

TOWN
Of
PARADISE VALLEY



STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor Bien-Willner and Town Council Members

FROM: Andrew B. Ching, Town Manager
Duncan Miller, Town Clerk

DATE: May 9, 2024

DEPARTMENT: Town Manager
Duncan Miller, 480-348-3610

AGENDA TITLE:

Discussion of FY 2024 Community Services Funding Recommendations and FY 2025 Homelessness Initiative Funding

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

This study session item includes two subjects:

1. FY 24 Community Services Funding Program. The Town Council budgeted \$65,000 in this fiscal year and directed staff to conduct a needs assessment to identify services and programs benefitting underserved populations in the Town or broader community. Staff will present funding recommendations for Central Arizona Shelter Services and Duet: Partners In Health and Aging
2. FY 25 funding proposal to work with regional partners on homelessness initiatives. During the FY 25 budget study sessions, there was Council consensus to include \$200,000 in the budget for homeless shelter services as was done in FY24.

1. BACKGROUND – Fiscal Year 2024 Community Services Funding Program

At the March 9th Study Session, the Town Council discussed the annual Community Services Funding Program. The policy which governs the program gives the Council discretion to either invite applications for funding from government, non-profit, educational institutions, or civic groups that provide valuable services to the community; or conduct a community services needs assessment to identify essential services not provided by the Town or under-served populations in need of assistance. There was Council consensus to direct staff to conduct a needs assessment and, based on those findings, investigate agencies or programs which address the needs identified. The Council suggested that focus areas should include regional partnerships to address homelessness (even though the Town has not experienced homeless camps or issues) and support services for older residents.

An interdepartmental working group comprised of the Town Manager, Town Clerk, Community Resource Officer, and Code Enforcement Officer met twice in April and had robust discussions about community engagement, requests for services, and potential program funding options consistent with the Council's direction. Although programs that have not previously received funding were investigated and considered, it was the advisory group's unanimous recommendation to renew funding agreements with Central Arizona Shelter Services and Duet: Partners in Health and Aging.

Regional Homeless Initiatives

The Town has allocated funding in previous years to assist with regional homelessness initiatives and continues to recognize the importance of partnering with neighboring communities to find long-term solutions for this regional problem.

CASS

To further assist with this initiative, it is recommended that the Town continue its long-standing support for the Central Arizona Shelter Services (CASS). CASS is the largest emergency shelter in Arizona. CASS serves single adults and families with children. Their clients include individuals with serious mental illnesses, those with addictions to alcohol and drugs, victims of domestic violence, veterans, the elderly and young adults, single parents, and those who are chronically homeless.

Their mission is to end homelessness. In addition to providing beds for the night, they also offer case management and/or other support to all clients and work with them to obtain employment, benefits, medical care, mental health treatment, dental care, housing and more. Their case management model meets clients where they are to address barriers, with the goal of helping them permanently resolve their homelessness.

Demand for CASS Services is Increasing

CASS provided the following statistics to the Town underscoring the need for a regional approach to homelessness, as well as a summary of the new initiatives they are implementing to respond to the increased demand.

- Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) data shows that the unsheltered count in Maricopa County increased 30% between 2020 and 2023. In response to the increased need for service, CASS expanded their downtown shelter from 470 beds to 600 beds in 2022. CASS sheltered 5,071 individuals in their emergency shelter program, for a total of 253,302 bed nights.
- CASS served 23% more young adults (ages 18-24) than the year prior, rising to 522 young adults served. Additionally, their veteran's population increased by 11% over the prior year.
- CASS's data has shown a rapid rise in seniors over age 55, accounting for 30% of those served at CASS. Last year, CASS served 1,672 seniors. In July 2023, CASS opened the Senior Haven shelter with a 170-bed capacity expected to serve 500 homeless seniors aged 55 and older.

CASS's Community Impact Report is attached as Attachment B.

It is recommended that the Town provide funding in the amount of \$55,000 in Fiscal Year 2024, which is consistent with previous years. The Town has provided funding assistance to CASS since the 1990s with support ranging from \$18,000 to \$50,000.

Support Services for Older Residents

Duet: Partners In Health and Aging

Duet is a private non-profit organization based in Phoenix. Their mission is to promote health and well-being for homebound adults and family caregivers. The Town has partnered with this organization for many years. The specific recommendation is to provide funding for their program called Promoting Independence through In-Home Services. This program uses volunteers to provide transportation to homebound seniors and disabled adults to medical appointments, social service agencies, grocery stores, shopping centers and other locations. The volunteers also help unload groceries at their home or shop for and deliver groceries when needed. They assist with paperwork, minor home repairs, and other routine needs.

2023 Statistics Provided by Duet

- 434 homebound adults received services including 5 Paradise Valley residents
- 138 one-way trips for Paradise Valley residents for doctors appointments and groceries.
- 307 new volunteers were recruited to participate in the program, including 8 from Paradise Valley.

Duet's Community Impact Report is attached as Attachment C.

It is recommended that the Town continue to support this program in the amount of \$10,000 in Fiscal Year 2024, which is consistent with previous years. The Town has provided funding assistance to Duet since the 2000s with support ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

2. HOMELESSNESS INITIATIVES - Background

In 2022, Paradise Valley, along with other communities in the Valley, partnered with the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) on the Pathways Home: Regional Action Plan for Local and Tribal Governments. The goal of this comprehensive plan is to reduce homelessness by 25% by 2027. The Town provided \$25,000 to help fund the Regional Public Education Campaign.

In 2023, the Council budgeted an additional \$200,000 in community services funding for enhanced homelessness initiatives. It was noted that the Town is not a "full-service government" and relies on private and non-profit organizations to provide valuable services to the community that the Town does not have the staffing or expertise to provide. In particular, the Town does not have public programs or private facilities to address the needs of unsheltered people. There was consensus that by partnering with MAG and neighboring communities on programs to reduce homelessness in the region, the Town could amplify its impact and provide immediate resources if ever someone within the Town's borders needs shelter.

The Town has traditionally waited until the end of the fiscal year to make funding decisions related to community services. However, given the increased need for shelter services during the summer months and funding shortfalls last year, it was decided to award the \$200,000 allocation for shelter services at the beginning of the fiscal year.

On May 25, 2023, the Council authorized the Town to enter into an agreement with MAG to support homelessness services. In turn, MAG issued a request for proposals (RFP). Town staff participated in the RFP process and a contract was awarded to the City of Phoenix Rio Fresco Healing Center operated by Community Bridges, Inc (CBI). CBI operates multiple shelters in the Valley and provides other related support services.

Rio Fresco is a 117-room shelter in Phoenix that can serve 460 individuals per year including three meals per day for all residents. The Healing Center leverages CBI's full continuum of care by providing intense supportive services through case management, behavioral health services, individualized housing plans and opportunities for employment. The agreement between the MAG and the City of Phoenix included a provision to allow the Paradise Valley Police Department to make direct referrals to Rio Fresco. To date, no referrals have been made.

CBI's report to MAG on the use of the Town's funding is included as Attachment D.

FY 2025 Homelessness Initiatives

It is recommended that the Town follow the same process as last year to allocate funding for homelessness services. MAG has the expertise and resources to direct the Town's investment to programs and services where they will have the greatest impact. As was done last year, the Town would stipulate that preference should be given to agencies or programs that serve the area neighboring Paradise Valley, that PVPD may make direct referrals, and that a report would be provided on the use of Town funds.

NEXT STEP

Staff is asking for Council direction on whether the Town should provide financial assistance to any or all agencies (i.e. CASS, Duet, MAG) and at what amount. Based on that direction, staff will bring back funding agreements for action at the May 23rd meeting.

BUDGET IMPACT

The Town Council budgeted \$65,000 in FY 24 for community services and \$200,000 in FY 25 for homelessness initiatives.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Staff Report
- B. CASS Community Impact Report
- C. DUET Community Impact Report
- D. City of Phoenix/CBI Report to MAG on Paradise Valley Funding
- E. PowerPoint Presentation