

Greenwich Non-Profits Seek Approval for Funding

By Ken Borsuk

Greenwich— Representatives from more than a dozen local non-profits appeared at a Monday public hearing at town hall to make a last effort for more federal funding for their programs.

First Selectman Peter Tesei and town Community Development Administrator [Princess Erfe](#) paid close attention as representatives thanked the town for past support and asked for more of the same.

“We serve primarily low income kids in the community and roughly 73 percent of the kids we see are on Medicaid and 88 percent of the children come from families that are HUD low income families,” said [Eliot Brenner](#), president and CEO of [Child Guidance Center of Southern Connecticut](#) Inc. “We serve kids that have the most serious psychiatric needs and have been abused or neglected or subject to violence or suicide.”



Greenwich expects to have \$751,160 of federal [Community Development Block Grant](#) money available to hand out to local non-profits. Members of the [Community Development Advisory Committee](#) spent weeks sifting through \$1.35 million in requests and proposals before making recommendations to the selectman.

The allotments are expected to be confirmed at the Aug. 11 board of Selectmen’s meeting. The Child Guidance Center serves more than 700 children a year from the Greenwich community, Brenner said. The \$16,250 recommended, which was the highest of all the recommended spending for a non-profit’s programming needs, is much appreciated, he said.

Block grants in line for the funding serve both Greenwich non-profits and nearby ones that have Greenwich clients, including Inspirica in Stamford which provides housing and counseling and employment services to women and children in need.

“The numbers for the homeless are soaring and the Stamford/Norwalk metropolitan area, which includes Greenwich, is now the fifth most expensive housing jurisdiction in the country,” Jason Shaplen, Inspirica’s CEO.

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Inspirica is set to receive \$10,000.

“As the cost of living soars, we’re seeing stagnating and declining wages. And when you get soaring homelessness — and the support we receive from the state and other government sources is actually dropping — this support is critical to maintaining our operations,” Shaplen said.

“We very much need the funding so we appreciate what was recommended for us this year very much,” [Monica Bourgie](#), chief advancement officer for the YWCA Greenwich, which is slated to receive \$5,000 for its emergency housing and crisis counseling work for domestic violence victims. [Debra Mecky](#), executive director of the [Greenwich Historical Society](#), said the \$25,000 pledged to her organization will pay for a new elevator, part of a larger project for new building construction and more parking to better serve their patrons.

Some \$5,000 will go to the [Supermarketing for Seniors](#) program of [Jewish Family Services of Greenwich](#).

“Like other non-profits we are affected by the economy and we do appreciate the donations you have recommended for us,” said [Elyse Brown](#), director of the marketing program. “It would be great if, after seven years, we could give our stipend shoppers a little bit of a raise. And if we’re able to close our budget gap, that’s a distinct possibility. Every bit helps.”

Tesei said final funding decisions take into account the [Connecticut Economic Research Council](#)’s town profile, which looks at demographics, economy, education, government, tax base, housing configuration and labor force.

“What’s important to note is that people think of Greenwich as an extremely affluent community but looking at our population and percent of those living at the poverty rate measured over a four year period, we’re looking at 5 percent of the population according to CERC,” Tesei said.

After the amounts are approved at the selectmen’s level, the final decision will come from the [Board of Estimate and Taxation](#) and Representative Town Meeting.

To view the article online, please visit: <http://www.greenwichtime.com/local/article/Greenwich-non-profits-seek-approval-for-funding-9131853.php>