



Aid to Agencies Program Proposal

May 24, 2021 Study Session

Purpose

- The purpose of this study session is to present a recommended proposal for Board consideration regarding the future of the Aid to Agencies program
- This evaluation effort stems from a request from the Board that all programs, including Aid to Agencies, be reevaluated to ensure funds are being used in the most responsible way
- The following proposal reflects feedback the review team (“team”) received from the Board at the two previous study sessions as well as the agencies during the program evaluation
- The goal of this effort is to improve accountability, foster more competition, and increase exposure and recognition of the County’s support to local non-profits

Background

- The Aid to Agencies grant program provides a necessary lifeline for non-profit organizations that serve Arapahoe County residents
- Since its inception, the program has evolved several times
- Numerous efforts have been made to make the program more competitive in order to fund additional agencies
 - A subset of the review team prescreens applicants to identify any ineligible agencies before applications are sent to the full review team
 - The application and scoresheet have been restructured multiple times to solicit more detailed reporting information
 - Applicants who do not respond to questions completely receive lower scores during the review process

Evidence of Need in Arapahoe County

- Between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020, at least 31,207 people in the metro area accessed services or housing supports related to **homelessness**, according to the State of Homelessness 2020 report
- According to an analysis from the National Commission on COVID-19 and Criminal Justice, the number of **domestic violence** incidents in the US increased by 8.1% after lockdown orders
 - In 2019, 5% of all fatal domestic violence-related incidents in Colorado occurred in Arapahoe County
- Out of 5,470 respondents over 18 who completed representative panel surveys between June 24-30, 2020, 40.9% reported at least one adverse **mental or behavioral health** condition
 - A 2018 health update from Tri-County Health Department found that 10% of adults in Arapahoe County experienced 14 or more days of poor mental health within the last 30 days
- According to the 2018 Arapahoe County Assessment Survey for Older Adults, 25% of **older adults** reported “minor” problems with independent living and 27% experienced difficulties with activities like eating and walking

Program Funding Categories

- The team recommends establishing specific funding categories for future Aid to Agencies grants, replacing the broad language of funding vulnerable populations and instead focusing on four categories:
 - Behavioral and Mental Health
 - Homelessness
 - Seniors
 - Domestic Violence
- Within these categories, staff recommends annually allocating a portion of the Aid to Agencies budget to fund nine programs that supplement the County's existing safety net programs and offer community-based assistance to populations in need

Recommendations to Augment Existing Safety Net

Service Area	Organization	Geographic Area	Proposed Award
BEHAVIORAL AND MENTAL HEALTH			
Mental Health Substance Use	AllHealth Network	Entire county	\$179,540
Mental Health	Aurora Mental Health Center	Entire county	\$180,063
Substance Use	Aurora Mental Health Center – Detox	Entire county	\$280,000
HOMELESSNESS			
Emergency 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 and 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
Shelter Domestic Violence Services for women and children	Family Tree - House of Hope	Entire county	\$20,000

Why These Agencies?

- **Behavioral and Mental Health**
 - AllHealth Network operates a walk-in crisis center for behavioral health services and is a drop off resource for law enforcement when a citizen has a behavioral health emergency
 - Aurora Mental Health Center's Connect to Care program provides clients immediate access to mental health services without an appointment
 - Aurora Mental Health Center's East Metro Detox and Recovery Services program serves as the only non-hospital detox facility in the county
- **Homelessness**
 - Comitis Crisis Center serves as the only emergency shelter in the eastern part of the metro Denver region
 - Family Tree - GOALS is home to the first residential 2Gen program for families experiencing homelessness in Arapahoe County and Aurora
- **Seniors**
 - Jewish Family Service of Colorado – Aging Care and Connections was asked by Arapahoe County to do care management after other options were found to be too expensive
 - Tri-Valley Senior Citizens Association focuses specifically on serving older residents who live on the eastern part of the county by providing access to transportation and other services
- **Domestic Violence**
 - Gateway Domestic Violence Services is the only domestic violence-specific shelter in Arapahoe County
 - Family Tree - House of Hope provides safe shelter and supportive services to women and children experiencing homelessness usually as a result of domestic violence

Safety Net Augmentation

- Implement a \$300,000 cap on the amount a single agency or program can receive
 - If a \$300,000 cap was implemented, all but two of the identified programs would maintain 2021 funding amounts
 - Gateway Domestic Violence Services would be reduced by \$45,000 to reach the \$300,000 cap
 - Tri-Valley Senior Citizens Association would be reduced by \$2,000
 - This would hopefully allow these programs to continue providing services without having to make dramatic cuts
- Staff also recognizes that many agencies utilize Aid to Agencies awards to leverage federal funds, and there is concern that reducing or eliminating this funding would lead to agencies receiving fewer federal grants as well

Competitive Grant Program

- Limit Aid to Agencies applications to the four program areas:
 - Behavioral and Mental Healthcare
 - Homelessness
 - Seniors
 - Domestic Violence
- Place a cap on the amount that can be awarded to a single agency of \$100,000
- Adjust grant agreements to include more expectations around awareness and public education to better evaluate metrics and outcomes
- Increase transparency by providing a timeline, checklist of required materials, sample grant agreement, and other information on the website along with the application
- Update the application to include more questions related to diversity and inclusivity
- Eliminate the current Tier I/Tier II category system

Reporting Requirements

- All annually funded agencies would be required to provide quarterly updates, with at least one being presented to the Board in-person at least once per year
- Agencies receiving competitive grants would be required to report once a year, and at the request of the Board
- Metrics would include:
 - How funds are being used
 - What services are being provided
 - Outcomes for Arapahoe County residents
 - Impact of funding on population
 - Number of total clients served
 - Number of Arapahoe County residents served
 - Demographic information of clients served
 - Details on work being done to promote inclusivity and diversity
 - Percent of funding going towards administrative costs
 - Funding percentage of total revenue
 - Geographic areas served
 - Activities and events performed within Arapahoe County
 - Outreach efforts
 - Fundraising events held

Timeline

- The team also proposes condensing the timeline for the application and review process as follows:
 - Late June/early July: post the application via Award Force on website
 - August: application deadline six (6) weeks after posting
 - September: review team meeting
 - October: study session with BOCC
 - December: budget approval/award decision notifications
 - January: materials submitted/funds disbursed

Questions and Next Steps

