



# **City of Columbia**

## **Social Service Provider Capacity Evaluation 2015**

### **Executive Summary**

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#### **Introduction**

The City of Columbia contracted with Emily Johnson from the Institute of Public Policy at the University of Missouri to conduct a capacity evaluation of social service agencies that applied for funding within the Economic Opportunity, Independent Living and Mental Health funding categories. This evaluation is the third in a three year evaluation process which will provide a comprehensive evaluation of all funding applicants in a three year cycle as follows:

2013- Basic Needs and Emergency Services

2014- Children, Youth, and Families

2015- Economic Opportunity, Independent Living, and Mental Health

The goals of the provider capacity evaluation process are to:

- Provide the City with an objective assessment of the organizational capacity of prospective social service providers to inform the annual social services funding process
- Provide applicant agencies with information which can be utilized to continuously improve the quality of their agency and services

The evaluator conducted site visits with eight agencies that submitted responsive proposals for funding consideration. The evaluation assessed the provider's capacity in eight categories:

- Governance
- Financial Management
- Human Resources
- Information Management
- Service Delivery
- Performance Management
- Program-Based Budgeting
- External Relationships

## Methods

Appendix A is a copy of the provider capacity questionnaire and document list used for the evaluation. The template and scoring criteria were developed using a modified version of the McKinsey Capacity Assessment Grid developed by Venture Philanthropy Partners<sup>1</sup>.

In July, applicant agencies submitted letters of intent to the City and the evaluator was notified of the agencies to be evaluated in the RFP cycle. City staff sent the provider capacity questionnaire and document list to each agency and instructed them to prepare for the evaluator's site visit. The evaluator conducted individual site visits with the agency's executive director or designated staff in August and September.

During the site visit, the evaluator asked the agency to answer and discuss the questions in the provider capacity questionnaire and allow the evaluator to review the documents indicated on the document list. The evaluator tape recorded the interviews for reference after the site visit. The evaluator also observed information management procedures, toured facilities, observed infrastructure and saw programming in action when possible.

Once the site visit was complete, the evaluator analyzed the collected data and produced a detailed capacity evaluation and overall evaluation score. The evaluator set scoring criteria for reaching certain levels of capacity as determined by the data collected during the agency's evaluation site visit. Appendix B is a copy of the scoring rubric. The evaluator used a three point scale for capacity scoring:

- 3 – High level of capacity in place
- 2 – Moderate level of capacity in place
- 1- Low level of capacity in place

Capacity scores are reflective of the capacity needs and opportunities of the agency and are not designed to evaluate the quality or impact of the agency or its program.

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<sup>1</sup> McKinsey Capacity Assessment Grid, Venture Philanthropy Partners. [www.venturephilanthropypartners.org](http://www.venturephilanthropypartners.org)