

Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board

CoC Bi-Monthly Meeting

July 28, 2020; 10:00AM to 12:00PM

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

Purpose: The Homeless Advisory Board (HAB) is a public/private partnership formed to assist and recommend to Allegheny County, the City of Pittsburgh, the City of McKeesport and the Municipality of Penn Hills on public policy, programs, activities, data and all other efforts that will eliminate homelessness and improve the wellbeing of persons and families who are homeless.

HAB Members¹

Frank Aggazio (P)	Abigail Horn (P)	Christy Pietryga (P)
Meg Balsamico (P)	Knowledge Build Hudson (P)	Lea Etta Rhodes (P)
Jerry Cafardi (P)	Joe Lagana (P)	Gale Schwartz (P)
Jane Downing (P)	John Lovelace (P)	Kyona White (P)
Laura Drogowski (P)	Jennifer McCurry (P)	Kellie Wild
Annette Fetchko (P)	Michael Murray	Bethany Wingerson (P)
Pete Giacalone (P)	Susie Puskar (P)	

In addition to the below notes, [the meeting recording can be accessed here](#).

Minutes

1. Welcome—John Lovelace

May 2020 Meeting Summary was approved by the HAB.

2. Housing Stability Funding

Recognizing the tremendous impact the pandemic was having on housing instability and the changing landscape of resources made available in response, the HAB invited speakers to present on housing funds intended to maintain housing for County residents. Presentation slides are available in Appendix A for the following:

- Cassa Collinge, Allegheny County Economic Develops (ACED): Allegheny County CARES Rent Relief Program
- Cassa Collinge: ACED/City of Pittsburgh Emergency Solutions Grants
- Jessica Smith Perry, Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA): URA Housing Stabilization Fund
- Kara McFadden and Anna Gongaware, DHS: Aggregate review of area Foundations grant making in response to pandemic

3. IO Updates

Utilizing Unified Funding Agency (UFA) status—Rob Eamigh

While there has not been any word from HUD regarding this year's CoC Program Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), which is the annual application process from CoC's to receive CoC Program Funding, DHS received official approval from HUD reaffirming DHS's status as Unified Funding Agency (UFA) for the CoC, enabling the CoC to continue working forwarding on implementing the benefits that come with having a UFA. The first course of action that was put into place was moving all HUD CoC Program grants to be on the same time cycle, so they are now all consistent July 1 start dates. With that in place, DHS is now working through the UFA process that the HAB approved around funding redistribution when necessary in

¹ (P) indicates HAB members who were present for the meeting.

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order to utilize all CoC Program funds. This will be DHS's first full year of having UFA status, and the first main adjustment was moving all HUD grants to July 1 start date. As such, after the first quarter of spending DHS will do a deep review of spending levels and if there are trends of over- or under-spending, DHS will work with the programs to assess how those trends are expecting to move forward and if there are expectations of underspending, funds will be redistributed to other programs who have capacity.

Home4Good—Hilary Scherer

DHS received notice on July 17th of our Home4Good conditional award of about \$820,000. As a reminder, for the application we submitted broad funding categories that we anticipated the CoC might use funds for based on input from the HAB and CoC at large. We now need to submit a short narrative describing the projects. As such, based on the priority feedback previously shared, recognition of other funding available (such as CARES rental relief) and consideration of the flexibility of Home4Good funds and CoC needs (e.g., thinking about where other funds have restrictions that Home4Good does not), as well as Home4Good being one-year grants so considering both the ability to effectively getting funding out quickly and the funds being effectively utilized within a year, we are putting together a preliminary recommendation of funding that will go out for public comment and HAB comment and vote before submitting to PHFA. Those recommendations include:

- Federally Qualified Health Centers and Emergency Shelter project to integrate health supports into the shelters. Estimated at \$250,000, this would bring electronic workstations and FQHC staff into the shelters;
- CoC Website Development and Maintenance;
- Capital Improvements Funds, for both physical space and technology needs;
- Behavioral Health Training Funds, to support homeless providers around both recognizing BH needs as well as handling situations; and
- Housing Flex Funds, a broad category of housing support funds which would be accessed by providers across the CoC to use for an array of things that act as final barriers to getting service participants into permanent housing, including for supporting individuals and families moving on from homeless housing programs to mainstream housing (thus opening spaces in homeless system housing), supporting individuals and families getting housed through homeless system housing, and supporting individuals and families getting into mainstream housing directly from emergency shelters or prior to becoming homeless.

Again, this proposal will be put out to the CoC and HAB for review and comment, before the final allocations categories are approved by the HAB.

System Updates—Cynthia Shields

- Jessica McKown has accepted the position of Homeless Data and Performance Outcomes Manager, which will include responsibility over many of the areas that Terri Laver has diligently carried for DHS and the CoC over her many years of service.
- HUD has approved the projects submitted for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) so those will move forward. In addition, we have collaborated with the National Council and AIU to bring together a virtual symposium fortifying the collaboration around youth and transition age youth (TAY) and homeless programs.
- Winter Shelter repairs are scheduled to be done for the opening in November, while now there is a focus on Covid response and handling the need to limit the capacity at Smithfield to meet pandemic safety procedures. Working with other shelters and planning teams to develop overflow plans and processes.
- So far 79 individuals have been housed in the Safe Haven Hotel, with most of these individuals involved with the homeless system, but some from across human service systems.
 - Related note: had a donation of tablets from AHN that has enabled everyone in Safe Haven to have access to telehealth services. Another 150 being dispersed to family shelters for people to have access to telehealth, homework, other needs.
- Initiated initiative with the shelters, County Health Department and other stakeholders to get more

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access to health care at the shelters; have connect shelters and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) and the next step is to install the telehealth workstations at the shelters so that each shelter has the technology capabilities to connect with the FQHC platforms and support health visits in the shelter space. Additionally, FQHC staff will be in the shelters for health care resources including vaccines, PCP connections and wellness visits.

4. Committee Updates

CoC Analysis and Planning Committee—Pete Giacalone

Committee will continue their review of data, including the upcoming August meeting's review of the Performance Measures. These reviews enable the CoC to assess system performance, and Mr. Giacalone noted some specific examples of noted trends from reviews, including: emergency shelters improving their overall data quality and successfully existing clients; bridge house programs are providing housing for shorter periods of time with improved turnaround times for clients; rapid rehousing programs are moving people into housing a little more quickly. In addition to the regular performance measure reviews, the Committee will also be exploring data regarding death that have occurred after individuals have been moved into stable housing to assess for patterns and trends for system consideration.

Homeless Outreach Coordination Committee (HOCC)—Laura Drogowski

HOCC updates were provided around key discussion categories from recent meetings:
COVID-19

- Continued feedback in and out of meeting re: COVID-19 uptick concerns (food access, doubling up, showers, phone plan length).
- Several providers noted that initial guidance to limit interactions in camps/with people outside was needed or else they do not believe that people would've taken as seriously.
- Chief Kudrav and Dr. Kohl's advising/insights have been instructive.
- Group discussed holding a future discussion of enhancements/resources that were made available during COVID-19 that would ideally endure.

Return to "Business as Usual"

- Since April, HOCC has been having remote, round robin updates from each provider. Providers have been extremely adaptive in meeting the needs of participants (with support from DHS and foundation community). This has been very informative and allowed for a forum to share lessons learned.
- During most recent working group and general meetings, HOCC feels it's appropriate to shift focus back to strategic goals/standard format:
 - Training, support for, and alignment of organizations;
 - Public safety/law enforcement working group development (creation to allow for separate prioritization of related topics);
 - Criminal justice working group (continued focus on jail release, DHS dashboard/PD partnership);
 - Survey for other groups (municipalities outside of Pittsburgh, risk of exploitation - limited capacity, a lot of parallel efforts across communities);

BLM/Equity

- We are fortunate to have longstanding participation/support of public safety in HOCC, with members willing to identify collaborative/alternative responses. We plan to continue pursuing these discussions in HOCC (with a separate working group so as not to take away from Outreach support focus).
- Given heightened awareness and momentum for change, members suggested that we use the Activist/Organization Collective Demands to center our work and ensure we are focused on equity;
- Continuing to keep group abreast of Just Housing/re-entry efforts spearheaded by DHS working group.

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Communication and Education Committee—Jennifer McCurry

Following the May meeting, the Committee has been grateful for the comments received regarding plans for the CoC website. The Committee continues to move forward on visions for how to expand engagement through a webpage and will present the ideas to the HAB Executive Committee for guidance on next steps.

Provider Committee—LeaEtta Rhodes

Currently the Provider Committee is in the process of conduct a survey of Providers to capture what key concerns and/or needs are. The intent is to use the results to guide areas of work for the Committee moving forward. Regarding other areas of work for the Committee: Erin Dalton and Andy Halfhill presented on the utilization of existing data for a predictive risk model in replace of the VI-SPDAT within Coordinated Entry; there are efforts to develop universal forms at the service category level (e.g., shelters) so that providers can more easily share information; and Committee members are continuing to coordinate with DHS to explore opportunities and needs around mental health service training for homeless provider agency staff.

5. Public Comment

- No comments.

Next CoC Meeting

September 28, 2020 from 10:00am to 12:00pm
Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

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Appendix A Housing Stability Funding Presentations

County CARES Rent Relief Program



Allegheny County CARES Rent Relief Program



Background

- **House Bill 2510:** 5/29/20 legislation that included the creation of dedicated rental assistance program to help those whose livelihoods have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic stay in their homes.
- **Pennsylvania Housing and Finance Agency (PHFA):**
Rental Assistance: Managed by PHFA and allocated to each County to implement in-keeping with PHFA's established CARES Rent Relief Program Guidelines.
- **Allegheny County Economic Development (ACED):** ACED is receiving and implementing the Rental Assistance Program on behalf of Allegheny County. ACED is working closely with Allegheny County Department of Human Services (ACDHS) and many community partners.

AC CARES-RRP: Funding

- **Pennsylvania:** \$150,000,000 statewide for CARES-RRP
- **Allegheny County:**
 - PHFA allocation: based upon a population-weighted formula. Could be ~ \$22,500,000.
 - Allegheny County allocation: \$14,500,000
- **Renter:**
 - Up to \$750/month per renter in PHFA state-funded rental assistance;
 - Up to \$750/month per renter in Allegheny County-funded rental assistance
 - Up to \$200/month per household in County funding to cover additional household costs for gas, electric, and internet. Late fees charged by the landlord and/or utility company; and/or court costs are also eligible.
 - Payments will be made to the landlord on behalf of the renter for a maximum of six months of assistance between March 1 and November 30, 2020 (may include December rent).

AC CARES-RRP: Program Structure & Partners

- **Inquiries, Intake and Eligibility Provider:** ACTION Housing, Inc.
 - Staff C-RRP Hotline
 - Receive, Review and determine eligibility for all applicants
- **Rental Assistance Providers:** Auberle, Community Human Services & Urban League.
 - Receive referrals from ACTION
 - Undertake limited case management and household budgeting with Lessee's
 - Complete Landlord Application as needed
 - Prepare Lessee-specific Financial Assistance Package
- **Rental Assistance Payments:**
 - Lessee-specific completed Financial Assistance Packages submitted to ACED for approval.
 - Payments Disbursed to Landlord or utility company via ACTION Housing

AC CARES-RRP: Additional Partners

• Outreach & Lessee Application Assistance Partners:

- Contracted Providers:
 - ACED & ACDHS are working with community organizations who will assist with outreach and community/renter engagement.
 - Providers will also be available to provide technical assistance to help C-RRP renter applicants complete applications and submit required supporting documentation.
 - Also partnering with Community Justice Project and their Resource Navigators
- Legal & Mediation Service Providers: Referral systems are in place with Neighborhood Legal Services and Just Mediation Pittsburgh for legal and mediation services.
- Partners: Please help us spread the word to get this important and much-needed resources to our renters! AC is preparing outreach and communication materials for use.
- Others: YOU!

AC CARES-RRP: Eligibility

Renter/Lessee – CORE ELIGIBILITY

Lessee household

- Lessee(s) household income must be under 100% Area Median Income for household size
 - Must also be at least 30 days late in rental payments
 - AND At least one Lessee Must meet one of the requirements below:
 - Be unemployed, as verified by the PA Dept of Labor and Industry after March 1, 2020
- OR**
- Have lost more than 30% of Lessee income after March 1, 2020

Landlord: CORE ELIGIBILITY

- Must have a landlord willing to participate in the program that completes an application and certification documents
- Must agree to forgo any additional rent owed for the month's C-RRP payment is received and also agree to not pursue eviction for 60 days after final C-RRP payment is made.

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6
Gross Income	\$58,100	\$66,400	\$74,700	\$83,000	\$89,700	\$96,300

AC CARES-RRP: Two Applications

1. Lessee Application

- Inclusive of Lessee supporting documentation

2. Landlord Application & Certification

- Inclusive of Landlord supporting documentation

- **Application Process can be initiated by either party.**
- **Both applications inclusive of supporting documentation must be complete to move forward.**
- **This is a first-come first-served program as determined by complete applications inclusive of all documentation submitted.**

AC CARES-RRP: INFORMATION

- **Website:** Allegheny County has a one stop website for information on the AC-CRR Program:

[COVIDRentRelief.AlleghenyCounty.us](https://www.alleghenycounty.us/covid-rent-relief)

- **Phone:** ACTION Housing has a dedicated hotline to answer applicant questions:

412-248-0021

AHICaresRRP@actionhousing.org

AC CARES-RRP: HOW TO APPLY

- **Web-based application:**

COVIDRentRelief.AlleghenyCounty.us

- **Mailed/Drop-off Applications:**

Allegheny County Economic Development
CARES Rent Relief Program Application (must include)
Chatham One, Suite 900
112 Washington Place
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

- **Email Applications:** This option was only temporarily available prior to the launch of the web-based application.

Applications will be accepted from July 6th to September 30th or earlier if funds run out.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

ACED/City of Pittsburgh Emergency Solutions Grants

EMERGENCY SOLUTION GRANT (ESG) & EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT CARES ACT (CV)

HOMELESS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
JULY 28, 2020

City/County Joint ESG Process

- ▶ Built on existing City/County Partnership
 - ▶ Strong Partnership with DHS Homeless & Housing Team as well
- ▶ Combined 2020 and 2019 ESG CV funds into one application cycle
- ▶ Received many good applications, submitted on June 3, 2020.
 - ▶ Shelter & Street Outreach: 20
 - ▶ HPRRH & related: 12
- ▶ Federal Guidance is lacking. City/County are preparing to move forward without.

ESG Sources

Funding Year	Local Entity	Amount
2020 Reg	City	\$ 1,216,133
	County - Ent.	\$ 1,205,766
	County - State	\$ 176,375
2019 CV -1	City	\$ 4,193,562
	County - Ent.	\$ 4,157,814
	County - State	\$ 1,000,000
2019 CV -2	City	\$ 2,250,787
	County - Ent.	\$ 3,107,999
TOTAL \$		17,308,436

ESG Uses

- ▶ Shelter
- ▶ Street Outreach
- ▶ Rapid Rehousing
- ▶ Homelessness Prevention
- ▶ HMIS/Link/Admin.

All CV \$ must tie back to COVID, and that is where we were hoping for HUD Guidance, but after many conversations it only appears that general advise with a heavy dose of caution is being offered.

ESG & HP/RRH

- ▶ Any funding not allocated to shelter or street outreach is intended to be allocated to Homelessness Prevention & Rapid Rehousing
- ▶ Analyzing HP/RRH requirements to find any flexibilities to make these funds easier to use; **HOWEVER HP/RRH is a HOMELESS Resource.**
- ▶ Will work to make sure local HP/RRH requirements sync well with homeless/at risk of homelessness housing stability needs of the Community and align &/or differentiate well with other existing programs
- ▶ Will work on improving outreach to less connected populations

ESG Next Steps

GOALS Include:

- ▶ Make funding awards in August
- ▶ Contracts in September
- ▶ Open expanded HP/RRH in September



QUESTIONS?

URA Housing Stabilization Fund

Housing Stabilization Programs

*CDBG-CV Expansion
Eviction Prevention
Community Engagement Ambassadors*

Homeless Advisory Board
July 28, 2020



Housing Stabilization Program Overview


What is the Housing Stabilization Program?

The Housing Stabilization Program (HSP) is a housing crisis prevention program designed to promote the economic independence of renters and homeowners experiencing a temporary, non-recurring crisis by providing limited, short-term financial assistance to help them access and/or maintain safe, stable, and affordable permanent housing.

Who may be eligible for the Program?

- Renters at or below 50% AMI who live in the City or will be moving into the City
- Homeowners at or below 80% AMI who live in the City

Housing Stabilization Program



Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be a renter or homeowner
- Must live in the City of Pittsburgh
- Renters must be at or below 50% AMI*
- Homeowners must be at or below 80% AMI*
- Must develop a stability plan with a service provider

*Please refer to chart for income limits

Household Size	Maximum Income for Renters	Maximum Income for Homeowners
1	\$25,854	\$46,100
2	\$33,208	\$58,136
3	\$37,358	\$69,600
4	\$41,800	\$80,600
5	\$44,850	\$91,750
6	\$48,150	\$103,000

To see rates and eligibility for the program, please contact United Way 211. Contact information is on the back of the form.



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2020 HSP Service Providers



Coordinated Entry – United Way 2-1-1

- Operates 24 hours a day / 7 days a week through several modes
 - Calling 2-1-1
 - Texting zip code to 898-211
 - Chat at pa211sw.org
- Can communicate in over 250 available languages via telephonic translation service
 - Once client is connected with Resource Navigator, they must state that they will need a language translator
- Maintains a comprehensive database of hundreds of partner agencies and programs



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COVID-19 Considerations

COVID-19 Pandemic Temporary Guidance

Issued April 17, 2020

Income: If employer does not want to, or cannot, provide verification, the service provider may take verbal confirmation and note it in the household's file (and on HSP Central). **HSP will not deny applicants for lack of income during this time.**

General Documentation & Signing: Use web-based services such as DocuSign to complete signatures remotely. Intake forms are also available in PDF Fillable. Verbal confirmation can be considered as a last-resort situation.

Income: Calculate income going forward (not historical income). Requirement to have sustainable income post-HSP is waived during COVID-19 due to the unprecedented economic situation.

City Tax: URA is unable to verify city tax status remotely, but will still check County taxes. Service Providers should try to ask for verification of city tax payment/status, **but should not hold up the process if unable to verify.**



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COVID-19 Considerations

Language access

- Households with ESL, can be referred to JFCS (URA can facilitate inter-agency referrals)
- If you need translation support, notify URA

Limiting extra documentation

- minimize non-HOF paperwork as much as possible

HMIS is optional

- Although helpful, any applicant can opt-out of HMIS data entry (you still need to enter in HMIS as "client refused")



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HSP Funding Sources Overview				
	HOF Funds	CDBG-CV Rent	CDBG-CV Mort.	Foundation
Urban League				
YWCA				
Chartiers Center				
JFCS				
Goodwill SWPA				
Macedonia				
Pitt. Mercy				
VLP				
ACTION Housing				
PCSI				
NeighborWorks				



HSP Funding Sources Overview

	HOF Funds	CDBG-CV Funds
Rent Arrears	Yes – Up to \$3,000	Yes – Up to 3 months
Rent Forward	Yes – Up to \$3,000	Yes – Up to 3 months
Utilities	Yes – Up to \$3,000	Yes
App. Fees	Yes – Up to 3 Applications	No
Security Deposit	Yes	No
Can Be Tiered?	Yes	No**
Mortgage	Generally, No	Yes
COVID-Restricted	No	Yes

*Current/past due bills only (no deposits)
 **Must pass Duplication of Benefits test and must be last resort funding



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Community Engagement Ambassadors Program

Why?

The URA is addressing community feedback that more assistance is needed to help people through the system and application process.

We are also using the Community Ambassadors to help with outreach of the program and reach out to those least likely to apply for assistance.

Increases capacity for service providers to focus more on case management.

How?

- 1 Lead Agency to administer
- 2-6(?) Community Ambassadors

Work with other housing partners

Community Ambassadors will work with residents to collect documentation, complete applications, and help people navigate the different resources

When?

RFP out now - <https://www.omicelo.com/>

Due back 7/24

Training will be late July

Services to begin early August



Community Engagement Ambassadors Program

Overview

The Community Engagement Ambassadors Program will contract with community groups and community advocates to assist clients through the HSP process and application.

Community Ambassadors will work with residents to collect documentation, complete applications, and help people navigate the different resources.

Functions

1. Recruit Clients within their network that may not necessarily hear about the program through traditional marketing
2. Collect documentation and completed applications
3. Expand their experience with mentorship opportunities

Compensation

Community Engagement Ambassadors will be compensated in the following ways:

- Training and on-boarding
- Upfront admin costs
- Per completed application



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Eviction Prevention Program Overview

Why?

There is an expected surge in evictions in July/August 2020.

The current process is not efficient for eviction process timeline.

Magistrate and Appeals court has expressed great interest to partner with rental assistance system.

We have worked hard over the past 2 months to coordinate and synchronize processes.

How?

YWCA and ACTION Housing will serve as the program administrators
Will work directly with the courts to accept referrals at the appeal stage

Court support staff will work and coordinate with program administrators to streamline efficient payment processing to prevent eviction

Pilot program is funded by the Pittsburgh Foundation

When?

Services began on July 10th

Pilot will be measured and, if effective, may be expanded as the need presents itself



Questions?

Jeremy Carter
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Breanna Benjamin
HOF Program Coordinator
Bbenjamin@ura.org





COVID Grants & Funding

7/28/20



Approach

- Created tags based on type of assistance.
 - Grants could provide assistance in more than one category, so could have more than one tag.
 - Unable to determine how much of a grant's dollars are for which category. E.g. Of a \$10K grant, how much is for food and how much is for housing?
 - ***Therefore, a grant total may be included in more than one visualization category.***
- Dashboard
 - Used category tags to build visualizations in Tableau
 - Includes COVID response grants
 - Excludes foundation-to-foundation grants

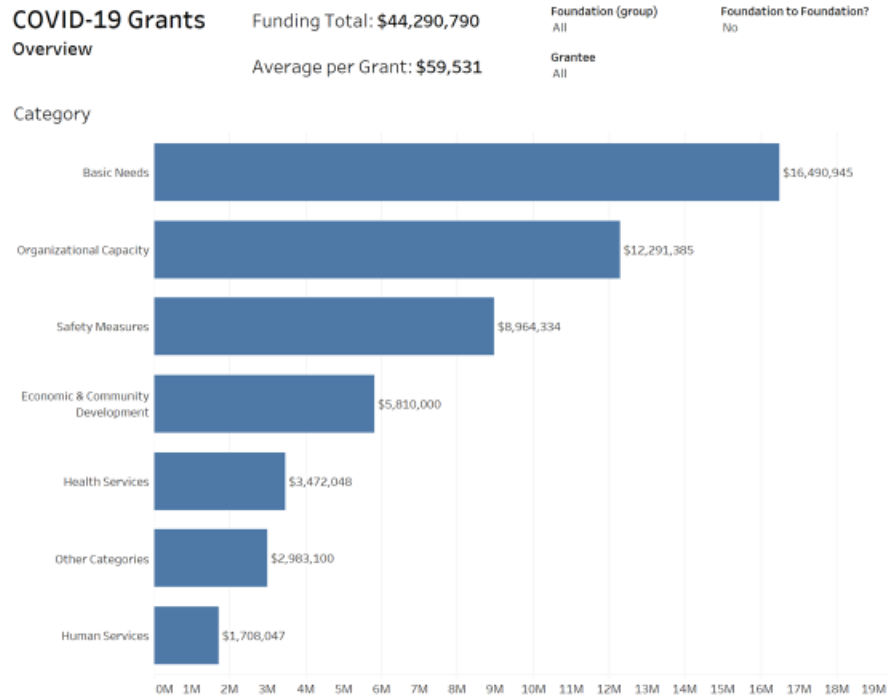
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By Category

Top three:
Basic needs
 \$16,490,945

Organizational capacity
 \$12,291,385

Safety measures
 \$8,964,334



By Sub-Category

Top three:
Operating costs, lost revenue
 \$10,691,385

Food
 \$6,783,725

Small business
 \$4,790,000

