

March 9, 2021

Board of County Commissioner  
Clackamas County

Members of the Board:

Discussion of Rent Assistance Program Update Only

<b>Purpose/Outcomes</b>	Review process to distribute newly allocated Federal and State Rent Assistance Funds
<b>Dollar Amount and Fiscal Impact</b>	\$14,826,199
<b>Funding Source</b>	Federal Treasury (\$12,478,950) and State of Oregon – Oregon Housing and Community Services (\$2,347,249)
<b>Duration</b>	State funds must be expended by June 30, 2021. Federal funds must be expended by Dec. 31, 2021
<b>Previous Board Action</b>	The board approved the acceptance of the federal funds on Jan. 12, 2021. The Board will see the Staff Report for the state funds in the near future.
<b>Counsel Review</b>	NA
<b>Strategic Plan Alignment</b>	1. Ensure safe, healthy and secure communities
<b>Contact Person</b>	Brenda Durbin 503 655-8641
<b>Contract No.</b>	

**BACKGROUND:**

Previous Rent Assistance Funding

In spring 2020, Clackamas County Social Services (CCSS) received \$3,630,746 in state and federal funds to provide rental assistance to individuals and families made vulnerable by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. CCSS quickly assembled an internal rent assistance team and contracted with three community partners to screen eligible recipients and distribute this assistance.

Together, CCSS, Ant Farm, Clackamas Women’s Services and Northwest Family Services distributed more than \$3.2 million to 671 Clackamas County households, helping 1,903 people maintain stable housing. Of those served, 34 percent identified as Hispanic/Latinx; 20 percent identified as a person of color; 45 percent were children under the age of 17 years; and 57 percent were women.

Current Rent Assistance Funding

Outcomes related to the percentage of LatinX and Communities of Color show that the process used for the previous round of rent assistance funding met the goal of ensuring that communities most impacted by COVID 19 were able to access these funds. That success will inform the process for expending this current round of rent assistance funding.

To avoid disruption of services, Social Services intends to extend the existing contracts that are meeting contractual obligations. All of these providers were selected after a competitive procurement process. After reviewing the capacity of the current providers, it was determined that 57% of the funds will be contracted out. County staff will process the remaining funds.

This is complex work that requires significant administrative processes and detailed eligibility determination in order to ensure that all funds are expended in compliance with program rules. Neither the federal nor the state program provides adequate administrative and program delivery allowances to cover the actual costs of delivering this program. In order to provide contractors with 10% administrative and 18% program delivery, Social Services will use a portion of CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) CARES Act funding to ensure that our non-profit partners will be fully reimbursed for all of the expenses related to administering this program.

### **Outreach and Communication**

Social Services will work closely with PGA, along with state and regional partners, to coordinate outreach to county residents who have fallen behind in their rent due to COVID-related economic impacts. The primary access point will be the existing Coordinated Housing Access Line, which employs Spanish speaking staff, regularly uses the Language Line, and has an on-line form as well as a telephone line. The CHA number is 503 655-8575.

### **Meeting the Need?**

There is no accurate local data on how many renters are in arrearages, nor how many of those may face eviction once Oregon's eviction moratorium ends. A calculation performed last spring indicated that the need for rent assistance is more than \$30 million. In addition to the funds that will be distributed by Social Services, the Housing Authority of Clackamas County will receive \$15 million via the Landlord Compensation Fund. With these two programs, Social Services and HACC will make good progress in clearing up many renters arrearages. Federal funds can also be used to pay for utility arrearages.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the Board approve the process described above, and expedite approval of the contracts with community partners once they are finalized.

Respectfully submitted,



Rodney Cook, Interim Director  
Health, Housing, and Human Services