



Legislation Text

File #: 22-214, **Version:** 1

To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Michelle Halstead, Director, Commissioners' Office

Prepared By:

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Presenter: Michelle Halstead, Director, Commissioners' Office; Alexander Nelson, Management Analyst I, Commissioners' Office; Cheryl Ternes, Director, Human Services; Lisa Vantine, Coroner's Office; Karl Herrmann, Deputy Clerk & Recorder, Clerk & Recorder's Office; Bryan Weimer, Director, Public Works & Development

Subject:

3:00 PM *ARPA Additional County Operations

Purpose and Request:

The purpose of this study session is to consider additional county operations requests seeking ARPA funds.

Background and Discussion: The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) is a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill signed into law March 2021. The goal of ARPA is to support public health response, address negative economic impacts resulting from or exacerbated by the COVID-19 public health emergency, replace public sector revenue loss, address premium pay for essential workers, and invest in water, sewer and broadband infrastructure. The legislation builds on the CARES Act funding from last year, which provided Arapahoe County \$114 million in one-time funding.

Last year, the Board updated its Response & Recovery Plan Goals and Objectives and expanded its list of initial programmatic areas for potential funding consideration. The Board also held 14 stakeholder outreach meetings to understand community needs and solicit funding proposals. Based on U.S. Treasury Guidance and stakeholder input, an interdisciplinary staff team presented an allocation approach as well as evaluation criteria matrix to help inform future Board decision-making. This information was presented at a Sept. 21, 2021, study session and received Board approval to move forward. Throughout Q3 2021, the Board reviewed numerous

proposals within key programmatic areas, completing initial allocations, with numerous investments requiring further information. Links to the previous study sessions are attached for reference.

The purpose of this study session is to review additional county operations requests that are eligible for ARPA funds. There are five eligible projects for review.

- **Continuation of the 3.5 TGFP through June of 2023 (Human Services):** The Board has previously approved funding for 3.5 temporary grant funded positions (TGFP) in Human Services to provide navigation and support for disadvantaged individuals and families experiencing the negative impacts of COVID-19. The original approval provided funding for these positions through June of 2022. However, Human Services staff have noted that there is still need for these positions, so they are requesting additional funding to continue the positions for one more year through June of 2023. The funding request for this staffing continuation is \$254,000.
- **Updated Postmortem Imaging Equipment (Coroner):** The Coroner is requesting ARPA funds to purchase new postmortem imaging equipment to more efficiently process the backlog created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The new equipment would reduce the required investigation time and reduce staff radiation and disease exposure while imaging bodies. In addition to helping mitigate the existing backlog, this new equipment would help create efficiencies for future responses to mass fatalities and emergency operations. The funding request for this equipment is \$475,000.
- **Clerk & Recorder Staff Vaccine Incentive (Clerk & Recorder):** The Clerk & Recorder's Office is requesting ARPA funding to pay \$100 to each employee who can prove full vaccination against COVID-19. The intent behind these incentive payments is to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates, ultimately creating a safer workplace and reducing transmission to members of the public. The request for this incentive is \$13,000.
- **Stormwater Projects (Public Works & Development):** Public Works & Development is requesting ARPA funds for the replacement of 132 culverts in eastern Arapahoe County. Some of these replacements occurred in 2021, and the remaining are scheduled to be complete by 2024. The total cost for these culvert replacements is \$1,064,884; leveraging one-time funding enables the department to invest limited Road & Bridge funds into maintenance of other assets. Staff are confirming the total eligible amount, but it will not exceed the total project cost.
- **Countywide Fiber Master Plan (Public Works & Development):** Public Works & Development is requesting ARPA funds to prepare a countywide fiber master plan. Specifically, the master plan would refine Arapahoe County's role in deploying countywide fiber infrastructure, outline existing conditions of internet services in the county, develop a strategic approach to accomplish the fiber vision established by the county, and determine funding approaches for accomplishing the vision. The total project cost for this master plan is \$400,000; a portion of this cost could be covered with ARPA funds. Staff are confirming the total eligible amount, but it will not exceed the total project cost.

Additional project submittals were determined to be ineligible and are noted on the spreadsheet for future general government/revenue loss funding consideration. Based on previous Board direction, the ARPA team will provide policy options for using that funding for consideration this summer.

Fiscal Impact: If the Board approves the projects as requested, the maximum total fiscal impact would be \$2,206,884 of ARPA funds.

Alternatives: The Board could modify or decline to move forward with this proposal as presented.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

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

Staff Recommendation: Based on the established scoring criteria, staff recommends that the Board fund the following:

- Continuation of the 3.5 TGFP Positions (Human Services)
- Updated Postmortem Imaging Equipment (Coroner)
- Stormwater Projects - Culvert Replacements (Public Works & Development)
- Countywide Fiber Master Plan (Public Works & Development)

Concurrence: ARPA Team