



## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

# AGENDA REQUEST & STAFF REPORT

**MEETING DATE:** March 22, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Consideration of ARPA Funding to support the Homeless Outreach Services Team

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:**

Move approval to extend and increase American Rescue Plan Act Funds to fund 3.0 FTE through June 2026 for Countywide Homeless Outreach Services.

**BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The Board approved \$1,065,000 on December 1, 2021 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support Countywide Homeless Outreach Services through December 2024. This included 3.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, a truck, and various materials and supplies. Health Services estimates \$883,000 of the ARPA funding allocation will be spent through December 2024, leaving \$182,000 unspent at that time.

Health Services is requesting the Board approve extending support for Countywide Homeless Outreach Services through July 2026. Specifically, the department is requesting any unspent funds from the original allocation be allowed to be spent after December 2024 and for the Board to reallocate \$337,619 from either the ARPA Public Health Response Contingency or ARPA Health Unintended Consequences Reserve for Homeless Outreach Services. The total estimated budget for the time period January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025 is \$519,619.

This extension and additional contribution to Countywide Homeless Outreach Services will help retain hired staff who will continue to help to address increased need for homeless outreach and services in the community, including providing support to the Navigation Center, Project Turnkey and the Structured Camps being acquired/developed by the City of Bend. In addition, these services will continue to support increased need in Sisters, La Pine and Redmond with the intention to provide support to Oasis Village upon its completion. A critical part of the success of all of these projects is having consistent and reliable services responding on site regularly. Due to current hiring challenges, retention of these staff is critical, thus the request to convert to regular.

The extension of the ARPA Funds would continue to cover the cost of three positions: 2.0 FTE Behavioral Health Specialist I (position #2993 and #2994) and 1.0 FTE Peer Support Specialist (position #2995) through July 2026, with the overall request to convert them from limited duration to regular. This will maintain capacity to the existing team, which previously had only 1.0 FTE Behavioral Health Specialist I, and will continue to make it possible to assign one to cover Bend and Redmond and one to cover Sisters and La Pine. The Peer will continue to serve all four communities, as needed. In addition, \$12,000 will be used to purchase supplies. Health Services will continue to seek sustainable funds to support these services and positions long-term.

Without continued funding, retention of existing staff is compromised and Health Services may be unable to offer logistical or programmatic support in our community or be able to meet the increasing need for services and connection to services in this population

Health Services is requesting these positions be converted from limited duration to regular in order to retain staff and continuity of services throughout the Homelessness Emergency Declaration period. Should funding discontinue or be unavailable, Health Services will consider the future of these positions within the budgeting process. If supported by the Board, a budget and FTE resolution from the Finance Department will be forthcoming.

**BUDGET IMPACTS:** Total budget for time period January 2025 to July 2026 is \$519,619. This includes extending the date of expenditure of original ARPA Homeless Outreach Services allocation to July 2026, and increase ARPA allocation by \$337,619. The department recommends using ARPA Public Health Response Contingency (current balance is \$624,395) or ARPA Health Unintended Consequences Reserve (current balance is \$1,075,000).

**ATTENDANCE:**

Holly Harris, Behavioral Health Deputy Director  
Cheryl Smallman, Business Intelligence Officer  
Laura Skundrick, Finance  
Dan Emerson, Finance