

Memorandum



Date: June 5, 2007

To: Honorable Chairman Bruno A. Barreiro
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

Agenda Item No. 9(A)(14)(A)

From: George M. Burgess
County Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Burgess", written over the printed name of George M. Burgess.

Subject: FY 07-08 Request for Proposals for Library Educational and Information Access
Services for Community-Based Organizations

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board approve the attached Library Educational Access Services Request for Proposals (RFP) for FY 2007-2008 for community-based organizations (CBOs).

Scope

The RFP provides program funding for library activities in both incorporated and unincorporated areas that will have a countywide impact.

Fiscal Impact/Funding Source

The funding to be allocated through this RFP for Library Educational and Information Access Services includes a total allocation of \$27,000. The allocated funding amount is contingent on the adoption of the FY 07-08 Budget by the Board of County Commissioners at the 2007 Budget Hearing.

Track Record/Monitor

The person responsible for administrating and monitoring the CBO will be Lainey Brooks, Executive Assistant to Department Director, Miami-Dade Public Library System.

Background

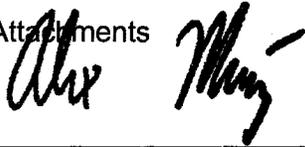
Since FY 1995-96, the Library Department (in conjunction with Parks & Recreation Department) has used a formal RFP process for the allocation of grant funds to CBOs. The same process will be used by the Library Department for FY 07-08. The Library staff CBO/RFP selection committee will provide funding recommendations to the Board from the applications received.

As in the past, the process will include an evaluation of programs and service priorities with a pre-determined set of standards and ranking methodology. The solicitation documents are divided in two parts, Exhibit I and Exhibit II. Exhibit I provides the Instructions providing the priority focus areas, general completion guidelines, and evaluation criteria. Exhibit II contains the Application to be completed by all proposers.

Honorable Chairman Bruno A. Barreiro
and Members, Board of County Commissioners
Page 2

This RFP is scheduled for distribution beginning June 11, 2007. The completed applications are due July 15, 2007. It is anticipated that the selection committees will review the applications and make funding recommendation by late July to mid-August 2007 and forward the recommendations to the Board by September, 2007.

Attachments

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex Muñoz", written over a horizontal line.

Alex Muñoz
Assistant County Manager



MEMORANDUM

(Revised)

TO: Honorable Chairman Bruno A. Barreiro
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: June 5, 2007

FROM: Murray A. Greenberg
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Agenda Item No. 9(A)(14)(A)

Please note any items checked.

- "4-Day Rule" ("3-Day Rule" for committees) applicable if raised
- 6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing
- 4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing
- Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget
- Budget required
- Statement of fiscal impact required
- Bid waiver requiring County Manager's written recommendation
- Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Manager's report for public hearing
- Housekeeping item (no policy decision required)
- No committee review

Approved _____ Mayor
Veto _____
Override _____

Agenda Item No. 9(A)(14)(A)
06-05-07

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION APPROVING PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS,
EVALUATION CRITERIA, AND SOLICITATION
DOCUMENTS FOR FY 2007-2008 COUNTY FUNDING OF
COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE
LIBRARY EDUCATIONAL AND INFORMATIONAL
ACCESS SERVICES REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

WHEREAS, this Board desires to accomplish the purposes outlined in the accompanying memorandum, a copy of which is incorporated herein by reference,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, that the recommendations, as outlined in the attached memorandum from the County Manager which is duly incorporated by reference, regarding the solicitation documents for FY 2007-2008 CBO funding requests, are approved and accepted for inclusion in the Library Educational and Informational Access Services Request for Proposals (RFP) for such services.

The foregoing resolution was offered by Commissioner _____, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner _____ and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Bruno A. Barreiro, Chairman
Barbara J. Jordan, Vice-Chairwoman

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Jose "Pepe" Diaz | Audrey M. Edmonson |
| Carlos A. Gimenez | Sally A. Heyman |
| Joe A. Martinez | Dennis C. Moss |
| Dorin D. Rolle | Natacha Seijas |
| Katy Sorenson | Rebeca Sosa |
| Sen. Javier D. Souto | |

The Chairperson thereupon declared the resolution duly passed and adopted this 5th day of June, 2007. This resolution shall become effective ten (10) days after the date of its adoption unless vetoed by the Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BY ITS BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS

HARVEY RUVIN, CLERK

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency. DDC

Diamela del Castillo

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**MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM
FY 2007- 2008
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (INSTRUCTIONS)**

**LIBRARY EDUCATIONAL AND INFORMATIONAL ACCESS SERVICES
FOR
COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS**

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pre-Proposal Meeting <i>(To review proposal guidelines and application)</i> | <u>Monday, June 18, 2007, 10:00 A. M. at the Miami Dade Public Library System, Main Library, 101 W. Flagler Street, 3rd Floor Conference Room</u> |
| Deadline to Accept Questions <i>(Written or verbal)</i> | <u>Wednesday, July 18, 2007, 5:00 P.M.</u> |
| Application/Proposals Package Submission Deadline | <u>Wednesday, July 25, 2007, 5:00 P.M., at the Miami-Dade County Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners, Stephen P. Clark Center, 17th Floor, Suite 202, 111 N.W. 1st Street, Miami, Florida 33128</u> |
| Request for Proposals (RFP) Contact Person | Ms. Lainey Brooks Miami Dade Public Library System 101 W. Flagler Street, Miami, Florida 33130; Fax: 305-375-5545 Email: brooksl@mdpls.org; Phone: 305-375-5017 |

**Note: Pre-Proposal Meeting Date and Time Subject to Change.
For other deadlines, see page 4.**

Applicants are strongly encouraged to thoroughly read these documents before completing any requested information. Copies of the Request for Proposals (RFP) Instructions and Application are available beginning Monday, June 11, 2007.

This FY 2007-2008 Community-Based Organization (CBO) Grant Program Request for Proposals (RFP) is designed to establish a standard procedure to screen and evaluate proposals, and to allocate County funds to qualified community-based organizations.

OBTAINING THE REQUEST FOR THE PROPOSAL (RFP)

- **Website Download** - Miami Dade Public Library System Website: www.mdpls.org Click on "FY 07-08 CBO Request for Proposals" on the homepage. Download the document after completing the registration information. (See page 6, "APPLICATION COMPLETION INSTRUCTIONS".)

Miami-Dade Public Library System (MDPLS) is not responsible for the inability of that proposer to fully and accurately obtain the RFP document or any part thereof, on the MDPLS website.

- **U.S. Mail** – Mail request to the RFP Contact Person, by mail or fax and include your name, the organization name, mailing address, phone number, fax number, and email address (if applicable). The RFP will be mailed.
- **E-mail** – Via Email to (brooksl@mdpls.org) request and provide the same information as requested under the "U.S. Mail" instructions (see above).
- **Pickup (hardcopy)** – Visit the Miami Dade Public Library System, Main Library, 101 W. Flagler Street, 3rd Floor Reception Desk, Miami, Florida, 9:00 A. M. to 5 P.M., Monday-Friday, excluding County holidays.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER AND DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE BASED ON AGE, GENDER, RACE, RELIGION OR DISABILITY.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUBMITTING A RESPONSE TO THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AT THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ON/OR BEFORE THE STATED TIME AND DATE WILL BE SOLELY AND STRICTLY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PROPOSER. THE COUNTY WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR DELAYS CAUSED BY THE UNITED STATES MAIL DELIVERY OR BY ANY OTHER OCCURRENCE.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Miami-Dade Public Library System, (hereinafter referred to as the "MDPLS"), is seeking proposals [referred to as "application"] from qualified community based organizations, (referred to as "proposers" or "applicants") to provide community-based library related educational and informational access services.

Community-based library-related educational informational access services should be unduplicated (Not offered by MDPLS), not readily available, and fulfills an identified need within the community. These services should support, enhance, or improve current MDPLS programming.

ELIGIBILITY

- Proposers must be legally incorporated as not-for-profit organizations, with a designated 501(C) (3) , 509 (A) (1), or other tax-exempt status determined by the United States Internal Revenue Service at the time of proposal submission and throughout the duration of the services to be provided during the term of the grant award.
- Proposers must be legally incorporated as a not-for-profit organization for at least (2) years prior to application deadline.
- Proposers must be able to provide a one-to-one match (Cash and/or In-kind).

FUNDING CATEGORIES AVAILABLE

Library Educational And Informational Access Services (\$27,000 funding available; up to four individual grants totaling \$27,000)

The available funding amount in the category as represented in this RFP is contingent on the adoption of the FY 07-08 Budget by the Board of County Commissioners at the Budget Hearing in September, 2007.

The "community" as defined in this proposal is anywhere in Miami-Dade County that is served by the Miami-Dade County Public Library System and benefit Miami-Dade County residents.

For the FY 2007-08 RFP process Priority Focus Categories have been established for "Library Educational And Informational Access Services". A separate application must be submitted if applying for more than one category. An organization may only submit one application per category.

- Projects providing cultural, educational, and/or recreational activities occurring on facilities owned and/or operated by Miami-Dade Public Library System in any municipality or the unincorporated area of Miami-Dade County. **(Category 1)**
- Projects providing activities as described above, which emphasize direct involvement and participation by persons with disabilities of any age. **(Category 2)**

EVALUATION CRITERIA

It is the mandate and responsibility of the Library Educational And Informational Access Services Selection Committee to evaluate all proposals based on the criteria below. Each application is scored using the following criteria:

- 1) **Applicant provides a Library Educational and Informational Access Service that fulfills an identified need within the community. (20 points)**
- 2) **Applicant provides an unduplicated Library Educational and Informational Access Service. (20 points)**
- 3) **Applicant provides a Library Educational and Informational Access Service that is not readily available in the community. (20 points)**
- 4) **Project improves access to Library Educational and Informational Access Service for the disabled. (10 points)**
- 5) **Applicant has realistic contribution (Cash or in-kind) committed to the project. (10 points)**
- 6) **Applicant exhibits the ability to successfully administer the project. (10 points)**
- 7) **Project demonstrates an effective and cost efficient use of County funds. (10 points)**

ALLOWABLE GRANT EXPENDITURES

- **Contracted Services:** Include items for which your organization must contract or pay another entity; examples include, but are not limited to caterers, instructors, photographers.
- **Related Equipment:** Include major items, e.g., musical instruments, art equipment, educational tools etc.
- **Related Supplies:** Include incidental materials and small non-durable goods, e.g., office supplies directly related to the project, arts and crafts supplies, educational supplies, software etc.
- **Space Rental:** Include fees to rent space for the program.
- **Transportation:** Indicate expenses directly related to the project services that take place within Miami-Dade County. Travel costs outside of Miami-Dade County are not reimbursable through the grant.

MATCHING FUNDS

Applicants must provide a one-to-one cash and/or in-kind match to receive grant funds. Library educational and informational access services grant shall not be the sole source of funding. Applicants should thoroughly explore other funding sources in addition to seeking support from this program.

In-Kind services/contributions may include such items as administrative, technical and artistic personnel, volunteers, advertising, and other non-cash resources.

Cash contributions are actual funds (e.g., a corporate and/or private donations; another grant; applicant's own funds, etc.) to be provided towards the grant project. Please be accurate and specific in developing the "Detailed Budget Justification" to show exactly how cash contributions are calculated.

Project activities purchases and services, for which grants are awarded through this RFP, shall be designed for implementation within the County's fiscal year (October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2008). *Grant-related expenditures made before October 1, 2007 are not reimbursable.* A Community-Based Organization grant award carries no commitment for future County support beyond this time period and beyond the scope of the awarded project.

GRANT USE RESTRICTIONS

- Remuneration of any County employee for any services rendered as part of a project receiving a grant from Miami-Dade Public Library System
- Grant funds may not be used in furtherance of fundraising efforts.
- Debt reduction
- Building Fund
- Out of County Travel
- Lobbying any governmental agency
- Events not open to the public
- Charitable contributions

RFP TIME/TABLE DEADLINES

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| RFP available for distribution | Monday, June 11, 2007, 10:00 A.M. |
| Pre-Proposal Conference | Monday, June 18, 2007, 10:00 A.M. |
| Deadline for receipt of RFP questions | Wednesday, July 18, 2007, 5:00 P.M. |
| Deadline for receipt of proposals | Wednesday, July 25, 2007, 3:00 P.M. |
| Staff review process | July, 2007 |
| Public meetings of Selection Committees | Late August, 2007 – To be noticed in the Miami-Dade Calendar |
| Award recommendations sent to Board of County Commissioners (BCC) | September, 2007 (anticipated) |
| Award recommendations approved by BCC | September, 2007 (anticipated) |
| Contract start date | October 1, 2007 |

PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE

The purpose of the Pre-Proposal Conference is to acquaint potential applicants with the specifics of this solicitation, the priorities of the Miami-Dade County Public Library System and the County recommendation and the funding process. Attendance by a proposer is **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED** for all parties interested in submitting a proposal for funding consideration. The date, time and location of the Pre-proposal Conference are:

Monday, June 18, 2007
Miami Dade Public Library System
Third Floor – Conference Room
101 W. Flagler Street
Miami, Florida 33130
10:00 A.M.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Carefully read the following directions to properly complete the Application and Attachments.

FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL RULES, REGULATIONS & LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Proposers shall comply with all laws, ordinances and regulations applicable to the services contemplated herein, especially those applicable to conflict of interest and collusion. Proposers are presumed to be familiar with all federal, State and local laws, ordinances, codes and regulations that may in any way affect the services offered, especially Executive Order No. 11246 entitled "Equal Employment Opportunity" and as amended by Executive Order No. 11375, as supplemented by (Department of Labor Regulation (4) CFR, Part 60), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and implementing regulations, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, Chapter 553 of Florida Statutes and any and all other local, State and Federal directives, ordinances, rules, orders and laws relating to people with disabilities.

PROPRIETARY / CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Proposers are hereby notified that all information submitted as part of, or in support of, proposals will be available for public inspection after the proposals are opened, in compliance with Chapters 119 and 286, Florida Statutes.

APPLICATION COMPLETION INSTRUCTIONS

1. All proposals must be completed on the application form labeled "Application". The application is to be completed using 11 point, or larger, type face in black with NO bolding. If you must use a typewriter to complete the application, due NOT bold your answers, and select a font and size as close as possible to that of the original application. Applications are NOT to be hand-written or hand-printed for all the application responses.
2. Complete the application in the spaces provided on each page as the layout of the original application. If your answer needs extra space, attach an addition sheet to the end of the application.
3. The application may be signed only by the organization chairperson, president, or authorized executive director, who is legally authorized to enter into a contractual relationship in the name of the applicant. No County employee may serve as signatory for this document. The application must also have its organization's corporate seal. If no corporate seal is available, the signature must be witnessed and the application sealed by a notary public.

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS FOR APPLICATION

1. Applications must include the following attachments, or the application may be deemed non-responsive, and may not be considered for a grant award. It is the proposers' responsibility to make sure that all attachments are fully completed and submitted with the application. All proposers are strongly encouraged to hand-deliver the application. Proposal must be submitted no later than Wednesday, July 25, 2007, 3:00 P.M.
2. IRS Letter of Tax Exempt status or other IRS 501C3 document, which clearly states tax exemption for your organization; document MUST be submitted regardless of past submissions in a grant process. As well as proof that the Applicant agency has had the not-for-profit status for at least (2) years prior to submission of proposal.
3. Certification that the Agency is currently listed as a corporation under Florida Law (Proposer may use www.sunbiz.org to obtain the necessary information).
4. Organization's total budget for the proposers' current year and a copy of the most recent audit or financial statement.

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS FOR APPLICATION - Continued

5. Names and addresses of Board of Directors.
6. List of paid principal staff and positions with a brief description of each.
7. Lobbyist Registration Affidavit: Proposers are advised that in accordance with Section 2-11.1 (s) of the Code of Miami-Dade County, the attached "LOBBYIST REGISTRATION FOR ORAL PRESENTATION" affidavit must be completed, notarized and included with your proposal submission. Lobbyists (Anyone who serves as representative/advocate of the proposal and may speak to it) specifically include the principal, as well as nay agent or officer (Including volunteers), or employee of a principal, regardless of whether such lobbying activities fall within the normal scope of involvement of such agent, officer or employee. A blank affidavit, for completion, is included with the application. Individuals substituted for or added to the presentation team after submittal of the proposal, **MUST** register with the Clerk of the Board and pay all applicable fees.

Additionally, proposers who wish to address the County Commission, a County Board or Committee concerning any actions or the decisions for recommendation of County personnel regarding this request for proposal must register with the Clerk of the Board (Form BCCFORM2.DOC) and pay all applicable fees.

8. "Detailed Budget Justification" – see page 5.
9. Organization pamphlet/brochure/flyers describing organization and any completed projects. Do not include more than 3 attachments.
10. "Acknowledgement of Addenda", if applicable. (Addenda are mailed to potential applicants when County staff is required to make substantive corrections or additions to the RFP document. The "Acknowledgement" form will also be mailed, with the Addendum, to potential applicants for completion).

APPLICATION SUBMISSION PACKAGE REQUIREMENTS

Submission deadline: Wednesday, July 25, 2007, time/date-stamped by the Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners, no later than 3:00 P.M.

LOCATION

Miami-Dade County
Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners
Stephen P. Clark Center
17th Floor, Room 202
111 N.W. 1st Street
Miami, Florida 33128

PACKAGE IDENTIFICATION

The application must be submitted as follows:

In a sealed envelope or container, submit one (1) paper-clipped or clamped original signed application, with all Attachments, each marked by a numbered tab; and six (6) stapled copies of the application including only required Attachments, each marked by a numbered tab. Use only staples for binding purposes, (No folders, binders, report covers etc.) Use a separate sealed envelope or container for each additional original application and the copies that you are submitting under this RFP process.

The front of the envelope or package must include the information in the order and placement as shown below:

Proposer Organization Name
Address
Phone Number

Miami-Dade County
Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners
Stephen P. Clark Center
17th Floor, Room 202
111 N.W. 1st Street
Miami, Florida 33128

Mr. Jeffrey Rosenberg
Library Educational and Information Access Services
July 25, 2007

Hand-carried applications may be delivered ONLY to the above address from Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. (By 3:00 P.M. per the Clerk of the Board's date/time stamp on the due date) excluding holidays observed by the County.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION PACKAGE REQUIREMENTS - Continued

All applications shall be accepted **ONLY** at the above location and must be delivered at the address, and date/time stamped by the Clerk's Office no later than 3:00 PM on Wednesday, July 25, 2007. Proposers are solely responsible for assuring that all application submissions are delivered to the correct address by the deadline stated above. **THE SUBMISSION LOCATION AND DEADLINE ARE FIRM.**

All expenses involved with the preparation and submission of applications to the County, or any work performed in connection therewith shall be borne by the proposers. No payment will be made for any applications received, or for any other effort required of or made by the proposers prior to commencement of work as defined by a contract approved by the Board of County Commissioners or its designee.

REVIEW/EVALUATION/RECOMMENDATION PROCESS

Staff will review all applications to determine if the application is responsive to the submission requirements outlined in the RFP. A responsive application is one that follows the requirements of the RFP is submitted by the time and date noted herein; includes all documentation; is submitted in the format outlined in the RFP; and has the appropriate signatures required of each document. Failure to comply with any of these requirements may deem an application non-responsive.

Following the initial staff review, the applications will be forwarded to a Selection Committee, one (1) for each of the two (2) Priority Focus Categories of this RFP. The Committees will be comprised of staff members of the Miami-Dade Public Library System and/or other County departments and agencies. Each Selection Committee will hold a public meeting to review and score the applications for qualitative and technical merit according to the criteria determined for each type of project as described on the following pages. The public meetings will be noticed in the County's News and Events Calendar, available at www.miamidade.gov/comm/ and www.mdpls.org.

PROPOSERS/APPLICANTS ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND THE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC MEETING.

Although proposer representatives are **not** allowed to make presentations at the public meetings, the Selection Committee members or staff may request information from the representatives. Committee members/staff often have questions that can only be answered by the proposers' representative(s). A proposer should be aware that if committee members/staff request information regarding a particular application and the proposer has no representative present at the meeting to respond, the lack of information may affect scoring results. In order to respond to questions from the committee the applicant must submit a completed Lobbyist Registration Affidavit which is included in the application package.

At each meeting for the review of proposals, the final scores for all applications will be tallied, averaged and ranked. The committees then make their funding recommendations and approval. The recommendations will be forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners. The awards shall be made to the proposers whose proposals shall be deemed by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to be in the best interest of the County, after they have considered the Selection Committees' recommendations. The Board may, at its sole discretion, reject any and all, or parts of any and all proposals; reject any and/or all recommendations; re-advertise this RFP; adjust the amount of funding available under this RFP; postpone or cancel, at any time, this RFP process; or waive any irregularities in this RFP or in the proposals received as a result of this RFP. The Board has the authority to approve and conduct a new RFP process. The Board's decisions of whether or not make the awards and which proposals are in the best interest of the County shall be final. All proposers will be notified of the final decisions of the Board of County Commissioners.

GENERAL GRANT AWARD PROVISIONS

ACCOUNTS CURRENT

All accounts with the Department(s) must be current before the grant contract may be executed, i.e., all outstanding bills, invoices, fees owed, etc. must be paid and documentation submitted to the County department administering the grant, before a grantee may have access to the grant funding awarded under this RFP.

CONTRACT PROCESS AND TERM

Grantees (Awarded applicants) will be required to complete certain contract documents. They will be required to submit all documents necessary for contract development (i.e., budget, scope of service, affidavits, and Certificate of Insurance as noted below) at the time the contract is submitted for execution. All restrictions expressed in the RFP with regard to how the awarded funding may be spent, remain in effect for the duration of the grant period, regardless of whether or not those restrictions are expressed in the contract document.

GENERAL GRANT AWARD PROVISIONS - Continued

Successful proposers will not have access to awarded funds until after the execution of a grant agreement (contract) with the County. [Therefore, the proposers' must have funds available to continue the project before actual receipt of grant funds]. The contract period for all grants awarded through this RFP must fall within the Miami-Dade County Fiscal Year 2007-2008, which begins October 1, 2007 and ends on September 30, 2008, or as otherwise stipulated in the negotiated agreement. Project expenses incurred before October 1, 2007 are not reimbursable.

INDEMNIFICATION

CBO's awarded funding under this grant program shall be required to indemnify and hold the County harmless from any and all claims, liability, losses, and causes of action, which may arise out of the fulfillment of the ensuing contract. The successful Proposers shall pay all claims and losses of any nature, whatever in connection therewith, and shall defend all suits, in the name of the County when applicable, and shall pay all costs of judgments which may issue there from, except for those caused by the sole negligence of County employees or officers.