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JAE Enterprises will assist Camden nonprofits in need

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CAMDEN — The city's Community Development Block Grant funding will dip again in the upcoming fiscal year, which will strain the budgets of the city's nonprofits.

JAE Enterprises Inc., a for-profit consulting firm in Glenside, Pa., hopes to soften the blow with a three-year, \$1.5 million federal grant.

JAE Enterprises has been selected to administer capacity building assistance to nonprofits through a Compassion Capital Fund Demonstration Grant, awarded by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. Training, technical assistance and six cash sub-awards of \$33,333 will be made available by the firm, which began soliciting requests for proposals from nonprofits this week.

"We will help them look for other

ways to bring in income and not be dependent on grants," said Kelley E. Ewing Jr., who is directing the project, known as the Grassroots Capacity Building Initiative.

"Grant writing should only cover 20 to 30 percent of the total budget," said Jolene A. Ewing, president and CEO of JAE Enterprises. "There are other ways to raise funding, whether they charge fees for service to a client or revenue from entrepreneurs, thrift stores and coffee shops; a lot of nonprofits have been doing these side businesses that can bring in additional income."

Nonprofits will be selected based on numerous criteria, one of which will be strategic partnerships — the number, strength, length of time and planned partnerships, Kelley Ewing said. Camden nonprofits have largely shied away from partnerships in the past, but with continued cuts in funding they will need to collaborate to survive, which will be a challenge, he said.

"In general, nonprofits are very competitive when it comes to funding sources and are very territorial," Kelley Ewing said. "So, it's difficult in general to get nonprofits to want

to work together as a group to get funding for services."

Cyrus Saxon, bureau head of grants management for Camden, agreed.

"That has been a goal of CDGB for a long time as well, they want us to combine our forces. But, you find most nonprofits are resistant to that, they like to go after their own funding," Saxon said.

Camden will receive about \$2.8 million in Community Development Block Grant funding in the upcoming fiscal year, which begins July 1. That's slightly less than it got in the current fiscal year. It received about \$2.9 million in fiscal year 2007.

"We've had to reduce all of the money we've been awarding to nonprofits, as well as internal programs we run through the city," Saxon said.

JAE Enterprises has set a May 6 deadline for nonprofits to submit applications and will announce its selections on May 22. Applications are available on their Web site, www.jaenterprises.com. Citizens Bank, a collaborating partner in the project, will provide the staff to review and score the applications.



K. Ewing



J. Ewing