



Arapahoe County

5334 South Prince Street
Littleton, CO 80120
303-795-4630
Relay Colorado 711

Board Summary Report

File #: 21-701

Agenda Date: 10/19/2021

Agenda #:

To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: N/A

Prepared By:

Michelle Halstead, director, commissioners' office

Presenter: Aid to Agencies Review Team

Subject:

9:30 AM *2022 Aid to Agencies Recommendations

Purpose and Request:

The purpose of the study session is to provide funding recommendations for the 2022 Aid to Agencies competitive grant program for approval by the Board of County Commissioners as part of the 2022 budget.

Background and Discussion: Since 2008, The Board of County Commissioners has provided over \$22 million in financial aid to more than 40 non-profit agencies that serve Arapahoe County residents in the areas of mental health, seniors, drug or alcohol addiction rehabilitation, and other vulnerable populations. For the past two years, the Aid to Agencies budget has remained flat at \$1,679,500, but it has fluctuated considerably since the program's inception. In an effort to create a sustainable budget for the next 5-7 years, Arapahoe County has been evaluating all programs, including Aid to Agencies, to implement fiscal belt-tightening in the years ahead. This evaluation effort included the Aid to Agencies review team ("team") as well as the agencies themselves.

Over a series of three study sessions earlier this year, the staff team presented information to the board on key areas of concern, reviewed similar programs conducted by other agencies, surveyed agency recipients to solicit feedback, and identified potential options to better align the program with the Board's new strategic plan. The result was an updated program that better reflects the goals of the organization, provides greater transparency, and improves competitiveness.

Arapahoe County's Aid to Agencies program augments the safety net provided by the County and supports critical nonprofit agencies that deliver necessary services. To help inform the evaluation, the team researched where the largest gaps in service exist within the County. The findings indicated the need for services among our population is greater than ever, an issue that has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Program Overview

The new program establishes specific funding categories for future Aid to Agencies program grants, replacing the broad language that applicants should fund vulnerable populations and instead focus on four specific categories:

- Behavioral & Mental Healthcare
- Homelessness
- Seniors
- Domestic Violence

Within those categories, the program also annually allocates a portion of the program budget to fund nine programs that supplement the County's existing safety net programs, offering community-based assistance to populations in need.

Service Area	Organization	Geographic Area	Proposed Award
BEHAVIORAL & MENTAL HEALTH			
Mental Health Substance Use	AllHealth Network	Entire County	\$179,540
Mental Health	Aurora Mental Health Center	Entire County	\$180,063
Substance Abuse	Aurora Mental Health Center –Detox	Entire County	\$280,000
HOMELESS			
Shelter	Comitis Crisis Center	Entire County	\$68,000
Residential Program	Family Tree – GOALS	Entire County	\$80,000
SENIORS			
Care Management	Jewish Family Service of Colorado – Aging Care & Connections	Entire County	\$33,000
Transportation Resource Sharing	Tri-Valley Senior Citizens Association	Focus on Eastern Plains	\$10,000
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE			
Emergency Shelter	Gateway Domestic Violence Services	Entire County	\$300,000
Domestic Violence Services for Women & Children	Family Tree – House of Hope	Entire County	\$20,000

The rationale for these specific recommendations is multifold. First, some of these organizations are community health centers which serve uninsured, underinsured, and indigent clients; existing revenue streams do not cover the costs to provide these services to the broader community. Second, some of these organizations provide services to residents at the request of the County. Finally, several of these programs are the only one of their kind within Arapahoe County. If these programs did not receive annual funding, they would need to reduce services, negatively impacting the most vulnerable people in the community and our own County

programs. Many of the agencies listed above have received funding each year of the program since its inception, which further affirms the importance of these safety net services. Rather than have the agency and county staff spend the time submitting and subsequently reviewing these applications, the new program will require organizations to meet stringent reporting requirements on a quarterly or annual basis, depending on the award amount.

The remaining program budget was allocated to a competitive grant program, which sought applications that aligned t the four programmatic funding categories. The new grant program eliminated the existing Tiered category system, established a \$100,000 grant award cap per agency, leveraged an online grant tool to improve submittal and review processes, and updated the application to include additional questions regarding metrics, outcomes, and population.

Competitive Grant Program Results

The Aid to Agencies competitive grant program opened July 15, 2021, and closed August 27, 2021. The program received 40 online applications, totaling approximately \$1.8 million in requests. A review team comprised of staff from the Human Services and Community Resources Departments scored applications based on established criteria and met to discuss scores and finalize recommendations. A complete list of applications received, total funds requested, and scores are included in the Board Summary Report, as well as the evaluation criteria for reference.

The review team has presented several options for the Board to consider in allocating these competitive grant funds:

- Option 1: Allocate available funding based on scores, which would fully fund 16 recipients based on their request, with one receiving partial funding.
- Option 2: Allocate available funding to those scoring 43 and higher, adjusting the recommended award amounts and augmenting program funds with the existing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) food assistance allocation and Community Service Block Grant -CoronaVirus (CSBG-CV) funds for qualified applicants (^).
- Option 3: Amend the 2022 budget with an additional \$50,000 in general fund dollars to allocate available funding to those scoring 43 and higher, adjusting the recommended award amounts.

See the attached Options document for additional detail; staff will present these options and the recommendation.

Fiscal Impact: Total Aid to Agencies Program Budget is \$1,679,500, of which \$527,897 is available for the competitive grant program.

Alternatives: The Board could select one of the alternative options presented in by the team or decline to award the grant program.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

- ☒ Be fiscally sustainable
- ☐ Provide essential and mandated service
- ☒ Be community focused

Staff Recommendation: The review team **recommends advancing Option 2** as it invests the greatest amount of funding into the community where it is most needed and does not require any additional general fund investment. The Board previously allocated \$1.4 million in ARPA Food Assistance; Integrated Family Community Services proposed grant program aligns with this allocation. The County also has approximately \$100,000 in remaining CSBG-CV funds; Doctor's Care has significant experience with federal reporting requirements and is a past recipient of these funds as well.

Staff also recommends as part of the 18th Judicial District split, the County revisit how the problem solving courts have evolved, are funded, and outcomes to ensure continued alignment with Board expectations.

Concurrence: Community Resources Department, Human Services Department.