

**Phoenix City Council
Community Services and Education Subcommittee (CSE)
Summary Minutes
22, April 2026**

City Council Chambers
200 W. Jefferson St.
Phoenix, Arizona

Subcommittee Members Present

Vice Mayor Kesha Hodge Washington, Chair
Councilwoman Ann O'Brien
Councilwoman Anna Hernandez
Councilwoman Debra Stark

Subcommittee Members Absent

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Hodge Washington called the Community Services and Education Subcommittee (CSE) to order at 10:08 a.m. with four members present.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

None.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

1. Minutes of the Community Services and Education Subcommittee Meeting

Councilwoman Stark made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2026 Community Services and Education Subcommittee meeting. Councilwoman Hernandez seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 4-0.

CONSENT ACTION (ITEMS 2-4)

Items 2-4 were for consent action. No presentations were planned, but staff was available to answer questions.

2. Request Approval for the Head Start Birth to Five Program to Purchase Capital Equipment over \$10,000

3. 2026-27 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Neighborhood Enhancement and Infrastructure Programs

Councilwoman Hernandez asked what outreach does the City conduct to ensure underserved neighborhoods are aware of the grant program.

Neighborhood Services (NSD) Director Spencer Self explained the City has historically partnered with nonprofits through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process managed by the Community Development Review Committee. He recalled over the past eight years,

limited public service funds have been directed mainly to the Office of Homeless Solutions (OHS) and Human Services Department (HSD) for homelessness-focused grants. He noted that these grants use targeted RFPs with specific scopes. He added the City occasionally partners with nonprofits to improve public facilities through a less formal process when Council offices or departments identify a unique or urgent need.

Councilwoman Hernandez asked how Council can provide more information to community leaders to assist with information sharing.

Mr. Self stated staff can work with Council to explore different ways to reach underrepresented communities.

Councilwoman Hernandez asked if staff can speak to the grants available at community events.

Mr. Self responded to the Councilwoman that staff can speak at events and pointed out the Housing Rehabilitation Program is more expansive and involves community engagement.

Councilwoman Hernandez asked if there is technical assistance being provided to neighborhood groups or nonprofits with little grant writing experience.

Mr. Self stated NSD staff partner with neighborhood leaders who provide training and there are other opportunities throughout the year such as the Neighborhood Synergy Conference.

Councilwoman Hernandez asked what projects are typically funded by the BlockWatch Grant Program.

Vice Mayor Hodge Washington noted the BlockWatch Grant Program will be covered in a later presentation and asked to table those questions.

4. 2026-27 CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Programs

Councilwoman Hernandez referred to data provided in the agenda packet and asked what the \$6 million in funding would do for services.

Mr. Self explained the \$6 million is funding from a number of different state and federal entities and out of that, the City gets homes for low and moderate income homeowners and rental properties. He also shared the funding is used to improve property that otherwise may not be repaired and increase homelessness or poor living conditions.

Councilwoman Hernandez requested a map to show where these projects have been done in District 7.

Mr. Self confirmed staff will provide that.

Councilwoman Hernandez asked if staff have evaluated where the program is preventing displacement.

Mr. Self stated staff have not reported that and assured the Councilwoman as staff develop the map, they will also provide that information for all Council districts.

Councilwoman Hernandez stated this is an important investment and these investments miss communities due to language barriers and lack of information.

Councilwoman Stark made a motion to approve items 2-4. Councilwoman O'Brien seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 4-0.

INFORMATION ONLY (ITEMS 5-8)

5. Head Start Birth to Five Monthly Report – January 2026

Councilwoman Hernandez asked what policies the City has in place to properly attempt family stabilization before contacting the Department of Children's Services (DCS).

HSD Director Jacqueline Edwards stated the department is required to report to DCS and there are prevention policies and training services available to parents. Ms. Edwards noted there are wrap around support services and family development plans available if a family has been identified as unstable. She explained reporting to DCS may be a result of classroom observations or observations with the child such as unexplained bruising.

Councilwoman Hernandez reiterated HSD is a mandated reporter of the system and asked if there is additional information that can be shared.

Ms. Edwards stated she can share additional information with the Councilwoman's office after the meeting.

6. Head Start Birth to Five Monthly Report – February 2026

Information only. No Councilmember requested additional information.

7. City of Phoenix Naloxone Program Quarterly Report (November-January)

Councilwoman Hernandez asked if all Naloxone kits are nasal only.

Public Health Advisor Yanitza Soto responded yes.

Councilwoman Hernandez asked what investments Ms. Soto would recommend the City make to ensure overdose prevention services continue to grow.

Ms. Soto explained Naloxone kits are the first layer of defense, even as the community begins seeing emerging non-opioid substances that Naloxone cannot reverse. She emphasized Naloxone is still being encouraged and noted the Naloxone program

expanded to five additional locations over the past year. She added expansion would be helpful.

Councilwoman Hernandez thanked the Office of Public Health (OPH) staff for their efforts and acknowledged residents would like to see more investments into OPH.

8. Mental Health Awareness 2026

Stephanie Deleon stated she advocates for suicide prevention and mental health. Ms. Deleon noted Arizona is ranked 14th in the nation for suicide rate with suicide being the second leading cause of death for those ages 10 to 34. She acknowledged the City for implementing May as Mental Health Awareness month and the programming being done.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington thanked Ms. Deleon and staff for their efforts in the community.

Councilwoman Hernandez thanked the Ms. Deleon for her advocacy and requested staff look at opportunities to allocate additional funding to provide services for those struggling with mental health.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington concurred with Councilwoman Hernandez and acknowledges the importance of mental health in addition to physical health. She also thanked staff for leading the Mental Health Awareness month efforts.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION (ITEMS 9-13)

9. Workforce Services and Partnerships for Job Seekers with Barriers to Employment

Ms. Edwards and HSD Deputy Director Jovanna Parkhouse introduced the item and stated they would be presenting an overview of the workforce services for job seekers with barriers to employment and collaborative efforts to drive economic mobility for residents.

Ms. Edwards explained the Workforce Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law in 2014 and HSD's allocation is just over \$4 million. She shared HSD services are anchored at the West Job Center in Maryvale and the South Job Center where HSD operates the Adult and Dislocated Workers Program which provides workforce readiness services. Ms. Edwards highlighted program follow-up services and program eligibility requirements.

Ms. Parkhouse detailed employment barriers, partnership, data-driven outreach and program performance. She stated 72 percent of the Adult Program participants are low-income and over half are experiencing long-term unemployment. Ms. Parkhouse noted for dislocated workers, long-term unemployment and low income remain the most

significant barriers to re-entry into the workforce. She conveyed staff uses census data and zip code mapping to identify areas where barriers are prominent and conduct targeted outreach.

Ms. Parkhouse highlighted the programs performance for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 which includes 80 community events, 1,300 engagements, 800 referrals, 1,700 individuals and 4,000 services. She explained services include workforce readiness workshops, career planning, financial literacy, transportation assistance, resume assistance and clothing. Ms. Parkhouse announced engagement exceeded the federally mandated performance measures with second quarter employment being above target by over six percent, and median earnings being above target by over \$1,000. She highlighted for the Dislocated Worker Program, median earnings exceeded the target by over \$4,300 and measurable skills exceeded the target by over 16 percent. Ms. Parkhouse also pointed out client satisfaction survey results reveal the efforts are effective with 81 percent of respondents noting they feel supported and 74 percent noting they exited the program more prepared for their next steps.

Ms. Edwards shared service delivery enhancements including the Benefits CLIFF tool, further departmental integration and enhancing client engagement and support. She shared the department is currently hosting a clothing drive.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington thanked staff for the presentation and stated that the program reflects economic mobility, stability, dignity, and long-term opportunity for residents. She appreciated the intentional focus on individuals facing employment barriers and emphasized the value of comprehensive services, including one year of support, and stated the model is working.

Councilwoman Hernandez stated there is a need for business clothing so individuals can be interview ready and improve economic mobility. She thanked staff for their efforts and the presentation.

Councilwoman O'Brien thanked staff and requested data for District 1. She referred to the 1,300 engagements mentioned and asked are those all individual and separate engagements.

Ms. Parkhouse affirmed engagements are tracked in a variety of different ways and provided an example of staff assisting a visitor with their resume at the library.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked if the engagements are separate from the number of people enrolled in the program.

Ms. Parkhouse confirmed.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked about an age breakdown of the Adult Workers Program.

Ms. Parkhouse responded on average participants are in their late thirties early forties and stated that staff can provide more detailed information.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked what causes the difference in attainment between the Adult Workers Program and the Dislocated Workers Program.

Ms. Parkhouse responded dislocated individuals usually have previous engagement in the workforce. She stated these individuals often come to the program seeking to upskill or earn certifications, but they often receive new job opportunities before completing a credential. She added that this leads to lower credential-attainment rates for dislocated workers.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked are we looking at ways to modify or adjust the program to help individuals finish upskill programs.

Ms. Parkhouse responded yes. She explained staff continue to engage with individuals and educate how those certifications can benefit them.

Councilwoman O'Brien stated she is excited about departmental integration and encouraged collaborating with the Community and Economic Development Department (CED) to provide input on what kinds of upscaling or job attainment is needed. She also thanked staff for their efforts.

10. Phoenix Public Library MAX Collection Sharing Service

Library Director Erin McFarlane introduced the item and Library Deputy Director Karl Kendall.

Mr. Kendall explained the Maximum Library Access Program (MAX) is a collection-sharing service for participating in library systems in Maricopa County. Mr. Kendall explained the program allows library customers to search other participating libraries for books that are not available in their home library. He explained unique parameters including holding or checking out up to five items at one time, specific circulation periods and non-renewal eligibility for MAX items.

Councilwoman Stark asked if the program is just for books or is it also for DVDs.

Mr. Kendall responded there may be expansion in the future for other materials, but for now, participating libraries have chosen to focus on books.

Councilwoman Stark expressed her hope for expansion and stated the MAX Program is a great program.

Councilwoman O'Brien stated the program is exciting and acknowledged National Library Week.

Councilwoman Hernandez thanked staff for their efforts and acknowledged the access being provided to residents through the program.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington stated the program is fostering more learning, enrichment and providing kids with the power of imagination. She thanked staff for the presentation.

11. Summer Reading Program

Ms. MacFarlane introduced the Summer Reading Program and announced it begins May 1, 2026 with the theme being Unearth a Story.

Mr. Kendall stated the Summer Reading program is a game, structured around students reading twenty minutes each day to prevent the summer slide. He noted only 20 percent of third graders in Phoenix public schools are proficient readers. Ms. Kendall explained the game is open to all ages and available in both English and Spanish. He highlighted incentives such as the ability to earn up to three books to keep and prize drawings based on points. Mr. Kendall also highlighted the Teen Volunteer program which recruits and trains 200 teens every summer with several libraries already having filled their teen volunteer slots.

Ms. MacFarlane explained participants earn points for reading and can gain extra points by entering secret codes or attending library programs. She stated community experiences and challenges offer additional bonus points. Ms. MacFarlane also invited Council members to create district challenges and noted staff are coordinating with their offices. She added registration opens May 1, 2026, point-earning begins June 1, and the program ends July 15.

Councilwoman Stark thanked Library staff for their programming and shared excitement for the program.

Councilwoman O'Brien thanked staff and asked when the program ends.

Ms. MacFarlane replied, July 15.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington stated the presentation sparked friendly district competition and noted the program is a fun way to keep kids learning and avoid summer slip. She thanked staff for their efforts.

12. Love Your Block Grant

Mr. Self introduced Yvette Roeder, the Love Your Block Program Manager.

Ms. Roeder explained that the Love Your Block Grant Program has been managed by Neighborhood Services for more than 10 years and supports small neighborhood projects. She stated that the program's goals are to engage residents, empower communities and fund projects that show neighborhood pride and collaboration. She highlighted recent neighborhood projects across districts and thanked staff for their work. Ms. Roeder explained neighborhood specialists help refine project ideas, assist

with applications, recruit volunteers and connect groups to City services. She stated the FY 2025–26 cycle is closing and announced the FY 2026–27 application window will open April 27 through May 26. She noted that eligible groups must be registered before April 27 and groups funded in the past two years cannot apply. She added eight grants of up to \$5,000 are available and directed neighborhood groups to the website to register.

Mr. Self gave a shout out to the Volunteer Coordinator, Ashley Henderson and thanked subcommittee members.

Councilwoman Hernandez asked if there is a toolkit prepared for the Council to send out to neighborhood groups.

Ms. Roeder responded to the Councilwoman that staff will provide the toolkit, and it will be available on the website.

Councilwoman Stark thanked staff for the presentation and their efforts.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked for a list of ineligible groups and grant projects completed in each district since the program's inception.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington shared her excitement for the program and asked if the application will be available in both English and Spanish.

Ms. Yoder responded yes.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION (ITEM 13)

13. 2026-2027 HUD Annual Action Plan

Mr. Self introduced the item and NSD Deputy Director Kimberly Dickerson, Grants Compliance Manager Alicia Springs and Project Manager Rosemary Aguilar.

Ms. Dickerson stated the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), managed by NSD, supports a variety of needs for low- to moderate-income communities. She explained the HOME Investment Partnership Grant funds affordable housing development, the HOPWA Grant is administered by the Housing Department to assist persons with AIDS/HIV, and the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) supports individuals and families experiencing homelessness and is managed and administered by OHS.

Ms. Springs explained the annual action plan process including outreach, drafting, public hearings and Council action. She listed the six priority areas which include affordable housing, public services, public improvements, public facilities, and economic development.

Ms. Aguilar explained the community engagement process to develop the annual action plan, including online surveys, newsletters, department collaboration and social media.

She announced there was a 139 percent increase in the response rate for the survey and two-thirds of the respondents identified affordable housing as the first or second priority.

Mr. Self stated CDBG showed a two percent change from last year and noted the team was pleased to receive the federal allocation earlier than in previous years. He explained HOME saw a slight 1.7 percent decrease, while HOPWA increased by six percent. He added ESG remained essentially level with less than a half-percent change. Mr. Self thanked staff across multiple departments for their work on the plan and acknowledged the complexity of the process. He concluded by requesting a recommendation for approval.

Councilwoman Hernandez asked how staff are ensuring the unhoused community or residents without internet services participate in the digital engagement efforts.

Ms. Springs stated staff partnered with the Water Department to include inserts into the water bills and the Phoenix Public Library to post information at various locations.

Councilwoman Hernandez asked if staff could provide a list of community partners.

Mr. Self replied to the Councilwoman that staff will provide that information.

Councilwoman Hernandez asked how staff are measuring newsletter and social-media engagement to ensure it is reaching low-income residents and communities of color most impacted by the housing crisis.

Mr. Self stated the engagement is low and staff consider budget hearing information and public comment in addition to the surveys to determine where the funds go. He assured the Councilwoman 75 percent of the grant funding goes towards housing.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington asked if the numbers presented are actual numbers and referred to the draft plan provided.

Mr. Self shared the team recently received the final allocations and noted the numbers were not available when the packet was printed. He explained the final numbers will be included when the item goes to Council and the contingency language in the draft plan will be removed.

Councilwoman O'Brien thanked staff for their efforts and asked for a more detailed breakdown of the numbers. She also asked if staff had considered using ZenCity.

Mr. Self replied staff used more traditional social media platforms, but ZenCity could be a useful tool in the future.

Councilwoman O'Brien made a motion to approve the item. Councilwoman Stark seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 4-0.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

None.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Councilwoman Stark requested a refresh on HeadStart in the fall.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington asked for an update on Project Assist.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairwoman Hodge Washington adjourned the meeting at 11:57 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Taniya Williams
Management Fellow