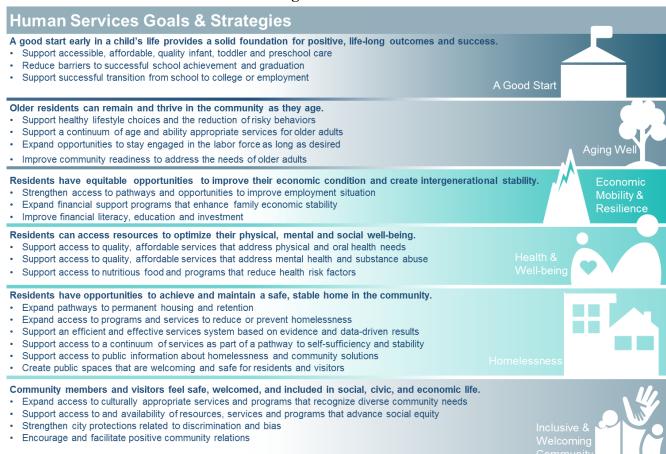# Community Funding: Human Services Fund

Mapping Our Future: The 2017 – 2022 City of Boulder Human Services Strategy

The Boulder Human Services Strategy (Strategy) reflects a two-year effort to identify Boulder's most important human services issues, needs and trends. It includes background research on demographics and best practices, information about other communities' experiences and data collected from robust community engagement. It anticipates shifting demographics and community needs and shapes the city response to both immediate and long-term challenges. The Strategy aligns investments with priorities and identifies the six key human services goals and strategies that will guide city investments over the next five years: A Good Start; Aging Well; Economic Mobility and Resilience; Health and Well-being; Homelessness; and Inclusive and Welcoming Community. Chart 1 below identifies the strategies that are aligned with Goals.

Chart 1: Human Services Goals and Strategies

Human Services Goals & Strategies

A good start early in a child's life provides a solid foundation for positive, life-long outcomes and success.
- Support accessible, affordable, quality infant, toddler and preschool care
- Reduce barriers to successful school achievement and graduation
- Support successful transition from school to college or employment

A Good Start

Older residents can remain and thrive in the community as they age.
- Support healthy lifestyle choices and the reduction of risky behaviors
- Support a continuum of age and ability appropriate services for older adults
- Expand opportunities to stay engaged in the labor force as long as desired
- Improve community readiness to address the needs of older adults

Aging Well

Residents have equitable opportunities to improve their economic condition and create intergenerational stability.
- Strengthen access to pathways and opportunities to improve employment situation
- Expand financial support programs that enhance family economic stability
- Improve financial literacy, education and investment

Economic Mobility & Resilience

Residents can access resources to optimize their physical, mental and social well-being.
- Support access to quality, affordable services that address physical and oral health needs
- Support access to quality, affordable services that address mental health and substance abuse
- Support access to nutritious food and programs that reduce health risk factors

Health & Well-being

Residents have opportunities to achieve and maintain a safe, stable home in the community.
- Expand pathways to permanent housing and retention
- Expand access to programs and services to reduce or prevent homelessness
- Support an efficient and effective services system based on evidence and data-driven results
- Support access to a continuum of services as part of a pathway to self-sufficiency and stability
- Support access to public information about homelessness and community solutions
- Create public spaces that are welcoming and safe for residents and visitors

Homelessness

Community members and visitors feel safe, welcomed, and included in social, civic, and economic life.
- Expand access to culturally appropriate services and programs that recognize diverse community needs
- Support access to and availability of resources, services and programs that advance social equity
- Strengthen city protections related to discrimination and bias
- Encourage and facilitate positive community relations

Inclusive & Welcoming Community

Framework for Community Funding

These six goals, their aligned strategies, and three core principles form the framework for the city's community funding.

2018 as a Transition Year for HSF
The fund round for 2018 HSF funding will take place in late summer and fall of 2017. Strategy metrics are in development as part of the Human Services work plan for the second half of 2017. In addition, GMS funding partners are evaluating next steps for the partnership. For these reasons, staff anticipates a one-year fund round as a transition toward implementation of the longer-term community funding methodology.

For this transition year, staff will use current GMS impact areas, outcomes, and indicators and prioritize indicators most closely linked to new Strategy goals and strategies for community funding. For example, the Good Start strategy of accessible, affordable, quality infant, toddler and preschool care would be represented by the current HSF indicator most closely aligned with: "percentage of families provided quality affordable and/or culturally competent child care options."

Table 1 below provides examples of how current HSF impact areas align with new HS Strategy goals.

Table 1: Current HSF Impact Areas and New HS Strategy Goals

Current HSF Impact Areas	2017 HS Strategy Goals
Impact Area 1: Preparing low-income and at-risk children and youth for success	A Good Start
Impact Area 2: Improving economic well-being, independence and self-reliance for adults	Economic Mobility, Homelessness, Aging Well
Impact Area 3: Meeting basic needs for individuals and families	Health and Well-being, Homelessness
Impact Area 4: Building a safer community	Health and Well-being, Inclusive and Welcoming

Priority on Economic Mobility and Resilience and Homelessness
Economic Mobility and Resilience and Homelessness are two goal areas identified for expanded focus in the Human Services and Homelessness Strategies over the next five years. The Homelessness Strategy identifies a new system of services focused on a coordinated entry, assessment and service delivery system, which prioritizes client need and permanent housing for better long-term outcomes, while continuing to ensure safety net services are available.

Boulder residents consistently identified poverty and affordability as top community concerns during public engagement. Poverty factors significantly influence other human services challenges and are a root cause to many long-term, downstream social welfare issues.

National research data suggests that by reducing poverty, improving resilience to economic downturns and expanding opportunities to become economically mobile, communities can significantly improve the quality of life for residents and, over time, reduce the demand on emergency and crisis services. By prioritizing goals related to economic mobility and resilience, the city can positively affect multiple populations and community needs.

<u>Core Principles</u>
Consistent with the Strategy, three core principles will influence future human services community funding decisions:
- focus more resources on upstream investment;
- data-driven decision making based on outcomes; and
- focus more resources on integrated and coordinated services for greater effectiveness and efficiencies.

These principles will be used as criteria to evaluate funding applications. Program proposals will be eligible for higher scores for incorporating one or more of the core principles described below.

Upstream investment – Community funding will support early interventions that target the root causes of social problems. Upstream investment focuses on outcome-based programs and policies designed to address problems before they become more critical and expensive. More downstream interventions should identify how programs and services are connected to prevention and upstream programs. In the upstream investment model, programs may also be prioritized for funding based on: evidence-based, promising practices or innovative practices. Service providers are encouraged to adopt one of these practices. An example of evidence-based programs and their definitions can be found at SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices.

Data-driven outcomes – The city will use outcome performance measures to drive funding decisions and services. Meaningful indicators will measure client outcomes rather than outputs – such as the number of services provided or clients served.

Systems integration – Community funding will support approaches that provide a client-centric, no-wrong-door access to services and emphasize funding partnerships over a funder/grantee contracting relationship. System integration emphasizes a seamless social safety net that is more efficient and effective for both service delivery agencies and clients. Funders and agencies will commit to common goals and outcomes and create mechanisms for accountability, particularly regarding data and performance measurement.

The core funding principles will not be a required element of every proposal for community funding. Instead, the principles are factors that will be considered in evaluating proposals and funding decisions. Other factors that will affect funding include:
- The strength of connection to specific goals and strategies. Proposals more strongly linked to specific strategies will be considered more favorably.
- The degree of collaboration. The department encourages organizations to apply for funding with partner organizations and to work collectively on targeted strategies and shared programs.
- Use of evidence-based, promising and innovative practices. The department encourages programs that feature established practices that are well grounded in academic and empirical research. The department also encourages use of innovative or promising practices that may help the city find new solutions for human services challenges.

Changes to City of Boulder Community Funding in Human Services

- HSF funding will be targeted to specific strategies identified for each of the six human services goals. Although funding for programs depends on alignment with goals, strategies, key principles and quality of proposals, an initial analysis of currently funded programs suggests that nearly all would continue to be eligible to apply for funding in new goals and strategies. Some new strategies create opportunities for additional programs to be funded, including Economic Mobility and Resilience, Aging Well and Homelessness.

- Funding will be competitively awarded through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process conducted every four years. Options for funding in interim years are included below.

- Four-year grants will focus on long-term outcomes and consist of a funder/partner approach. City and program staff will regularly meet to assess progress toward goals and make recommendations regarding program adjustments and advancement. This funder/partner role redirects some staff time from annual fund rounds to partnership check-ins and dialogue on what's working or change recommendations. Longer funding terms are a national trend as more cities choose to focus on long-term strategies and outcomes. Four-year terms are dependent on appropriations and appropriate progress on program metrics and milestones. The city recognizes that four years may not be enough time to capture many long-term outcomes; however, this longer funding time-frame offers more opportunity to capture changes over time than previous one- and two-year cycles.

- Funded programs will report regularly on metrics and outcomes that are closely aligned with demonstrated results. Annually, each goal area will have a summit, where all funded programs communicate about their outcomes and learnings. The summit will provide an opportunity to share information with city agencies, similar programs and other community partners. For example, all programs funded in the Health and Well-being goal area would meet with staff and other Health and Well-being agencies to present on their program's outcomes project learning. The summits will be in conjunction with other funders. The summits would also provide an opportunity for cross-pollination and idea generation for new programs, program enhancements, or new partnerships. This is different from individual agency mid-year and year-end reports currently submitted as part of one-year cycles, with a deeper commitment to, and action on, results-driven contracting.

As part of the Homelessness Strategy and Homelessness Working Group recommendations, a new adult homeless services system is being launched in October 2017. This will require new contract structures with adult homeless services providers and re-allocation of some funding previously provided for adult homeless services through the HSF competitive fund round to a contracting process outside of the HSF competitive round.

Youth Opportunity Fund and the Human Services Fund

Annual grants from the YOF are used to fund community youth programs in amounts up to $15,000. In addition, the city recently implemented the Substance Education and Awareness (SEA) program, providing dedicated community funding of up to $250,000 annually to support

drug and alcohol education and prevention for children, youth, and families. The awards have potential to overlap with HSF funding targeted to youth.

To clarify the differences between YOP and HSF funds and eliminate overlap between these funds and SEA, the following criteria are applied:

- YOP annual grants are primarily used for cultural, educational and recreational programs that meet a community need, provide pro-social opportunities, develop youth leadership and engage youth as partners in their planning and implementation with a concentration on underrepresented middle and high school age youth. YOP educational focus in areas such as peer education, substance use prevention and programs helping students learn about college and careers. Examples include:
  - o High school age peer educators participate in a leadership program and teach their classmates about healthy eating through interactive workshops.
  - o Mentoring program where college students introduce underrepresented high school students to STEM careers through field trips and mentoring.
  - o High school youth plan ecological restoration and environmental education projects for middle school students.
  - o A community center offers free sports programming on weekend evenings for high school age students.
- HSF funding for youth programs is leveraged primarily for basic needs, social welfare and educational services directly aligned with academic outcomes such as tutoring or academic case management, and substance treatment programs. Examples include:
  - o Provide academic case management and tutoring assistance for students living in affordable housing.
  - o Providing a social worker to address mental health needs at a youth shelter.
- SEA funding (marijuana sales and use tax dollars) is leveraged for substance abuse education, prevention and limited treatment programming for youth.

Overall, changes recommended for YOP and HSF funding eligibility for youth programs will not significantly impact currently funded agencies.

Community Funding Option Between Fund Rounds
<u>Opportunity Fund</u>
The City will conduct a competitive fund round in 2018 for a four-year fund cycle beginning January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2022. The Human Services Opportunity Fund (OF) serves as a community funding option between competitive fund rounds.

The OF is a reserved amount of the HSF to fund emergency services, innovative new programs or an opportunity or community need which has emerged outside of the competitive fund round cycle. Use of opportunity funds is approved by the City Manager. Applicants should demonstrate an unexpected or new need, or unanticipated opportunity to address a human services goal. Agencies apply to the OF on a rolling basis.

Eligibility criteria for the OF are similar to that of HSF. Both funding sources seek to fund agencies:

- serving primarily Boulder residents that are low-income or at-risk[1];
- aligning with HS Strategy, core principles and community priorities; and
- providing direct service(s) to vulnerable populations;
- demonstrating strong and longer-term evaluation of outcomes;
- demonstrating strong collaboration and partnerships; and
- exhibiting diverse funding sources.

HSF does not fund seed, startup or programs that do not demonstrate longer-term evaluation of outcomes. The OF will consider funding for startup programs that align with HS Strategy goals and demonstrate innovation and core principles. OF will also continue to fund unexpected needs or unanticipated opportunities that arise between fund rounds. As part of the HS Strategy, funding set aside for the OF will increase.

Boulder County Client Portal
Boulder County Housing and Human Services has created a county data warehouse to support the county "data platform" to integrate client level data from across systems and programs to track and report community-wide outcomes. Agencies will be encouraged to work with the County to leverage this platform as much as possible for community funding outcomes tracking on a community level.

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[1] For the purpose of this RFP, "at-risk" is defined as vulnerable residents that have additional barriers in meeting basic needs or self-sufficiency due to factors such as income, housing status, disability, language/culture, mental/physical health, history of family violence and the elderly, as examples.