



**Audit of Human Social Services  
Agency Review**

**FY2012/13 Volunteer Surveys**

**December 2013**



**City of Tempe Internal Audit Office  
TCC Agency Review Process  
FY 2012/12 Volunteer Surveys**

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Was asked to participate by the staff at TCC	The ability to provide input and continually improve upon the process to ensure a fair and consistent distribution of funds that supports the most critical needs of our community.	Can't say. I am not sure how it is being run this year.	Yes – but not right now. Have a lot going on	If this process were to change from TCC I would highly recommend that the city bring this in house. I know from being a part of the community that the largest recipient of city funds wants to take this process over. That would completely remove any independence of the process and make this a political nightmare for our city council. Please leave the community involvement in tact!

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I care about social services in general and especially in Tempe. I enjoy volunteering my time in activities and process that I see beneficial.	Having volunteers evaluate applications individually and then meeting as a group to discuss concerns. I like that the agencies are asked questions and have the opportunity to offer explanations and context to the review panel.	I can't think of anything at this time.	I enjoy the process and appreciate the benefit that it provides to the Tempe Community.	I like the process. It seems very fair to me to have Tempe residents and employees help decide where the funding would best serve our community. I feel the process also helps keep the agencies accountable by having to take part in the interview process. It was great experience volunteering.
I had been involved with I-HELP and wanted to get a better picture from human services in Tempe.	TCC staff did a great job.	I think the initial survey where the different areas are ranked could be done better. Seems overly subjective and unclear.	Great way to volunteer and make a difference in our city.	My involvement with Agency Review has led me to get more involved with the Tempe Community Council and I now serve on its Board.
I appreciate the independent process that TCC runs. The citizens of our community have the best process that eliminates the politics from the process. Because TCC is independent, TCC is always researching and	The INDEPENDENT community process. It is very nice to see that the city allows an organization to distribute the human services needs so that it stays out of the POLITICS of the city. It	The process works great. The volunteerism for the process is well managed. The city councilmen/women just need to 'back-off' and allow the process to	Because the process WORKS! I appreciate that the community cares enough to take the time and dedication to make sure our people are taken care of. I want to ensure	Change the system. Recognize the ability of most agency directors to collaborate on behalf of their clients.

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<p>reviewing organizations that needs the city's funds to better our community. I want to make sure that my tax dollars are distributed to reputable, sustaining organizations that actually take care of our citizens. City Government does not need to be part of this process.</p>	<p>is well managed and since TCC is an independent organization the funds are distributed in accordance with community needs.</p>	<p>work. Too many council persons try to manipulate the process by listening to their friends rather than let the process work. The community volunteers work as independent on behalf of the council to keep the process away from that type of political manipulation.</p>	<p>that my tax dollars are distributed to where the greatest needs are.</p>	
<p>It is an opportunity for input into where human service dollars go.</p>	<p>Great training provided by staff. It's easy to electronically review the applications and provide questions a head of time.</p>	<p>Recommendations are changed from the panel interview to the final meeting by TCC. General "we know best" explanation isn't sufficient to explain the changes. TCC staff have made comments during the panel interview that aren't relevant and could influence the funding recommendation.</p>	<p>It's an important process.</p>	<p>In several cases the recommendations of the review committee were not taken and funding that was recommended to be cut was restored. I was involved in one case where complete funding was restored to the applicant. In this case the review panel did not feel the agency supported enough Tempe residents for the amount of funding</p>

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				they were requesting. We recommended a significant reduction and it was completely restored. The same situation happened last year to another group and those participants were very unhappy with the process.
I served on the TCC Board.	The streamlining of the process. No time is wasted; the diversity of the reviewers is also good.	Deciding what types of funding should be prioritized. There should be a social-scientific instrument to guide us. The instruments used in the past were quantitative on the surface, but the survey population was self-selecting, guaranteeing its bias. ASU should be able to help.	The process was careful, collaborative, and considered.	I think the best thing that ever happened to nonprofit funding for the city was when the decision making was taken from the Council and given to citizens with support from TCC. It is a much fairer process, has much more depth of scrutiny and follow up with agencies during the year and takes the politics out of it. Ultimately, of course, the Council has the option to accept/reject/revise citizen

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				recommendations. Kudos to Kate and her staff at TCC for doing a great job of putting this important task together.
<p>When I heard about the process the City uses to decide on programs to fund, I thought it was great and really wanted to contribute. I am a Tempe native and resident and wanted to do my part.</p>	<p>The online proposal review process was very easy. I liked the interview process also.</p>	<p>It would be helpful to have more money to distribute! I do think one of the challenges is seeing where the agencies you review fit into the big picture since there are not in fact unlimited funds. It is challenging to figure out those priorities so it can be helpful to see everything that has been requested so you can have some perspective.</p>	<p>I have been doing this for a number of years and always find it a learning and challenging experience. And I do feel that my input makes a difference.</p>	<p>I was unaware of different reviews for Tempe and would like to have known that to select the one most interested to make the biggest impact. I believe all the funding assists in an impact but don't know if they are significant. To fund an agency for a second time, it is wise to know if they spent their previous award appropriately and effectively and as a volunteer we only assume staff are checking that out but I would feel better having proof.</p>
<p>I both live and work in Tempe so</p>	<p>I learned a great deal about</p>	<p>The process is built on</p>	<p>I believe this year will be</p>	<p>I have been involved in the</p>

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<p>felt it was important to contribute to the process of what was happening with our human service dollars.</p>	<p>what the human services needs were in the city of Tempe, the various agencies making services available to Tempe residents and the challenge of meeting those needs with limited dollars. I appreciated the chance to interview these agencies in person and really get a good feel for what they did. Most importantly I then got the opportunity to discuss these issues with my fellow citizens. I really felt like the combination of learning and then really getting to discuss priorities made me feel like I was a better-informed citizen and that I was really working with my fellow citizens to improve life in our community.</p>	<p>two flawed assumptions:  1. "Average" citizens, many of whom have no background in social/human service work, can make better decisions re funding allocation than the very people who work within the social service network and who are professionally and experientially qualified for the task.  2. If the funding allocation process were conducted by the professionals, their competitive drives would keep them from collaborating and stop them from making good decisions.</p>	<p>my 5th year. I love the process, the organizations being funded and the TCC.</p>	<p>process for well over 5 years. My participation started because of my involvement on the TCC Board and at the expiration of my term I still plan to come back and be involved in this process. It is really the only way, as a resident. I feel my voice will be really heard by the allocations that come from this process.</p>

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I wanted to serve my city. I'm passionate about human services.	I can pinpoint any one thing. It is an amazingly organized process that I have no complaints about.	I feel that the process lacks a complete overview. Each group is only evaluating a small portion of the agencies and in some cases not all that provide the same service. It makes it difficult to make a decision based on the bigger picture. There should be a better way to give participants a lot more background on all the requests.	For me, a novice in the area, to participate in a team with several other novices and make decisions affecting these agencies, agencies with directors and senior staff members who are far more capable of making these decisions, is absurd. It's also insulting to these professional agency directors. Their time is worth far too much to their clients to be wasted in a competitive endeavor in which they "put on a show" for reviewers, many of whom know very little about the task at hand in spite of the training the City provides.	I don't think a single organization seeking funds from the City of Tempe should be allowed to circumvent the Agency Review process. If one organization is allowed to go directly to the City, it sets a precedent for others to follow suit.



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The opportunity to serve my community and to learn about non-profit human service agencies in the area.	Caterina Mena -- superbly professional, wonderfully patient and respectful toward volunteers who were not well-equipped for their tasks	Perhaps confidentiality could be better communicated.	It has value to the community.	I am not confident that this survey serves to address the stated goal. How does this survey address the effectiveness and efficiency of Human Social Services? Nor is it clear to me that you truly want my thoughts, since this survey has the feel of being similar to a 'push poll' to generate the response you desire, so I will not take any more time to submit any other comments.
I am the liaison with the city and wanted to learn as much about the process and agencies we fund as I could.	The applications are very thorough and the information complete enough to make informed decisions	I was able to do some agency visits this year and certainly know from years of experience that there is nothing quite like "being there." Perhaps reviewers might be required to visit a minimum of two agencies	I really enjoyed the experience	It's a good process. Obviously there will be glitches from time to time but it seems to be working pretty well. I wouldn't recommend any major changes.

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		<p>each year so that over time, they have a hands on sense of each agency. On the downside, agency visit requirements may create a work-release hardship for reviewers and could potentially limit the number of volunteers.</p>		
<p>Wanted to get involved with the community.</p>	<p>The discussion among the panel members.</p>	<p>I think the process continues to be refined and improved each year - nothing stands out as a definite need for change in the coming year. The online review tool is pretty easy to use and I've found it easy to get my questions answered on the process when they arise. The only thing that I think the City can do is encourage more Tempe residents to</p>	<p>It's a great way to serve the community and be involved with making sure our city's financial resources are used well, have a direct influence on council decisions.</p>	<p>Although the Agency Review takes time and effort, I think that it is well spent. I feel the process is very fair and I love the fact that it involves the community so much.</p>

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		volunteer/participate. Also to do more to let residents know that community input is valued - I believe it is rare for cities to engage residents so directly in funding priority inputs as much as Tempe does.		
Having a say in the way our human services dollars are spent as a service to the city.	Having a separate committee with a financial background review all of the 990's.	None really. The preparation for the meetings of the panels has been excellent over the five years I have participated. Those on the panels have all seemed genuinely committed to the process and its goals.	I am not able to help out this year, but would certainly entertain doing it another year. Being a part of the nonprofit work of the city has many rewards both for those receiving aid and the good feeling one gets from helping others. On a selfish note, the more I know about the services available in the city, the more helpful it is to me, my family and friends when troubles arise.	After seven years of participating in AR, I can say the process represents the heart and soul of Tempe. We take a little money each year and help our own. The Tempe Community Council is committed to making the process fair, impartial and citizen driven. Agency Review is also an effective way to get volunteers interested in further volunteer involvement. The more they know, the

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				<p>more they want to help and volunteer for other projects like Tempe Cares and Tempe Neighbors Helping Neighbors. The other benefit of having TCC and Agency Review is the example Tempe sets for businesses looking to relocate in Tempe. Tempe has a tradition of taking a little money each year and allocating those funds to help our needy. In today's world, having a sense of civic consciousness is a tangible asset to attracting new businesses with a community mind-set.</p>
<p>I served on boards throughout the community for many years including the TCC board. Human services has always been my primary focus. Agency Review is one of the most important jobs of</p>	<p>Regarding question 3: The evaluation process is as effective and comprehensive as each individual reviewer makes it. The ability to spend time and thoroughly</p>	<p>Be able to print out my questions I submit, so I don't have to manually write them down. It would be good if the individual review process</p>	<p>Yes - I enjoy the process and it helps me to learn more about the agencies and issues facing Tempe. I expect I will continue to participate in the process</p>	

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TCC and it is an honor to be included in this work.	look over the paperwork is available. The paperwork submitted is quite thorough. I think it is helpful to separate out the initial screenings of agencies from the final decision making process as is done currently. When I began working with Agency Review, the entire panel had to come to consensus on funding recommendations and it was a lengthy, tedious process. Today, after the screenings and interviews, a few people sit down to make those decisions based on what the larger group recommends.	could be stretched to reach a higher collective determination because the group review can bring down a high priority due to personal interests. There needs to be improvement on defining the role of the volunteer moderator of group. Had one who didn't stick to the process-filtered her personal thoughts and another totally incapable of doing it (even though I appreciate the opportunities for everyone, the role is important). Maybe identify prior instead of on the spot.	even after my board term at TCC is up next year.	
I started participating in the Agency Review process after becoming a board member of Tempe Community Council.	This past year, the finance committee of the TCC board completed a thorough and additional review of the 990	This process gets better every year. The challenge with the process is that there is	I enjoyed the process, and would like to be more involved the next time. I missed an important	

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	documents. This provided an additional layer of analysis to the grant reviews being completed by the community volunteers who may have differing levels of knowledge of financial statements and tax forms. I also think it's helpful how different agencies are grouped together that provide similar services to Tempe, since those evaluating get a better picture of the issues and programs serving those populations.	always more need/request than funding. That makes it very difficult to prioritize one groups needs over another when both groups are in need. If there was one thing I would suggest, is to increase the Human Services budget for the agencies/programs that serve our city's less fortunate population.	session the first time around and I can't quite remember why. Maybe a few more reminder e-mails for what is coming up. Please let me know when the next sessions start.	
I strongly believe in the support the city has committed to assisting those Tempe citizens in need of financial and physical support.	The discussion with the agency applicants. The effectiveness of this process depends very much on the chosen leader to direct the questioning.	TCC staff go above and beyond to help ensure organizations submit thorough grant requests. However, not all grant requests are created equal. Much of that has to do with a lack of attention	If my time allows and after review of all the agency review teams for Tempe and Chandler.	

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		to detail and/or poorly written grants by the organizations seeking funds. I have reviewed grant requests that do not respond to questions effectively and do not present an accurate of concise picture about the services to be funded.		
A friend suggested it.	The discussions before decisions were made.	More funds to meet unmet needs would help. Lacking more funds I think a zero based and/or performance based budgeting approach is called for, at least for a year, to start from scratch and re-evaluate agencies and their funding requests from scratch. My observation is that many of the recipients have been receiving funds for many years and it appears	It is my opportunity as a resident of Tempe to direct my tax dollars to needs that I believe should be met with those dollars.	

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		<p>to me that some of them (by no means all) are not taking the time to ensure they communicate through the grant application process that they are meeting their goals and/or using the funds wisely. All of the AR volunteers I have served with agree that the programs are worthy, but I am not as certain about the agencies. Also, a few (relatively small number) of the agencies that receive large allotments seem to think it is their 'right' to receive the funds and they give the impression that the AR process does not relate to them. In particular, my impression has been that these few</p>		



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		agencies treat the citizen volunteers disrespectfully during the interview process.		
To serve the community I live in and interact with new people. Always commit to one volunteer role each year and this one complimented my expertise which was an extra bonus for me.	The individual review process. Limiting the number of proposals was good especially due the time of year. This past year was much better compared to the previous.	Each year the TCC staff works hard to refine the procedures in an effort to improve. I do think that because there are several teams of interviewers, the scoring might not be consistent from one team to another. As a result, while the Enhancement Committee strives for objectivity in allocation decisions, some degree of subjectivity will always be present.	I hope to be able to volunteer again in 2014. Reviewing grant proposals and participating in the interview process gives me an insight into the challenges facing my city and the people and organizations working to make a difference.	
Being on the TCC Board	I generally like the whole process. It requires potential agencies/programs to complete a written application, which then is followed up by a in person	More people	I believe I am making a positive contribution to our community by serving as an AR volunteer.	

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	meeting to review/discuss their submission. In my opinion, this is the only way that public dollars for human services should be allocated.			
Tempe offers a unique opportunity for company members to participate in providing feedback and recommendations to its City Council for the distribution of funds to human service organizations. In other word, elected officials listen to and consider input from constituents before making their decisions.	TCC staff do an excellent job of compiling information so that volunteers can make thoughtful recommendations. It's made clear that each volunteer's opinion is given equal consideration but that the group must come to a consensus for its recommendations to the council.	I believe it works pretty well	I enjoy hearing about the incredible agencies and programs that are making a big difference for the needy and the poor in our community. I'm glad that Tempe has a citizen review process for determining allocations and I'm pleased to be able to be a part of it.	
Upon returning to Tempe from Flagstaff I desired to once again volunteer with the City of Tempe (I used to serve on the Transportation Committee) and when I checked the website years ago TCC was scrolling.	The citizen driven process. The other AR volunteers I have worked with are dedicated and concerned and take this responsibility seriously.	Strict confidence prior to funding	I really enjoy being a part of a group that is trying to make the best decisions they can for human services in Tempe.	

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I am a member of the Tempe Community Council Board and wanted to be part of the process.	The applications submitted by agencies were helpful but I most appreciated the opportunities to interview the representatives of the agencies. I liked hearing the stories and seeing faces.	The issue is always the amount of funding... there hasn't been enough to fund some of the newer, innovative programs because the existing (necessary) programs also deserve continued support.	It's a good efficient system	
I wanted to see what process was like for agencies receiving money. I also wanted to know more about the different human services agencies and felt that this was a good way to learn about them.	I believe the 4-5 member panel worked great. We all had the opportunity to ask questions of the agencies and it helped me look at the agencies in a more thorough way. Afterwards taking among ourselves also helped me understand other people's reasoning.	To keep the politics out of it.	I plan to volunteer indefinitely- it's critical to have members of the community involved in this process.	
A desire to participate in a process for determining funding for social agencies and to take politics out of the process.	The give and take between the agencies and those reviewing the application and the overall process of determining priorities.		It's a great way to actively contribute to our community discussion.	

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I've been volunteering for Agency Review for 6 years. I started because I was looking for a way to use my grants experience in a meaningful volunteer setting.	The fact that it is compiled by community volunteers and the thoughtfulness that is implemented in the allocation process.		I will volunteer to participate in AR until I can't do it any longer.	
Initially as part of my board duties through TCC.	Cannot identify one specific item...it is unique for a municipality to involve citizens in the allocation of funding for human service funding. I believe that it is an excellent process.		The Agency Review process is an incredible way to understand both the needs and the non-profits addressing those needs in our community. Each year, I am inspired by the tireless work of volunteers and non-profits working to give back to make Tempe a greater place to live, work and play. Accordingly, I look forward to volunteering with the Agency Review process for many more years to come.	

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Awareness of the opportunity when I served on the TCC Board. Great opportunity for citizen involvement on a very important matter.	The evaluation process, which is comprehensive, reasoned and thoughtful.			
I had heard about the work TCC was doing when I went through Tempe Leadership seven years ago. When the opportunity of participating in Agency Review was announced in 2006 I signed up and have volunteered to help every year since. It is a wonderful way to understand the needs and challenges our human service agencies are facing in today's world.	The review of multiple applications and the interview process (so that volunteers truly get a chance to know and understand the mission of the organizations requesting funding). Agency site visits are another great way to evaluate (from hands on perspective) the non-profits.			
I have loved working in Tempe for the past six years. This is the same amount of time that I have served as a part of the Agency Review process. Understanding the Tempe Human Services initiatives in our community, evaluating the use of funds for the				

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community non-profits and ensuring proper stewardship of those funds by TCC is important to me as both a board member and a community volunteer.				