

Congressman John Curtis

FY 2022 Community Project Funding Request

Requesting Organization: San Juan County

Organizational Contact: Mack McDonald
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Project Description: (1,000 characters)

San Juan County requests Community Project Funding to reestablish the Victims of Mills Tailings Exposure Cancer Screening Program that was originally funded through the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, And Related Agencies Appropriation Bill of 2009. The Utah Department of Public Health received over \$400,000 in funding and then-Senators Hatch and Bennett made the program request for “health education and screening for citizens exposed to uranium mill tailings.”

By way of background, the Monticello Mill was owned and operated by the United States Government between 1941 and the early 1960s. In 1989 the Environmental Protection Agency placed the Mill and the tailings site on the Department of Energy’s National Priority List for cleanup and removal of toxic waste. The locations were ultimately designated as superfund sites by 2000 and the US Government spent over \$280 million on additional cleanup.

Prior to this, however, the toxic waste polluted the air and waterways in the greater-Monticello community. This led to noticeably high rates of cancer diagnoses, some tragically resulting in death, which is why Senators Hatch and Bennett fought to bring more resources to the community to be used for cancer screening.

In partnership with the Utah Department of Public Health, the then-Southeast Utah District Health Department (SEUDHD) administered the newly-established cancer screening program made possible by the Community Project Funding request. Individuals would call or visit the local SEUDHD, complete an application to determine eligibility, and could then receive a voucher for a doctor’s appointment at local hospitals or a health care provider in the community. To qualify, individuals needed to live in the greater Monticello community, which included the Blanding, roughly 20 miles South of Monticello, and Moab, about 70 miles North, between 1941-2000.

If individuals qualified, they could receive a voucher from the SEUDHD to use to pay for a physical examination and then for a battery of cancer screens, namely skin cancers, lymphoma, breast cancer, or cancers of the brain. Over 900 individuals were screened for cancer through this program, resulting in about 10% being diagnosed with cancer.

This program would operate similarly and be led by San Juan County government. Individuals would visit the San Juan County government building or call the local office to determine if they are eligible. If they

are, they would share their insurance status for San Juan County to take to the local hospitals and determine how much they would pay based off their insurance. San Juan County would pay whatever a patient's insurance doesn't cover for both the physical examination and for the cancer screen. For uninsured individuals, San Juan County would pay the full amount for both (if needed).

In addition to funding for cancer screens, funds would be needed for three full-time marketing professionals to visit hospitals, community centers, and attend town hall meetings in order to raise awareness about this program for FY22. They would also be given resources to use for digital, radio, and TV advertising in the area.

Finally, San Juan County would need to hire van drivers to transport individuals to and from appointments who are disabled or do not have access to reliable transportation. This also includes a yearly gas stipend of \$5,000.

Budget Breakout:

Program Advertising & Education Professionals	Administration and marketing employees @ \$35,000/person	\$105,000
Digital/TV Advertising/Radio Advertising	Facebook/Only Display Ads + Radio Advertising + streamed ads first 3 months	\$60,000
Van/Bus Drivers	4 Van Drivers @ \$12/hour, 3 hours/day, 4 days/week (1 driver/day)	\$29,952
Physical Examination	\$50/exam, 2,000 patients	\$100,000
Cancer Screens	\$216 screen, 1,000 screens (assumes of the 2,000 patients who received physicals, half will be sent for a follow-up cancer screen) \$216 – average cost of all screenings previously included in VMTE screening program	\$216,000
Gas	Gas for van drivers	\$5,000
TOTAL		\$515,952

Why this is a good use of taxpayer funds:

This is a good use of taxpayer funds because early detection of cancers related to the exposure in Monticello will lead to much better outcomes and much less overall expense to treat the cancer. Catching a handful of cancers that have resulted from the exposure very early will save enough money in the overall course of treatment to fund the entire program.

To that end, if 10% of cancers were detected from the screening program in 2009 of the 950 individuals screened, then that means about 95 patients received proper cancer care. The average amount a cancer treatment costs is \$150,000 according to AARP. This, multiplied by the 95 patients, amounts to over \$14 million, well above the total amount we are requesting for this project.

Is the grantee a nonprofit: YES

Is another Member making a request for this same project: NO

