

2024 BOCC Retreat Discussion Topic: ARPA Funds Set Aside to Address Homelessness

Background: Executive Orders were signed in 2023 to help address the crisis of homelessness in Oregon. Central Oregon received nearly \$15 million in State funding in 2023 to address homelessness. Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC) convened the Multi-Agency Council (MAC) group required by the order to coordinate the distribution of funds, with the task of meeting three goals:

- Preventing 354 households from becoming homeless
- Creating 111 new shelter beds
- Rehousing 161 unsheltered individuals

The Coordinated Homeless Response Office (CHRO) worked in close partnership with COIC on the facilitation and implementation of the historic Executive Order funding, and helped the region meet the goals.

However, more progress is needed to address gaps in the Homeless Response System. For example, per the January 2023 Point in Time (PIT) Count, there were 1,467 individuals living unhoused in Deschutes County, the vast majority (73%) of whom live unsheltered. The CHRO Board set the goal of expanding immediate sheltering options to accommodate 30% of Deschutes County's unsheltered population.

Public agencies met as a sub-workgroup (Public Partners Roundtable – PPR) of the Emergency Executive Council to identify properties that could be utilized to develop a shelter site or sites, a process for supporting the development of those sites and an RFP intended to provide additional resources and support to increase the number of places available to those living unhoused in Central Oregon.

Budget: The investment partners (cities, county, state, etc.) have goals and expectations for what their contributions to this process achieve. COIC estimates approximately up to \$4m in dedicated, one-time funding to support the work and is soliciting proposals from qualified organizations to design, develop, and operate temporary shelter sites for Central Oregonians living unsheltered.

Proposed Timeline:

- February 5, 2024 Issuance of RFP Documents
- February 12, 2024 RFP Open House
- February 20, 2024 Deadline for Proposal Submission (Phase 1)
- March 15, 2024 Deadline for Proposal Submission (Phase 2)
- March 22, 2024 Notice of Intent to Award(s)

Need: Those designing the RFP need clarity on resources that will be committed to funding approved projects from each entity.

- The CHRO Governing Board agreed to support a County-wide RFP to address unsheltered homelessness and unsanctioned encampments.

- The CHRO Board agreed to include resources from different entities in the RFP.
- The County has ~\$2 Mil in ARPA funds set aside to support efforts to address homelessness.
- It is unclear how much if any of that amount will be committed to the pool of dollars to be awarded through the CHRO RFP.

Request: Can Commissioners consider the following options and provide guidance to help this work move forward as soon as possible?

1. Commit the entire amount, no strings attached beyond the specific parameters of the RFP which are in line with the CHRO Values and Strategic Plan and the goal of the PPR Workgroup – add up to 300 additional beds for unsheltered homeless in the community.
2. Commit a portion of the amount, no strings attached as above.
3. Commit the entire amount only for projects that specifically address development of locations that would help alleviate the individuals living on land implicated in the DSL Land exchange.
4. Commit the entire amount with a carve out amount that must be specifically spent for projects that specifically address development of locations that would help alleviate the individuals living on land implicated in the DSL Land exchange.

Considerations:

- It is critical that providers have a sense of the total dollar amount available, the maximum amount for awards and the number of awards in order to make the decision to apply.
- We do not want providers to apply and then experience a lack of support b/c a need/requirement was not explicitly identified during the process.
- Combining resources into a pool with limited restrictions, will increase overall resources as well as the likely creativity and flexibility of projects.
- Projects that significantly increase beds may help to address the concerns about asking people to leave the DSL Land exchange area even without tying directly to that effort.
- Conversely, having a large or small project tied directly to that area, may help ease the difficulties of requiring people to leave.
- Remember, that even if a project is directly linked to the land swap area, there is no way to require people to leave one location and go to another specific location.
- Last, and in my view important, a combined RFP with combined resources embodies the CHRO value of not leaving partners alone and addressing some of the difficulties of siting in communities.