

City of Columbia FY2024 Budget: Social Services Funding

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, many of which are rooted in poverty and inequity.



This report, from the Human Services commission, is intended to outline these issues and the critical role the City's social services funding plays in addressing their causes and effects.

For detailed information about the City's social services funding, please visit the [City of Columbia Social Services Funding web page \(https://www.como.gov/health/social-services-funding/\)](https://www.como.gov/health/social-services-funding/).

A Strategic Investment

Because the City does not have the capacity to provide all of the social services needed to address the causes and effects of poverty and inequity in our community, the Human Services Commission 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, through professional services agreements with community-based providers, utilizing the City's social services funding.

In order to target limited resources, the City's social services funding is allocated to address two issue areas reflecting the funding priorities identified by the HSC and approved by the City Council:

- **Basic Needs**
- **Opportunity**

Goal	Ensure our basic needs are met and we all have the opportunity to achieve our full potential.
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Requests for proposals and the resulting purchase of service contracts are issued in a staggered, two year cycle:

Issue	%		Amount	
	Range	Mean	Range	Mean
Basic Needs	50 – 75%	62.5%	\$561,162 - \$841,744	\$701,453
Opportunity	25 – 50%	37.5%	\$280,581 - \$561,162	\$420,872

The social services contracted by the City are identified and prioritized through a data driven process, which also incorporates an ongoing assessment of community needs and resources. While the City's investment in social services is not adequate to fully address the causes and effects of poverty and inequality, it does substantially increase the availability of services in Columbia. Examples of services the City purchases include:

- Employment readiness and support from Job Point
- Homelessness and shelter services from Room at the Inn and Turning Point
- Housing support services from Voluntary Action Center
- Out of school programs from Columbia Housing Authority, Fun City, and Grade A Plus
- Personal finance education from Love Columbia
- Domestic violence services from True North
- Senior and disability services from Services for Independent Living and Meals on Wheels
- Nutritious supplemental foods from the Food Bank, CCUA, and the Community Garden Coalition
- Mental health services from Compass Health

Without funding from the City, many of these services would simply be unavailable to our community's most vulnerable residents.

A Return on Investment

\$13:1

The City's investment also allows our contracted partners to leverage additional, external resources which further increase the community's capacity to deliver social services. Based on an analysis of our current social services contracts, we found that for every \$1 the City of Columbia invests in local social services, our contracted providers generate \$13 additional dollars... a \$13/\$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.

A Collective Investment

The investment in social services also empowers the City to be a leader in convening diverse stakeholders to address our community’s complex social issues. Because we are operating in a resource-scarce environment, we have embraced and led a collective impact approach, in the spirit of moving the needles together rather than in silos.

Through our [Boone Impact Group](#), the City of Columbia, Boone County, Heart of Missouri United Way, Veterans United Foundation, Community Foundation of Central Missouri, and Missouri Foundation for Health continue to successfully align plans, policies, and practices in order to further develop our capacity to effect positive change at the community level. We measure our success in doing so through our [Boone Indicators Dashboard](#) (www.booneindicators.org), which serves as our community’s scorecard and repository of socio-economic and health indicators.

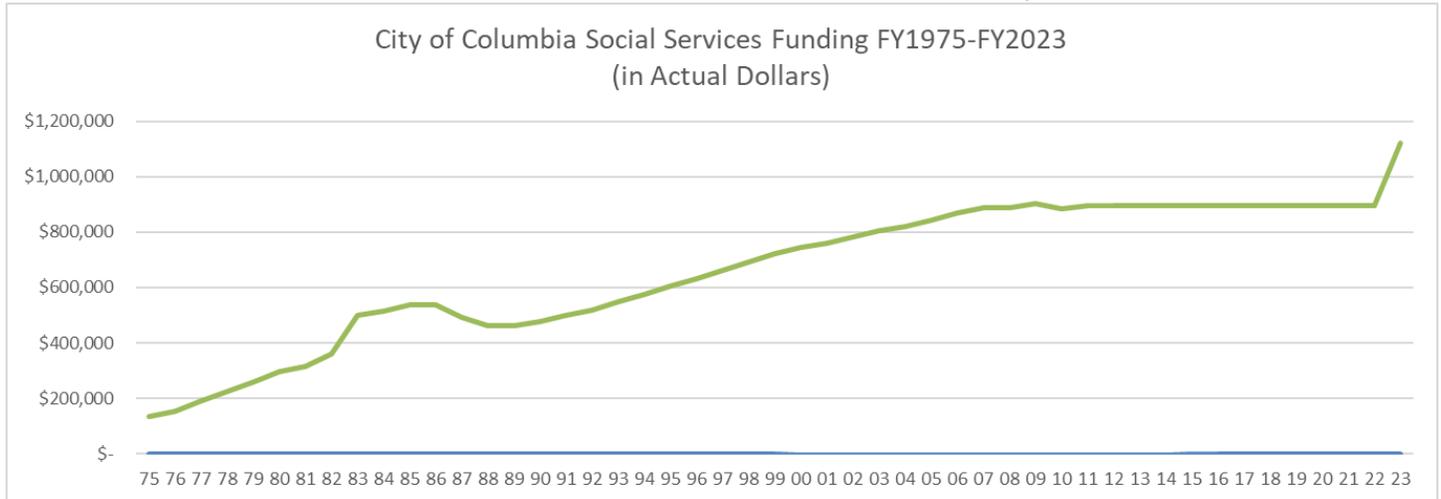


Poverty						
Indicator	Region	Category	Baseline	Most Recent	Trend	
Child Poverty Rate	City of Columbia	Total	15.90% in 2012-2016	14.90% in 2017-2021	🕒	
	Boone County	Total	15.40% in 2012-2016	14.60% in 2017-2021	🕒	
	State of Missouri	Total	21.10% in 2012-2016	16.90% in 2017-2021	--	
Equity Statement: In the City of Columbia, Black children have a poverty rate more than seven times higher than White children. In Boone County, Black children have a poverty rate more than five times higher than White children. [View more]						

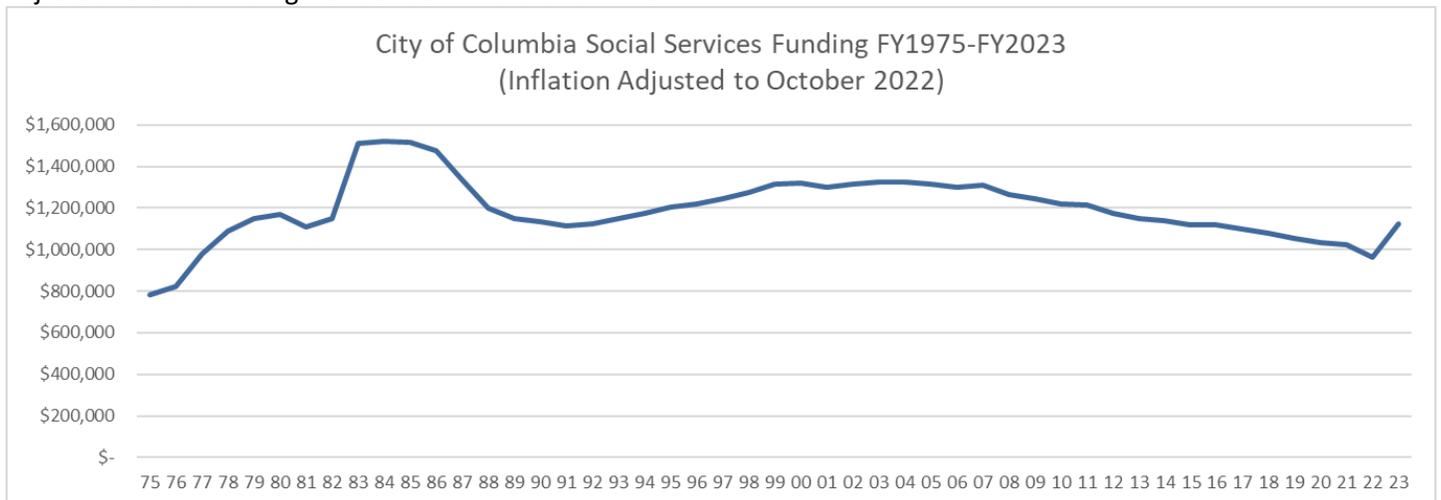
The Boone Impact Group partnership also allows us to mobilize and respond quickly to community needs. For example, in response to the worsening affordable housing crisis, the Boone Impact Group partners jointly funded the Columbia/Boone County Coalition to End Homelessness’ pilot housing stability program. In doing so, we were able to rapidly and strategically braid local funding to support an innovative and collaborative community effort.

Funding History

In actual dollars, the City's investment in social services steadily increased from FY1975 through FYFY2009. In FY2010, the investment was reduced and then remained flat until it was increased substantially in FY2023.



When adjusted for inflation, the City's investment in social services peaked in FY1984. Since that time, the inflation adjusted level of funding trended downward until FY2023.



FY2024 Request for Proposals for Social Services

On July 17, 2023, City staff issued a request for proposals (RFP) for social services to address the issue area of basic needs. The Human Services Commission looks forward to the opportunity to present the FY2024 social services contract recommendations to the City Council on December 18, 2023.

Conclusion

The issues of poverty and inequity have conspired to keep too many of our community members from realizing their true potential. This is why the City's investment in social services, which not only assist people in meeting their basic needs, but also build the skills and assets people need to move up and out of poverty, is so critical. And now, due to the, the need for social services has never been greater. At the same time, the burden of providing and funding social services increasingly falls on local communities. Therefore, the City's social services funding is needed now more than ever. As such, the commission was very pleased to see that the City Manager's proposed FY2024 budget does include a significant increase in social services funding. The members of the Human Services Commission would like to thank the City Manager and City Council for their support of the City's investment in the social infrastructure of our community.