics and MEAL Plan, Data System and Tools, Do No Harm: A Trauma-Informed Approach to Data Collection, and Measuring Social Emotional Learning.

In anticipation of the close of the Year 1, the BCYF technical assistance team invited grantees to a full-day Summer Institute to be held at Johns Hopkins' Bloomberg School of Public Health on August 17. Additional details about the event will be provided in the August City Hall report.

Given the increased demand for technical assistance, it is estimated that up to an additional \$200K to \$300K will need to be spent for technical assistance. The technical assistance providers (consultants) who have been working with the grantees since the beginning, will play a significant role in the support of grantees through the no cost extension review and the more detailed Continuation Review. This kind of TA review is essential for capacity building.