SOLANO COUNTY | COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

To:	Board of Supervisors
From:	Birgitta E. Corsello, County Administrator
	Ian M. Goldberg, County Budget Officer
Date:	September 16, 2021
Subject:	**Solano County ARPA Data Report #2 – Grant Opportunities & Process Overview**

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT – OVERVIEW ON GRANT OPPORTUNTIES IN THE ACT

An initial overview on ARPA guidelines was provided to the Board on May 25, 2021 and June 22, 2021 to begin discussions regarding the process for allocating the direct funding. Those discussions will continue in September/October 2021 as part of the development of required Recovery Plan and the public outreach and community engagement process on the plan for expending the County's ARPA allocation.

This report is to update the Board of Supervisors on the Federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) grant funding opportunities which are being made available in addition to ARPA direct funding provided to the County and are administrated through a separate federal allocation and process. This update includes an overview of the Solano County process and resources for identifying, evaluating, and applying for grant programs which may benefit County department programs and contracted nonprofits.

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was signed into law on March 11, 2021. The ARPA provides funding for direct and indirect relief in the continued response and recovery to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Funding is being distributed through the Federal and State budget process. Both direct and indirect allocation of ARPA funds are available to local Cities and Solano County.

ARPA FEDERAL & STATE GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNTIES

In addition to the direct funding provided from Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF), ARPA also provides indirect funding opportunities through Federal and State grant programs which Solano County may be eligible to apply for as a County organization. Each potential opportunity must be identified and evaluated to determine if the County can successfully implement the grant program requirements and achieve the objectives for the grant funds if successful.

Grant opportunities funded through ARPA range from Travel Tourism and Outdoor Recreation, Economic Adjustment, Promoting Vaccine Confidence, Investing in Communities, Job Training and Employment, and more. County departments continue to identify, review, and evaluate opportunities. Many of the grant programs intended to be funded through ARPA are still in development and will open for receipt of grant applications throughout the remainder FY2021/22.

SOLANO COUNTY GRANT RESEARCH & EVALUATION

Potential grant opportunities have historically been identified by Department staff through a variety of available resources. There are two primary grant resource websites available to the public, www.grants.gov which contains all federal grant opportunities and www.grants.ca.gov which contains a listing of all state grant opportunities. Grant opportunities are also identified through the County's legislative consulting team at both the State and Federal level and through announcements and websites maintained /distributed by national and statewide associations for each respective department.

Given the expanded funding made available through ARPA, the County is retaining a service used previously to increase access to a centralized expanded grant tracking service. The CAO is entering into a new contract with eCivis, a leading grant research and reporting software services provider. The new service available to Solano County includes both Federal and State Pre-Award software and online grant research tools. The eCivis tools allow County staff access to streamlined grant summaries, specialized tracking and research tools, grant alerts, and much more. These tools will allow County staff to identify and evaluate more opportunities for available funding, reduce the time required to determine eligibility and grant requirements and improve application success rates by utilizing eCivis tools for grant applications.

Grant opportunities for which the County is eligible to apply have been and will continue to be reviewed by department staff with responsibility in the program area available for funding. Staff will evaluate the applicability to County operations and the availability of resources to implement the grant requirements to ensure success and satisfaction of the grant guidelines. If the County can meet all grant requirements and the Department concludes the County can dedicate the internal resources necessary to successfully apply for and implement the grant, the Department will initiate the application process. Departments are being encouraged to revisit their needs assessments, program goals and objectives, to think locally and boldly about the grant opportunities ARPA provides at this time, recognizing these are likely one-time funds but that could make an impact.

SOLANO COUNTY GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS - APPROVAL

The Board approved a number of years ago a Grant Application Process and annually adopts the County Budget Construction document as part of the Recommended Budget which outlines grant approval requirements. The approval process includes a Grant Application Request Form (See Attachment A) for County approval prior to submission. The County Administrator is delegated authority for approval of grant applications when the amount of the grant is equal to or less than $75,000 per fiscal year or are ongoing previously approved grants in the budget. Grant application submissions over $75,000 per fiscal year or when the grant funded activity has General Fund impacts after the grant funds run out, require majority vote of the Board of Supervisors. In select cases, departments submit and receive special delegated authority from the Board of Supervisors to submit grant applications during the fiscal year, irrespective of the amount of the grant. Regardless of the delegation of authority, Departments must submit the required County grant approval form to the County Administrator's Office for tracking and seek Board approval.

SOLANO COUNTY GRANT WRITER ASSISTANCE

The County has historically utilized existing Department staff to complete and implement grant applications, with the assistance of external grant writing resources as needed. Departments requiring

external resources as a result of ARPA are being encouraged to work through the County Administrator and the newly created Grant Workgroup for assistance (See more on the Grant Workgroup below).

The County Administrator's Office in coordination with County Department Representatives have identified external grant writing expertise available on an as needed basis to assist Departments in applying for grants. Some Departments have entered into contracts for services with external grant writers. The County's resources in grant writing will be further expanded through eCivis and include additional access to contracted grant writing services.

The County has for many years, utilized grant writers on a very limited basis, relying instead on the internal expertise of department staff who have the knowledge of County operations necessary to evaluate our ability to implement the grant requirements, and ensuring department leadership is engaged in the application and committed to the successful implementation of the grant. Utilizing specialized grant writers can help to ease the burden on the department staff in the application phase of the grant, but ultimately the implementation of the grant proposal must be administered by Departments and their program and management staff. The County Administrator's Office recently completed an informal survey of County Departments to determine existing grant writing assistance needs. The results show no Departments in need of additional grant writing services at this time to address existing State and federal grant opportunities. However, Department staff noted the potential need for future grant writing assistance due to the amount of potential ARPA funding.

To ensure departments have access to all required grant application resources, the County Administrator's Office has communicated the ability to contract for grant writers to County Departments. Requests for grant writers will be filled through existing contracts or through the engagement of an identified available contracted grant writer or service firm. If it is determined that the County could benefit from dedicated full time grant writers, the County Administrator's Office and Departments will seek Board approval.
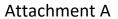
SOLANO COUNTY GRANT WORKGROUP

To ensure Solano County has adequate resources to identify, evaluate, and apply for the expanded grant opportunities, the County Administrator's Office has convened a workgroup of key County staff with expertise in grant review and application. The workgroup is assisting in looking at new opportunities and helping to identify grants which may benefit the County and the nonprofits we contract with. The Workgroup also will help ensure Grant applications are coordinated between departments where necessary, internal resources and expertise are shared where possible, and external grant writing or research resources are utilized efficiently. The Workgroup will continue to hold frequent meetings to ensure departments are utilizing available resources, evaluating opportunities and successfully applying for all eligible grant opportunities where appropriate.

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CC:
County Department Heads
County Administrator Office Staff
Posted to the County Website – ARPA

County of Solano - Request to Apply for Grant Funds

Attachment A

Grant Application Information

Department:	Budget Unit: 0	Grant Application Due Date:	Current Date:
Primary Contact (s):	Ext(s):	Grantor Organization:	New Grant: ☐ Renewal: ☐ Economic Stimulus: ☐

Administered by:	Evaluated by:

How did you learn about this grant opportunity? ☐ Grants.gov ☐ Grants.ca.gov ☐ Other(Indicate) ___

Purpose of Grant? If additional space is required, memorandum with those details should be attached to this form.

Who will the Grant directly benefit?

☐ Clients ☐ Program Operations Department ☐ Countywide ☐ Other

How?

Does Grant complement existing program(s)?	**Grant Timeframe**
☐ Yes ☐ No If so, what program(s)?	☐ One Time ☐ Multi-Year

Anticipated Grant Term	**Amount of Grant**	**Match Required**	**Match Amount**
___ to ___	☐ Total $ ___	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Total $ ___

Five Year Forecast	**Amount / Fiscal Year**	**Match Amt / Fiscal Year**	**Match Source**
☐FY2021/22	☐ $ ___	☐ $ ___ or ___%	
☐FY2022/23	☐ $ ___	☐ $ ___ or ___%	
☐FY2023/24	☐ $ ___	☐ $ ___ or ___%	
☐FY2024/25	☐ $ ___	☐ $ ___ or ___%	
☐FY2025/26	☐ $ ___	☐ $ ___ or ___%	

What will the Grant fund?

☐ Operating Expenses (List):	☐ FTE / Classification: / Reviewed w/HR? ☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Professional Services (Type?)	☐ Other (List):

Sustainability?

What will happen after grant ends? (Will program services cease? Will staff be reduced? Will County be expected to use General Fund to continue?)
Explain:

Cost of preparing the Grant Application

☐ Estimated hours and value of staff time and associated costs: ___ $ ___ Charged to B/U: ___

☐ Professional Services Contract/Grant Writer: ___ ☐ Other: ___

☐ How does department plan to pay for the cost of grant preparation and submittal? ___

☐ BOS approval required? ☐ No ☐ Yes. If grant request is greater than $75,000 provide BOS meeting date: ___

☐ Resolution signed by BOS required? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Grant Approval – Signature and Date needed

☐ Program/Division Deputy	☐ DH/Director/Assistant Director	☐ CAO Analyst	☐ CAO Approval
___ ___	___ ___	___ ___	___ ___