

# **Clark County Community Services 2022 Community Action Programs Request for Applications Description and Requirements**

## **RFA DESCRIPTION**

The federal Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 created the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program to help eliminate the causes and ameliorate the conditions of poverty. Funds are distributed to designated community action agencies across the nation. Clark County Community Services is the designated agency for all of Clark County. CSBG funds are designed to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities, and to empower families who are low-income to become self-sufficient. Households who are low-income earn less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, or as designated by legislation.

The purpose of this Request for Application (RFA) is to solicit programs that provide essential services for Clark County residents living in poverty and help them move toward self-sufficiency. Priority service areas in each category for this RFA have been determined by the Community Needs Assessment. Only programs meeting a need identified below will be selected for funding.

## **COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

All Community Action Agencies are required to conduct an assessment of the needs of people living in poverty in their community every three years. Clark County's most recent assessment, completed in 2021, includes direct feedback from people and households with low incomes collected through a comprehensive survey covering seven areas of need: Education, Employment, Physical Health, Behavioral Health, Housing, Income and Asset Building, and Support Services. Staff analyzed 1,655 survey responses to identify the most needed services in our community.

To view the full Community Needs Assessment, visit <https://clark.wa.gov/community-services/community-action-documents>.

## **AREAS OF NEED**

Although there are areas of need in each of the categories, this RFA is funding categories and services that were the most frequently identified needs in the Community Needs Assessment and for which there are no or limited sources of funding in the community.

- Housing. Housing services are ranked as the top overall category of need in Clark County, these services are funded through the Homeless Crisis Response System request for application.
- Physical Health. Top services in this category include dental assistance and food assistance.
- Income and Asset Building. The top services identified were credit repair and financial planning/budgeting assistance.
- Support Services. The top needs identified in this category are transportation, legal assistance, and information and referral services. Legal assistance and information and referral services are provided outside of this request for application.

- Employment. Programs that help people learn the skills necessary to find a job, get a better job, and transportation to/from employment are identified as the highest needs in this category. Funding is not available for services in this category through this request for application.
- Education. Programs that provide financial assistance to go to college, post-secondary education supports and assistance applying for financial aid/scholarships were identified as the top needs under the education category. Funding is not available for services in this category through this request for application.
- Behavioral Health. Access to mental health services and counseling were the top identified needs in this category. Funding is not available for services in this category through this request for application.

## **FUNDING CATEGORIES**

Clark County anticipates allocating approximately \$250,000 of Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds per fiscal year. Funding amounts are approximate and subject to change. The minimum request for these funds is \$40,000 per calendar year.

Funds will be allocated as follows:

- Physical Health - \$98,500
- Income and Asset Building - \$86,000
- Support Services - \$61,500

## **FUND USE RESTRICTIONS**

Funds provided in this RFA cannot be used for:

- Rent assistance
- Services to households earning over the designated income threshold
- Services that can be reimbursed through Medicaid/care
- Construction, rehabilitation or maintenance of property
- Purchase of assets including equipment and/or vehicles

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

All applications must be submitted through Bonfire. The application process is as follows:

1. All applicants are required to submit a pre-application by the end of the day October 31.
2. County staff will review the information provided and may ask applicant for additional information about the proposed program or the agency.
3. Once pre-applications are reviewed, staff will notify applicants that they may proceed with the full application.
4. Full applications must be completed by the end of the day January 5, 2022.
5. County staff will review all applications and may ask applicant for additional information about the proposed program or the agency.
6. The Community Action Advisory Board (CAAB) will review applications once all clarifying questions have been answered.
7. Applicants will be invited to provide program presentations at the CAAB meeting in April 2022.

8. Application recommendations will be made at the May 2022 CAAB meeting. Applications are scored on a 100-point scale including both objectively scored components completed by county staff and subjectively scored questions completed by the CAAB members.
9. County Councilors will make final program application funding decisions in May 2022.
10. County staff will work with awarded programs to draft contracts to begin July 1, 2022.

## **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

All proposals submitted in response to this RFA must follow the below general requirements. All applicable requirements will be incorporated into the performance contracts of selected proposals.

- The contract period will start July 1, 2022, and continue through June 30, 2024, with an option to renew the contract for one additional year ending June 30, 2025. Amount requested should be a per year figure.
- Proposals must address a need identified in the 2020 Clark County Community Needs Assessment.
- Contract performance will take place in Clark County.
- Programs may be required to enter accurate data into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); no more than 10 days following enrollment into the program and by the 5th of the following for services provided.
- Programs must be able to report unduplicated persons/households served.
- Quarterly reports and year-end narrative reports must be completed and submitted to the County by each program. Reports must include accounting of all grievances filed during the reporting period, and status of resolution.
- All programs must include the following components in their program design: peer support, a Trauma Informed approach, motivational interviewing, and cultural awareness.
- Promote dignity and respect by: 1) consistently implement practices to meet people where they are and provide person-centered care that focuses on personal strengths; 2) establish formal policies and value statements that convey clear expectations that participants will be treated with dignity and respect in every interaction, monitor adherence to expectations, and provide people served with a grievance process; and 3) follow practices that help ensure cultural awareness and provides equitable treatment for participants across demographic differences.
- Provide or assist the household with connections to other community resources and people supports that help them improve their safety and well-being and achieve their long-term goals.
- Be staffed by a core of employees who are suitably trained to effectively utilize HMIS, as required, as well as trauma informed services. Staff should also provide great customer service and ensure the program offers services in a culturally aware and appropriate manner to each program participant.
- All agencies submitting proposals must take active steps to help their organizations and programs become more culturally competent and aware and improve delivery of services to historically underserved communities in Clark County. Historically underserved communities include, but are not limited to: Native Americans, Hispanic/Latin(x), African Americans, Pacific Islanders, LGBTQ community, and other under-represented communities of color. Examples of active steps furthering this effort include, but are not limited to: increasing representation of underserved communities on agency governing boards; forming advisory committees with members of underserved communities to assist in culturally appropriate delivery of services; incorporating

formal collaborations with culturally specific organizations in program design. Steps taken by the agency to advance organizational and program cultural awareness will be included in the quarterly reports and year-end narrative reports completed and submitted to the County by each program.

- Follow all requirements in the Clark County Community Services General Terms and Conditions located at <https://clark.wa.gov/community-services/announcements-and-general-terms-and-conditions>.

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

Questions regarding this RFA must be submitted through the Opportunity Q&A in Bonfire. Responses will be posted within two business days. Questions will not be accepted within two business days of the pre-application and application deadlines.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCESS**

If an applicant has a grievance about the outcome of their application through this request for application, they are encouraged to discuss their concerns with Clark County Community Services Program Manager Michael Torres at [Michael.torres@clark.wa.gov](mailto:Michael.torres@clark.wa.gov). If this discussion does not result in a satisfactory outcome, the applicant may request the grievance be considered by Clark County Community Services Director, Vanessa Gaston who has final decision in all grievances.

I have read and understand the above request for application requirements and restrictions.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_