To Mayor Allender and City Council Members:

I appreciate the hard work that the committee did on the allocation recommendations for the 2017 CDBG funds for 2017. I also understand the difficulty in determining how the funds can be allocated when there were far more requests than funds available. One of the deciding factors, as I understand it, is wanting to maximize the impact of limited funding, by reducing the number of organizations funded to better increase funding to others, although this situation resulted in one organization being given more than was initially request and the remaining ones being given equal to or lesser amounts than requested.

The Front Porch Coalition, at its core, provides direct services to families that have suffered a loss of a loved one due to suicide. TheLOSS Team is called out by Law Enforcement to help the family and friends deal with the effects of a death by suicide. The LOSS Team members continue to help and support the family for as long as necessary to help the family back on the path of healing. Quite often a close relationship remains long after the LOSS Team is involved. Many family members, past and present, appreciate the immeasurable value the LOSS team brings to their health and well-being, and further improves the well-being of the community.

Not only does the program provide immediate help and support at the time of the loss, it is proven to reduce the likelihood that people turn to drugs and alcohol to ease their grief which has a lifetime impact on an individual and everyone in their life, including but not limited to their family, friends, and colleagues. Some people are not able to return to work if they do not receive the help that this LOSS Team and program provides.

The same is true with prevention programming that the Front Porch Coalition provides. Even if one person is provided with one prevention program or educational training, it can provide them with enough information to not only impact them but the people and lives that they will reach during their lifetime, a number that is unknown to them at the time, and many lives saved that we may never know. When we lose someone to suicide, and the majority of the losses in our community are people in their 20s and 30s, we lose approximately 50-60 years of economic productivity. That can also have a profound economic effect on succeeding generations.

In addition, the Front Porch Coalition directly works with law enforcement, the veterans’ community and youth through trainings, support, and other nonprofit organizations to improve community mental health policy to raise awareness of the factors that influence suicide prevention and promote help-seeking behaviors of individuals who are struggling emotionally and mentally.

I would urge the council to reconsider the current funding allocations and continue to invest in an organization that impacts many different members of the community, strengthening the community as a whole.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Patti Martinson

President, Front Porch Coalition