



Arapahoe County

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Board Summary Report

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Agenda Date: 11/18/2025

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To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Michelle Halstead, Director, Commissioners' Office

Prepared By:
Daniela Villarreal, Management Analyst, Commissioners' Office

Presenter: Daniela Villarreal, Management Analyst, Commissioners' Office

Subject:
3:00 PM *Aid to Agencies 2026 Grant Recommendations

Purpose and Request:

The purpose of this study session is to provide funding recommendations for the 2026 Aid to Agencies competitive grant program for approval by the Board of County Commissioners as part of the 2026 budget.

Alignment with Strategic Plan: Good Governance - Understand and respond to community needs, interests, and values.

Background and Discussion:

Established in 2008, the Aid to Agencies (A2A) program was created by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to provide financial support to nonprofit organizations that address critical service gaps across Arapahoe County. The program is funded through the County's General Fund.

Over time, A2A has evolved to reflect changing community needs and fiscal conditions. Most recently, the program operated with a total budget of \$2,079,500, structured around two primary funding mechanisms:

- **Safety Net Funding:** Annual allocations to core service providers that deliver essential programs the County could not otherwise offer.
- **Competitive Grants:** Merit-based funding opportunities for eligible nonprofits through an open application and review process.

In 2024, budget constraints necessitated a temporary pause of the Competitive Grant program and a reduction in Safety Net allocations. Following the passage of Ballot Measure 1A, the County restored full Safety Net funding and used the opportunity to reassess and strengthen the overall program framework.

Framework Revision and Program Alignment

Through a collaborative process involving the Commissioners' Office, Human Services, and Community Resources departments, staff analyzed community data from multiple sources-including

the Community Health Assessment, Community Needs Assessment, Point-in-Time Count, and prior A2A recipient reports.

This data-driven review informed a revised framework designed to make A2A funding more strategic, equitable, and outcomes-oriented. During the June 9, 2025, Study Session, the BOCC approved the new framework, which consolidates nine previous funding categories into four priority service areas aligned with the County's strategic plan and associated funding allocation:

- Housing and Homeless Services
- Food Assistance
- Mental and Behavioral Health / Substance Use
- Transportation

The framework also refined the definition of Safety Net providers to ensure that the funding supports agencies delivering unique, high-need, and high-impact services that do not duplicate County programs. As a result, the number of directly funded Safety Net providers is intentionally limited to two organizations: Three Birds Alliance and Aurora Mental Health & Recovery Detox.

A standardized criteria emphasizing community impact, organizational capacity, and service to vulnerable populations also was established.

2025 Application Cycle and Review Process

The 2025 A2A application cycle was open from August 11 to September 19, with applications submitted through an online platform. During this period, the A2A team (comprised of the community resources, human services, public health and commissioners' office departments) hosted three applicant workshops to help nonprofits understand the program and the new framework.

A total of 91 applications were received, representing more than \$6 million in funding requests. Three applications were deemed ineligible. The A2A Review Committee scored all eligible applications and met in October to discuss award recommendations.

Based on available funding and total requests, staff developed three funding options for BOCC consideration. (A detailed list of potential awardees for each option is provided in the attachments.)

Eligibility and Funding Priorities

Eligibility Criteria

Organizations must:

- Be a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit;
- Serve Arapahoe County residents; and
- Offer programs aligned with one or more priority service areas and target populations, including:
 - Individuals with disabilities
 - Minority communities
 - Older adults
 - Justice-involved individuals
 - Youth

Evaluation Criteria

Applications were evaluated across three major categories:

Category	Weight	Key Factors
Program Information	33%	Service gap & need, mission alignment, vulnerable populations served, staffing capacity, collaboration
Demographics & Community Engagement	47%	Population served, geographic reach, outreach efforts, and affordability
Tax Status & Financial Information	30%	Financial management, audit/accountability, prior County funding

A summary of recommended funding options is provided below, with a complete list of potential awardees in the attachments.

Option 1: Fund top-scoring organizations at 100% of the request within each category.

Option 2 (Recommended): Fund based on the percentage rank, which funds more entities based on their comparable scores within each category.

Option 3: Fund based on a two-tier model that allocates a percentage of funding based on scores (Tier I = 85%, Tier II = 50%).

Alternatives: The Board could select an alternating funding option, choose not to fund either funding option as presented, or decline to award the grant program.

Fiscal Impact: The Aid to Agencies program budget (subject to Board approval in the 2026 budget) is \$3,079,500, of which \$580,000 is available for safety nets.

Alignment with Strategic Implementation Strategies: The attached framework helps Arapahoe County institutionalize values-based, transparent decision-making, documenting how we make decisions and carry out actions to achieve the county's strategic plan.

Staff Recommendation: The review team recommends advancing option two, as it provides funding to the top scoring in each of the priority service areas with amended amounts.

Concurrence: The Aid to Agencies Review Team (Community Resources Department, Human Resources Department and Public Health Department).