



July 12, 2021

Chairperson Virginia Bass
Supervisor Rex Bohn
Supervisor Michelle Bushnell
Supervisor Mike Wilson
Supervisor Steve Madrone
County of Humboldt, Board of Supervisors
Clerk of the Board, Kathy Hayes
825 5th Street, Room 111
Eureka, California 95501

Re: American Rescue Plan Act

Dear Chairperson Bass, Humboldt County Supervisors, and Ms. Hayes:

The Humboldt Community Health Trust has been following with interest the County of Humboldt's approach to allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

Background

The Humboldt Community Health Trust (HCHT) was founded in 2017 as part of the California Accountable Communities for Health Initiative (CACHI). This collaborative is made up of non-profits, healthcare partners, treatment providers, community leaders, and government agencies committed to holistically addressing substance use disorder in Humboldt County, California. The North Coast Health Improvement and Information Network (NCHIIN) serves as the backbone agency for the trust.

While the HCHT has focused its efforts on substance use disorder, a broader goal of its work is to enhance system access, coordination, and integration, as exemplified by its track record of community discovery and convening to support planning, development of the North Coast Resource Hub, and current activities developing a Community Information Exchange. These initiatives often span a myriad of complex focus areas (Adverse Childhood Experience, Mental Health, Healthcare Utilization, Homelessness, etc.) that need intentional community partnership, planning, and stewardship to bring transformational change.

Proposal

We believe as Humboldt County makes the transition from crisis response to recovery, we arrive at a pivotal time of transition. This is also a time when government funding is flowing into our county and cities at a breathtaking scale, made possible through the American Rescue Plan, the Cares Act, and the California Comeback Plan/Governor's May Revise budget. This is a once-in-a generation



opportunity for communities such as Humboldt County to rebuild infrastructure, recover capacity, repair broken systems, invest in community assets, and advance efforts to tackle complex health issues that have plagued our region for many years.

However, the way current funding is being disbursed nationally also poses significant challenges for communities. Funding is flowing through numerous channels, with limited transparency, and on an extremely rapid timeline, leaving little room for meaningful participation from the broader community, or for thoughtful, coordinated planning among sectors and networks at the local level. When funding is made with limited intentionality and strategy, there is the risk of investing in a broken and fragmented system that only serves to reproduce the problems and disparities seen in our community and exacerbated during the pandemic. There is also the potential for funding to cause harm, by elevating competition over collaboration, deepening siloes, and prioritizing quick fixes and short-term deliverables over system-level strategies. Collaboration and alignment increase effectiveness, efficiency, and utilization of existing resources.

To mitigate this, the HCHT humbly requests that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors consider a partnership to conduct a stakeholder and community resident discovery process that could identify local health infrastructure and outcome priorities that could lead to recommendations for investment in the second round of ARPA funding in 2022.

This proposed discovery project will provide valuable knowledge to Humboldt County to develop stronger infrastructure and capacity needed to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and to prepare our community to build back better by galvanizing community and stakeholder shared priorities to address longstanding regional health issues. Convening diverse stakeholders and residents builds value across sectors and centers the conversation in community voice.

In the next eight months, the HCHT proposes to conduct a process that would result in the following key deliverables:

- Development of community tools for listening sessions, interviews, and brief surveys with community residents and local stakeholders
- Analyzed results from community survey and resident and stakeholder listening sessions on health priorities and challenges
- Summary of key themes from key informant interviews
- Final report distilling information gathered from discovery process including funding recommendations for round two ARPA funds to address identified priorities with actionable and transformational initiatives.



The HCHT has reputation for neutrality, a broad network of partners and local organizations that can be leveraged for this effort, and experience in this area of work. The CACHI network also has policy and evaluation consultants who can provide technical assistance to this project.

Should the proposed activity of interest to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, the HCHT would be happy to submit a full proposal for your consideration. We estimate the project to cost \$49,500.00

The HCHT believes that these complex issues our region faces cannot be solved by one organization or sector alone. This is a unique moment for our County to proactively understand community and stakeholder priorities providing an opportunity to make transformational change for the betterment of all residents.

With sincere appreciation for your consideration of this request,

Jessica Osborne-Stafsnes
Humboldt Community Health Trust- Project Director