



City of Columbia FY2017 Budget: Social Services Funding

QUICK FACTS

Poverty: Poverty is a persistent and growing issue in our community. In Columbia:

- Over 40% of residents are living in low-income households ($\leq 200\%$ of poverty level).
- Nearly 26,000 residents (24.9%) live below the poverty level, as compared to 22% in 1999.
- Almost 4,000 children (18.5%) are living below the poverty level.
- Over 41% of public school students qualify for free and reduced lunch, as compared to 27% in 2000.
- 16% of families with children under 18 live in poverty.
- 41% of female headed households with children under 18 live below the poverty level.

Disparities: Social, economic, health, and educational disparities among races continue to be a significant issue in our community. African-Americans in Columbia experience disproportionately high rates of poverty, unemployment, morbidity, mortality, and teen pregnancy and disproportionately low rates of home ownership and educational attainment.

Return on Investment: In our most recent analysis, we found that for every \$1 the City of Columbia invests in local social services, our contracted providers generate \$58 additional dollars... a \$58/\$1 return on investment. In addition, a significant portion of these revenues is obtained from sources outside our community. Our relatively small investment makes Columbia very competitive in obtaining shrinking resources from external funders which are increasingly requiring local matching funds.

Level of Investment: City of Columbia social services funding was reduced from \$903,743 in FY2009 to \$893,556 in FY2010 (a reduction of 1.1% or \$10,187) and has been held flat since that time. In 1980, the City's investment in social services was the equivalent of \$851,483 in today's dollars, or a rate of \$47 per low income resident, as compared to the City's current investment of \$893,556, a rate of only \$21 per low income resident.

BACKGROUND

For over 50 years, the City of Columbia has recognized that in addition to physical infrastructure and public safety, it must also make an investment in our community's social infrastructure. To this end, the City has both provided and purchased social services to ensure that adequate levels of these services are available to low-income residents of the City.

The social services provided and purchased by the City address some of our community's most challenging issues:

- homelessness
- unemployment and economic insecurity
- food insecurity
- at-risk children & youth and their families
- mental illness & substance abuse
- disabilities
- an aging population
- domestic violence

While the City's investment is not adequate to fully address any one of these issues, it does substantially increase the availability of services in Columbia and at the same time allows organizations to leverage additional, external resources which further increase the community's capacity to deliver social services. The investment also gives the City a seat at the community table, set to address complex social issues.

In addition, this investment in social services directly supports the City's Strategic Plan which includes as

strategic priorities and questions:

- Economy: Jobs that support families - How do we create more living wage jobs?
- Social Equity: Improving the odds for success - How can we strengthen our community so all individuals so all individuals thrive?

The City's Vision Plan also calls for high quality social services with the goals of:

- Supporting quality points of entry to access information for high quality and affordable social services to support children, youth, adults, seniors, persons with disabilities, and people with cultural barriers.
- All social services will be sufficiently funded to work toward the elimination of poverty.

SOCIAL SERVICES FUNDING ALLOCATION PROCESS

The Human Services Commission (HSC) and the Department of Public Health and Human Services are charged by the Columbia City Council to make annual recommendations for the purchase of social services. In order to better target limited resources, social services funding is allocated to address five issue areas reflecting the funding priorities identified by the HSC and approved by the City Council. "Requests for Proposals" (RFPs) and the resulting purchase of service contracts are issued by these issue areas in a staggered, three year cycle:

Issue Area	Target Funding Parameter	Funding Cycle
Basic Needs and Emergency Services	15-35%	2017 - 2019
Children, Youth and Families	15-35%	2015 - 2017
Economic Opportunity	15-35%	2016 - 2018
Independent Living	5-25%	
Behavioral Health	0-20%	

RFPs are issued at the beginning of June and proposals are due at the end of August. Proposals are submitted via a web-based funding management system. This system allows for the automation of data collection, reporting, and analysis, resulting in easily accessible, real-time information to be utilized throughout the funding allocation and contract monitoring processes. Proposals are reviewed by the commission and staff in September and October. During this period, the HSC also conducts site visits of all applicant organizations in order to observe the proposed programming in the environment in which it is delivered. Each proposal is rated by the commission using [standardized rating criteria](#) (pdf). The HSC and staff then hold a work session in late October to discuss the proposals and a second work session in November in which funding allocation recommendations are developed and then made public. Public input is encouraged throughout the process. Contract recommendations are then presented to the City Council in December.

For more detailed information regarding the social services funding allocation process, please reference the [City of Columbia Social Services Funding web page](#).

CURRENT RFP

For the FY2017-2019 social services funding cycle, a [RFP](#) was issued seeking proposals to contract with the City of Columbia to address issues related Basic Needs & Emergency Services. Ten (10) organizations have submitted letters of intent to provide twelve (12) qualified programs. As outlined above, the HSC and staff will review the proposals and develop contract recommendations for the City Council.

CONCLUSION

The members of the HSC and staff would like to thank the City Council for its longstanding support of the City's investment in the social infrastructure of our community. The HSC and staff look forward to the opportunity to present the FY2017 social services contract recommendations to the City Council on December 19, 2016.