



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 16, 2021

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Christopher A. Leonard *CAF*
Deputy County Executive

SUBJECT: Consolidated Community Funding Pool Process Improvement Recommendations

In response to a December 1, 2020 Joint Board Matter directing staff to review the Consolidated Community Funding Pool (CCFP) with a specific eye toward the basic needs of housing and food supports, the following set of process changes are presented as actionable for the next funding cycle. These changes address troubling service level gaps that have developed in past funding cycles. A multidisciplinary workgroup comprised of Consolidated Community Funding Advisory Committee (CCFAC) members, non-profit executive directors, and county staff worked to develop functional process changes to the CCFP. That workgroup group presented and discussed the changes at the January 10, 2021 CCFAC meeting as well as to the Community Action Advisory Board (CAAB) and staff now consider these changes ready for implementation in the next funding cycle starting July 1, 2022. As a reminder, the CCFP is a consolidated competitive funding source made up of the County's general funds, Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to form one streamlined RFP process.

Past funding cycle gaps and the impact of COVID-19 have highlighted the need to ensure adequate basic needs are resourced throughout the county. The CCFP is a competitive funding process which regularly sees basic needs of housing and food supports competing for funding with non-basic needs programs and services. Prior funding cycles have utilized a single Request for Proposal (RFP) process to facilitate the competitive nature of the CCFP. Appropriately, the CCFP offers no guarantee to any organization to be funded. However, it is not appropriate for areas of the county to be left without any basic needs funding support, and that was an unintended outcome of the competitive process.

Two-lane strategy

To address troubling service gaps, a two-lane strategy will be implemented. One lane, with a separate RFP, will use data to allocate housing and food support dollars to all areas of the county, based on need. This approach applies lessons learned from the process used to disburse \$20 million of CARES Act Supplemental Basic Needs dollars, essentially ensuring funding is proportionate to identified need. This shift in strategy will initially allocate between \$5-\$6 million dollars of the current CCFP budget, an amount based upon historical CCFP spending figures for food and housing programs. Moving forward, the funding amount in this lane may vary by cycle based on community conditions. The language in this RFP will be specific and directly address housing and food to ensure supports are available without gaps in services.

Office of the County Executive
12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 552
Fairfax, VA 22035-0066
703-324-2531, TTY 711, Fax 703-324-3956
www.fairfaxcounty.gov

A second lane for the two-lane strategy, facilitated through a completely separate RFP, would continue to support important services which build self-sufficiency, provide health programs, assist with financial stability, encourage positive behaviors, and build strong social networks. Once the housing and food supports lane is established, this would leave between \$7-\$8 million for this funding area. Both RFPs will be written in compliance with the spirit, as well as the letter, of the county's One Fairfax Policy.

Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) model

As the Board is aware, the CCFP uses a community member SAC model to rate proposals and recommend funding awards. As the new two-lane process would require two RFPs, there would also be two SACs. This will ensure the housing and food supports proposals will be read and scored by a SAC familiar with the specific requirements of the RFP, that services are awarded commensurate with need, and that funds are equitably distributed. A separate SAC will evaluate proposals for the second RFP. Due to the volume of proposals received for these services, the SAC would continue to be split into working groups.

To ensure both SACs have important demographic, equity and needs-based information, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), made up of county staff who have subject matter expertise, will be strengthened through participation early in the process. Additionally, the Consolidated Community Funding Advisory Committee (CCFAC) has a workgroup focused on SAC and TAC improvements.

Next steps

There is recognition that the term "basic needs" can encompass other services beyond food and housing, and what is critical to well-being can vary from person to person. However, within the context of CCFP and lane one, basic needs are inclusive of food and housing supports. It is also important to note that the CCFP is not the only source of funding for these types of programs. Fairfax County supports broader basic needs (including other food and housing programs) through the larger Health, Housing and Human Services budget, federal and state programs, and emergency funding due to the pandemic. Non-profit and faith-based partners also provide emergency services that are not funded by the county, further strengthening the local safety net.

In addition to the two-lane process, a review of current CCFP contracted programs will be undertaken each cycle. Some services have been continually funded through the CCFP over the years and have become integral to the way the county does business, and some services supplement existing county-funded programs awarded through another procurement. To ensure we do not lose these critical components of our human services systems, these programs should not be competed in the CCFP. Other funding sources could be more appropriate, and the regular review will help identify these programs and alternative funding options.

To continue to ensure an adequate number and well-qualified SAC members, staff will be asking each member of the Board of Supervisors (BOS) to provide the names of three county residents who will agree to serve on one of the SACs, supplementing additional outreach to ensure a large pool of SAC members.

Fairfax County relies on non-profit and community-based partners to deliver crucial services in our community. This strategy builds upon the CCFP premise that these organizations know their communities, are best positioned to offer these services, and can leverage CCFP and other resources and raise additional funds to maximize the county's CCFP investment.

Work will begin immediately to develop the requirements needed to start this two-lane approach. Staff feel strongly the process changes will enhance the end product and significantly reduce, if not eliminate, the service gap issues we have seen in the past. Current CCFP awardees are in the FY 2021-2022 cycle; these changes would be implemented for the FY 2023-2024 cycle, beginning July 1, 2022. RFPs for the FY 2023-2024 cycle are expected to be released Fall 2021. As this work gets underway, staff will be reworking the funding categories to align with this new two-lane approach and will keep the Board informed and solicit your feedback on these category updates before they are finalized.

For additional questions, please contact Sarah Allen, Deputy Director of Neighborhood and Community Services, at 703-324-7926 or Sarah.Allen@fairfaxcounty.gov.

cc: Bryan J. Hill, County Executive
Joseph M. Mondoro, Chief Financial Officer
David M. Rohrer, Deputy County Executive
Rachel Flynn, Deputy County Executive
Lloyd Tucker, Director, Neighborhood and Community Services
Sarah Allen, Deputy Director, Neighborhood and Community Services