Transitions - Mental Health Association
Helping children and adults live, work and grow in our community.

May 2, 2016

Ms. Adriana de Bruin
Business Manager, County Executive Office
105 E. Anapamu Street, Room 406
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Ms. de Bruin,

In a 2010 publication, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) noted that "an estimated one-third to one-half of people who live with serious mental illness lives at, or near, the federal poverty level," with 71% of mental health clients reporting "an annual income of $20,000 or less." TMHA has an established history of working with a client base that is part of Santa Barbara's poverty population, and our strategy remains unchanged when it comes to systemically addressing their needs. We provide housing, a full spectrum of behavioral health services, and truly unique employment opportunities. All of these are tools for recovery and independent living, critical steps in creating a pathway out of poverty.

The Growing Grounds Farm II of Santa Maria offers vocational training and employment for over 50 adults with mental illness each year. Each client at the Growing Grounds Farm II in Santa Maria receives:

- Vocational training in all aspects of growing, marketing, presentation and selling.
- Training in work readiness, such as personal responsibility for a work schedule, arranging for transportation, wearing suitable attire and being punctual.
- Opportunities for job advancement and increased responsibility.
- Individual meetings with the Program Manager to discuss and create personal milestones.
- A safe, supervised environment for strengthening social skills among peers.
- Input from Supported Employment Vocational Specialists who work one-on-one with individuals to obtain and maintain employment in the community.
- Job Coaching, Job Development, Benefits Counseling, Job Readiness Training, and Vocational Assessment.
- Individualized time-unlimited job support.
- A job and a paycheck.

For the past sixteen years we have consistently accomplished our goal of providing jobs and training for our clients. But something equally important has occurred: Growing Grounds Farm has grown into a true community hub—a popular destination for our neighbors, particularly families with children. Last year our Thursday Farm Stand was visited by over 1,000 different shoppers, spending an average total of $675.00 per week through the year. We staged *Everything Edible* plant sales at multiple locations, and saw hundreds of happy customers go home with heirloom tomatoes and other vegetable seedlings. Home-schooling families come to experience organic gardening, explore the chicken coop and pick up information on farming. Local elementary schools visit for regular garden tours. This past year, Santa

Barbara County Department of Behavioral Wellness has started hosting a weekly garden club at our Farm for their clients.

The fact that the farm has forged a meaningful role in Santa Maria indicates that we are accomplishing one of our most important goals: reducing the stigma of mental illness and integrating our clients into the community at large.

The challenge of serving greater numbers of clients who desire employment opportunities and vocational training is that Santa Barbara County eliminated its contract with our Growing Grounds Farm employment program eight years ago. We have progressed from survival mode to steady growth in both program scope and numbers served. The fact that we do so without any support from the Department of Behavioral Wellness is a challenge and an accomplishment. Our goal for 2016-17 is to take a greater step towards true sustainability as a social enterprise business. We plan to open our weekly Farm Stand at least one Saturday every month, and offer more family-friendly attractions—like a children's cooperative garden, or monthly classes for kids and families alike. We have seen the Farm emerge as a neighborhood attraction, and we want to do all we can to drive more customers—and revenue—our way.

At the same time, we are coping with a very real challenge: the minimum wage in the state of California rose on January 1st of this year from $9 to $10 an hour, and will increase to $10.50 by January 2017 (continuing in these increments until the state reaches a $15 an hour minimum wage by 2022). The Growing Grounds Farm II will provide minimum wage employment to 50 clients in the coming fiscal year, and we are applying for an Outside Agency Funding Request of $2,500.00 to offset the rise in our operating budget due to this fully justified wage increase.

We are pleased to be able to apply for this Outside Agency opportunity. Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Very Truly Yours,

Frank Ricceri
Division Director

County of Santa Barbara

FY 2016-17 Outside Agency Funding Request Form

Deadline for Submission: Monday, May 2, 2016, 5:00 p.m.

The Board of Supervisors *may* consider funding requests from outside agencies during the **FY 2016-17** budget hearings in June 2016, if funding is available. An allocation of funding to outside agencies is not guaranteed.

Please submit the following by **5:00 p.m., Monday, May 2, 2016, NO EXCEPTIONS, via Email or Hardy Copy (postmarks will not be accepted)**:

1. Provide a cover letter explaining your request; and
2. Fill out this application (no more than 2 pages); and
3. Attach the Line Item Budget spreadsheet (no more than 2 pages) for the agency's program request

Hearings are scheduled for June 13, 15, and 17, with Outside Agency Requests considered on one of these days (yet to be determined). The **requesting agency must be represented and present**; please plan accordingly.

Total Request: $ 2,500.00
Name of Organization: Transitions-Mental Health Association
Title of Program: Growing Grounds Farm II New or ongoing program? Ongoing since 2000
Location(s) of services delivered: 820 W Foster Road Santa Maria, CA 93454
Name of Agency Executive Director: Jill Bolster-White
Phone #: (805) 540-6505 Email: jbw@t-mha.org Website: www.t-mha.org

1. Briefly summarize the purpose of the program, why the funds are needed, and the benefit to the community:

Since 2000, Transitions-Mental Health Association (TMHA) has operated the Growing Grounds Farm of Santa Maria, one of California's most compassionate, proactive forms of treatment for adults living with a mental illness. A combination of therapeutic horticulture and vocational training, the farm provides a disenfranchised population with true employment opportunities while maintaning a supportive environment. Our employees are diagnosed with persistent illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder, or major depression.

There are two compelling reasons that drive this request and need for funds. The first is that our Santa Maria employment programs were eliminated from the Department of Behavioral Wellness operations in 2008, and have been surviving on revenues generated by the businesses, private donations, and foundation grants ever since. The second is that the minimum wage in the state of California rose on January 1st of this year from $9 to $10 an hour, and will increase to $10.50 by January 2017 (continuing in these increments until the state reaches a $15 an hour minimum wage by 2022). The Growing Grounds Farm will provide minimum wage employment to 50 clients in the coming fiscal year, and we are applying for an Outside Agency Funding Request to offset the rise in our operating budget due to this fully justified wage increase.

2. Briefly summarize the service to be provided and how many people will be served:

Growing Grounds Farm II of Santa Maria represents a significant first step in North Santa Barbara County for mentally disabled adults to return to work. The program is composed of different pathways that can be tailored to suit each individual client. These pathways include: work on the Growing Grounds Farm, work at the weekly farm stand, accessing increased employment services through TMHA's Supported Employment Program (SEP) , and work within the greater community of Santa Maria. GGFII offers the following services to each of our clients:

- Vocational training in all aspects of growing, marketing, presentation and selling.
- Training in work readiness, such as personal responsibility for a work schedule, arranging for transportation, wearing suitable attire and being punctual.
- Opportunities for job advancement and increased responsibility.
- A safe, supervised environment for strengthening social skills among peers.
- SEP Vocational Specialists who work one on one with individuals to obtain and maintain employment in the community.
- Job Coaching, Job Development, Benefits Counseling, Job Readiness Training, and Vocational Assessment.
- A job and a paycheck.

3. Detail the timeline for providing the service:

The Growing Grounds Farm II of Santa Maria operates throughout the year, 52 weeks a year.

4. Describe key outcomes to be achieved with the funding and how they will be measured:

Outside Agency Funding will be devoted to client wages, and will contribute to the following outcomes and measurements:

CLIENTS SERVED are defined as unique participants in the program, receiving paid employment and vocational training. Our objective for 2016-17 is that 50 Clients will be served by Growing Grounds Farm in Fiscal Year 2016-17.

SHIFTS are work periods of 3 hours. Each client will receive 1-4 Shifts per week for a 3-6 month period . We anticipate a total of over 2,700 shifts in the coming fiscal year, with an additional 65 three hour shifts attributed to this funding request.

5. Describe if this is a one-time or ongoing request, and if funded in prior years and amounts:

The Growing Grounds Farm II of Santa Maria has received County HSF funding in previous years (funding ended on June 30, 2015), but never from an Outside Agency request. If successful in this pursuit, we will attempt to renew our request as ongoing support.

6. Describe the agency's expertise and capacity to deliver services including fiscal stability:

TMHA was the first organization to provide mental health services other than emergency treatment or clinic-based services to North Santa Barbara County residents, beginning in 1993 with a Social Rehabilitation program in Santa Maria. In 1997, we hired a Family Advocate for family members needing support and information, and that program expanded into Partners in Hope, a collaboration with Santa Barbara County Department of Behavioral Wellness. In 2000 we signed the lease on a four-acre parcel that became Growing Grounds Farm II, Santa Maria. Over the past ten years we purchased three properties that became part of our Santa Maria Housing program. Last year TMHA served over 2,000 unduplicated clients in Santa Barbara County and over 5,800 agency-wide.

7. Agency staff responsible for application: Frank Ricceri, Division Director (805) 720-2655

County Staff Comments Only:

Address submittals to:
Adriana de Bruin
Business Manager, County Executive Office
105 E. Anapamu Street, Room 406
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Requests can be emailed to: outsideagency@countyofsb.org

Questions: Please contact Adriana de Bruin, Business Manager, County Executive Office, at 568-3400.

FY 2016-17 Line Item Budget
For Program

Agency: *Transitions - Mental Health Association*
Program Name: *Growing Grounds Farm II*
Amount $$ Requested: **$2,500**

Program Budget	**FY 2016-17**	
Funding Sources/Revenues	**Committed**	**Uncommitted**
County of Santa Barbara		2,500.00
Woods Family Foundation	35,000	
State Dept of Vocational Rehabilitation	4,000	
Henry Mayo Newhall Foundation	40,000	
Other Private Foundations (weingart,SB Found)		66,500
Produce and plant Sales	70,000	
Total	**149000**	**69000**

Funding Uses/Expenses	**Budget**
Salaries and Benefits (includes client wages)	157,500
Cost of Goods Sold (plants, soil, seeds)	25,000
Operating Expenses (transportation,admin, etc.)	33,000
Total	**215500**