

CARES CVRF FUNDING IMPACT REPORT

March 18, 2021



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BACKGROUND

On March 9, 2020, the first COVID-19 case in Larimer County was announced. Within a week, as cases rose throughout the county, state and nation, Fort Collins saw schools, businesses and public space closures that were happening across the country, followed by a statewide Stay-at-Home Order through April. The City of Fort Collins responded both to the immediate crisis and the ongoing response to move toward recovery.

Emergency health orders and regulations were put into place and continued to evolve throughout the pandemic. This included, but was not limited to, authorizing emergency purchases, suspending Transfort fare collection, suspending utilities disconnects, changing sign codes, and issuing a public face covering order.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law on March 27, 2020 by Congress. The CARES ACT established a \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund (CVRF), which was distributed to communities throughout the United States.

On May 18, 2020, Governor Polis signed Executive Order D2020 070, Directing the Expenditure of Federal Funds Pursuant to the CARES, to establish the CVRF for those communities that have less than 500,000 population. Through the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), this fund would reimburse costs to Counties, Municipalities and Special Districts. Through an intergovernmental agreement with Larimer County, and other municipalities within the county, the City was allocated \$9,015,692 to respond and address the COVID-19 public health pandemic.

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of how the City's CARES funding was used to support COVID-19 relief efforts and help inform the path toward recovery.

TYPES OF CARES FUNDING

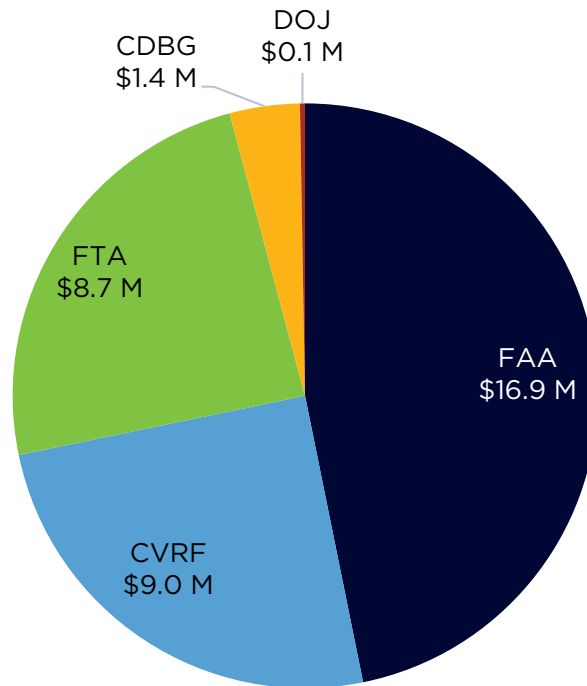
A Recovery Executive Team was formed to provide strategic oversight and guidance, including the deployment of the CARES CVRF funds. A City Recovery Manager position was hired to focus on the connection of response and long-term recovery within the overall city organization and community. Additionally, staff were redeployed to support the coordination, logistics and operations, and cross-departmental structure put into place. The Mayor and City Council made the strategic decision to utilize the CVRF to respond to the immediate COVID health crisis, advance community strategic objectives and support our community small businesses, nonprofits and residents. The majority of the funding was deployed directly into our community. Funding allocation was structured with 30 percent going to keeping our City organization safe, 30 percent to support businesses/economic recovery and 40 percent for direct social and residential recovery.

FUNDING SUMMARY

CARES Grants and Amounts Awarded

While this report focuses on the use of CVRF, it was one of several forms of CARES funding received by the City of Fort Collins and our region. Under the CARES Act, there were dedicated funds for transportation and emergency services (police). Below is a high-level summary of additional CARES funds received.

Total CARES Funding: \$36.1M



- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) - Northern Colorado Regional Airport
- Coronavirus Relief Fund (CVRF)
- Federal Transportation Agency (FTA) - Used for ongoing operations and offset contributions from General Fund in 2020
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- Department of Justice (DOJ) -Used for Police Overtime and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

CVRF Funding Allocations



30%
Organization

Funding supported safe service delivery by the City.

- Remote work equipment
- Covid PPE Supplies
- Emergency Operations Center
- COVID Testing / Lab Center

Outcome: Provided safe service delivery and support for employees and the community



30%
Business / Economic Recovery

Support for economic recovery and business reopening.

- Restaurant Dine-In Expansion
- Keep NoCo Open
- Small Business Assistance Program
- Inclusive Communication & Engagement

Outcome: Deepened relationships with the business community and was responsive to critical business needs



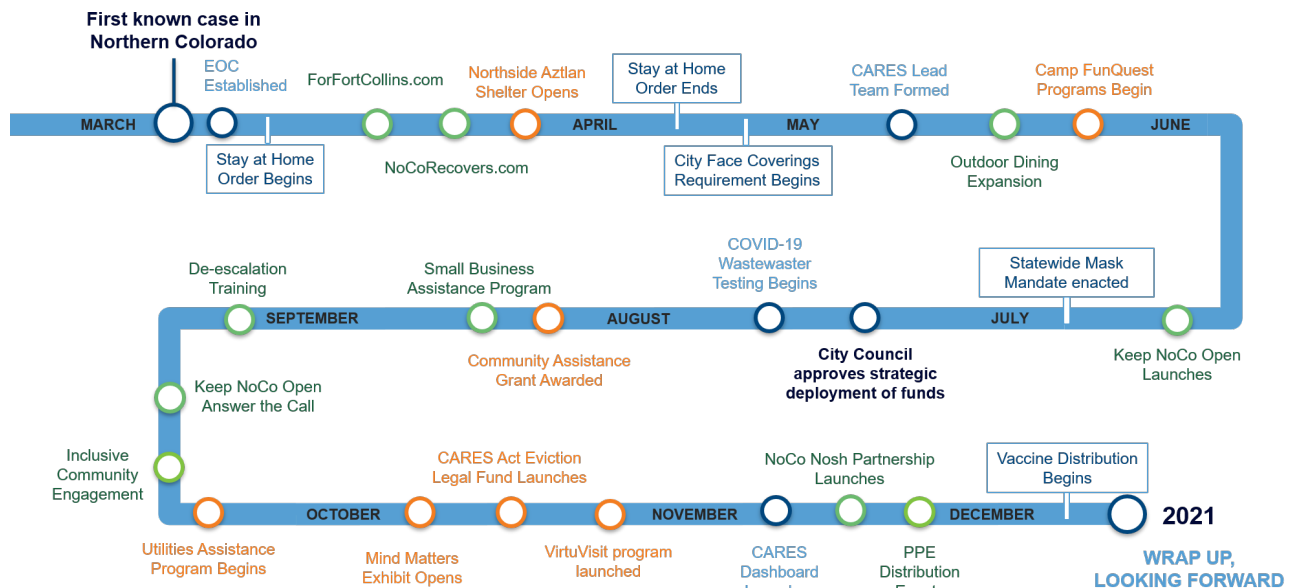
40%
Residential Support / Social Recovery

Human services projects to support community response.

- Non-Congregate / Congregate Shelters
- Legal Defense Fund
- Utilities Payment Assistance
- Childcare

Outcome: Supported innovation and adaptability to meet most critical community needs and keep people in their homes

Timeline of Projects





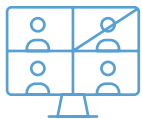
ORGANIZATION/ DIRECT CITY RESPONSE

Outcome: Provide safe service delivery and support for employees and the community

Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

The virtual Fort Collins Operations Center was activated on March 9, 2020 in response to the pandemic. The pandemic and wildfires highlighted the need to have a formal emergency operation center. Technology and processes were developed to ensure the safety of employees and the community while effectively coordinating response efforts.

Remote Work and Office Reconfigurations



By the end of March 2020, the majority of City staff began working remotely due to the statewide Stay-at-Home order. The City invested in infrastructure (additional computers, monitors, peripherals etc.) and additional IT support to enable telework capabilities.



Many critical City services continued to operate during the Stay-at-Home order, and since late-spring of 2020, some employees have transitioned back to working onsite due to the nature of their work. To keep employees and community members safe, workspaces were reconfigured, and additional cleaning services and safety measures were implemented.

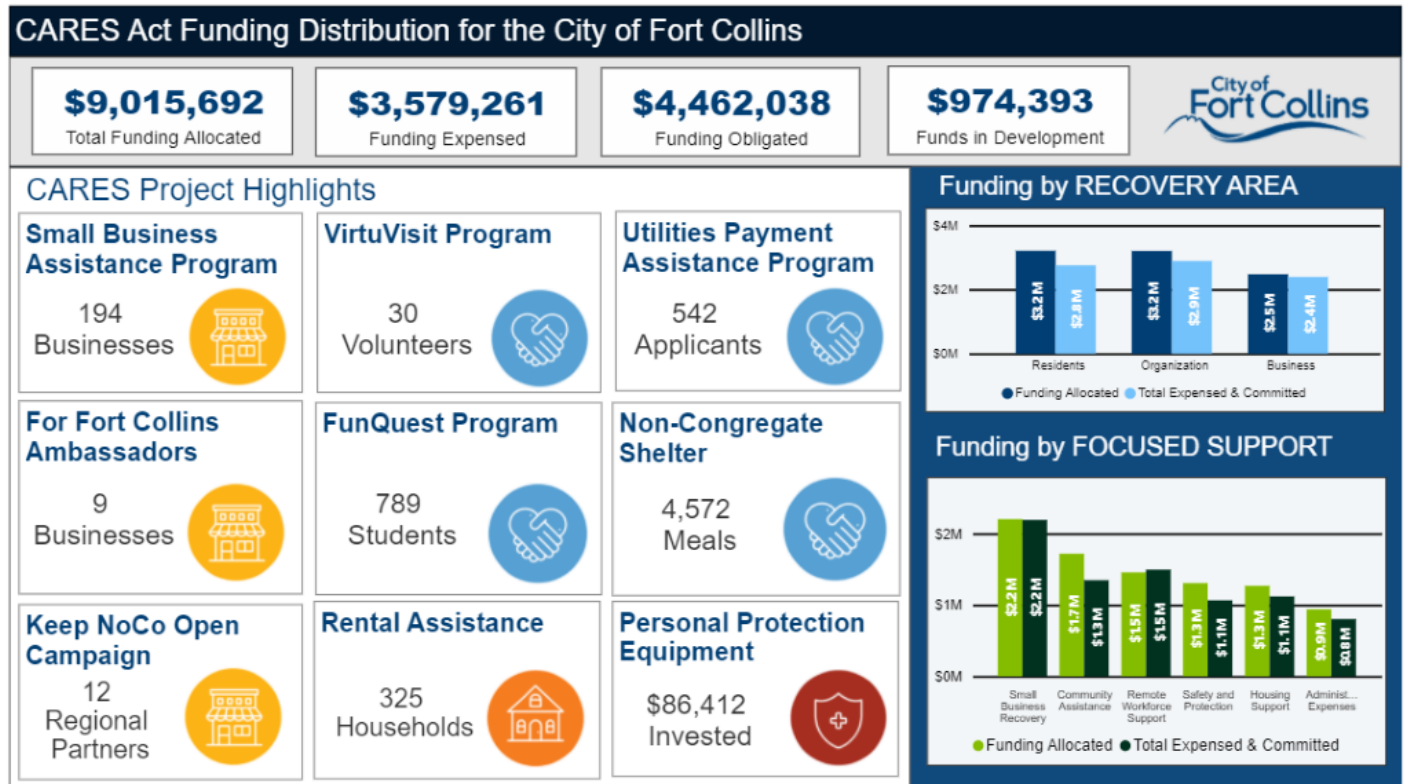
COVID Testing/ Lab Center



The City of Fort Collins partnered with Larimer County and Colorado State University to support free COVID-19 testing. Additionally, Fort Collins Utilities partnered with Colorado State University and other partners to test wastewater samples for SARS-CoV2, the virus that causes the COVID-19 infection. This collaboration was part of a broader Front Range effort to test the wastewater of over 65% of Colorado's population. Wastewater sampling served as another early warning indicator to aid in decision-making for public health officials.

CARES Dashboard

An interactive CARES Dashboard was created to provide a transparent snapshot of how the City's CARES CVRF funds were being utilized to support pandemic response and recovery.



Additional outreach related to the overall impact of CARES CVRF funding included:

- The City Manager's Column in the Coloradoan, December 2020
- Press releases throughout 2020 and into 2021
- Regular reports to City Council



BUSINESS SUPPORT/ ECONOMIC RECOVERY

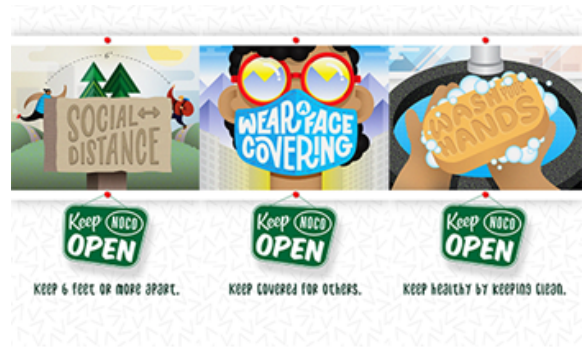
Outcome: Deepened relationships with the business community and response to critical business needs

Keep NoCo Open Campaign

NoCoRecovers.com was created to provide a single source of up-to-date information on potential funding resources available to support the business community of Northern Colorado.

The site served as a hub for other tools including the Keep NoCo Open educational campaign, ongoing COVID-19 impact surveys, public health summaries, and recovery indicators and metrics.

Keep NoCo Open encouraged businesses and community members to take action and follow safety guidelines to keep the community open for business.



196+ unique marketing components created and distributed across Northern Colorado

Restaurant Outside Dine-In Expansion

The City of Fort Collins created a temporary program with a streamlined permitting process to expand options for restaurants, retail, and bars to operate in outdoor patio settings adjacent to their businesses, including parking lots, sidewalks and street parking spaces.

City of Fort Collins Art in Public Places, in partnership with the City's Engineering, Streets, and Traffic Operation Departments, as well as the Downtown Fort Collins Creative District and the Jason and Lucy Greer Foundation for the Arts, hired local artists to paint 15 temporary murals on the concrete barriers around outdoor dining areas throughout Downtown.



Shawna Turner, Artist at Rio Grande Mexican Restaurant



Chris Bates, Artist at Beau Jo's East

Number of approved outdoor permits in Fort Collins:

48

Number of temporary concrete barrier murals:

15

Nosh Noco Food Delivery Partnership

Due to capacity restrictions and public health concerns, the City of Fort Collins launched a program to assist local restaurants and incentivize community members to support their favorite restaurants by partnering with Nosh Noco, a local restaurant delivery service, owned by Northern Colorado restaurants.

The program paid the restaurant portion of the delivery fees and the first \$0.50 of the delivery fee charged to Fort Collins community members.

TESTIMONIALS

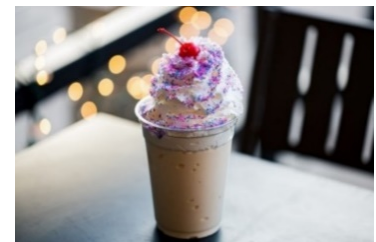
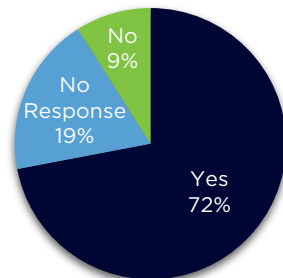
"This has helped us so much, any little boost is huge for us. We are so new we haven't qualified for any grants or funding so it helps immensely"

"I think the program was beneficial as it highlighted the importance of partnerships between locally owned business. Keep it local."

HIGHLIGHTS

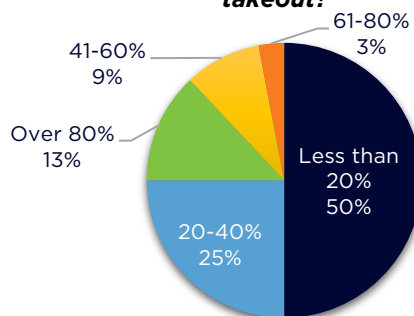
- As of February 5, **32** restaurants added to the Nosh platform since program launch
- Nosh sales went from an average of **\$4,300/week** to **\$5,700/week** signifying a change in consumer behavior since program launch
- Total amount of businesses who received free menu photo shoots through the partnership: **16**

Did you see an increase in orders after the City-Nosh partnership launched in late November?



Stuft

What percentage of your dining room revenue have you been able to re-coop through delivery or takeout?



Los Comales

PPE Distribution for Fort Collins Small Businesses and Nonprofits

The City of Fort Collins held PPE distribution events for small businesses and nonprofits needing safety supplies.

Businesses were able to pick up 1 box of items that included: 100 adult masks, 12 8oz. hand sanitizer bottles, 1 gallon hand sanitizer (used for refills), 10 clear masks, nitrile reusable gloves (variety of sizes), 2 face shields, 1 reusable spray bottle, and 1 bottle of dish soap. Children masks and eye protection glasses were also available.

A total of 95 boxes were given out. Extra supplies were given to the Chamber of Commerce for distribution to their members.

The City of Fort Collins also helped develop, NoCoSafetySupply.com, the region's PPE marketplace in coordination with the Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce and WTF Marketing.



Small Business Assistance Program (SBAP)

Small Business Assistance Program (SBAP), administered by the City's Economic Health Office, provided relief to 205 small businesses disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program targeted our smallest, long-standing businesses, focusing on reaching those that had not been able to obtain other forms of assistance. The funding helped offset the significant, temporary loss of revenue and impact of public health orders. The funding reimbursed the costs of business interruptions and supported rent, utilities, and purchases of PPE.

The City prioritized inclusive business engagement and utilized different mediums of outreach to ensure monies were spent where most needed, including hiring local cultural brokers and engagement staff. In 53 workdays, more than **130 contacts** were made with more than **90 businesses**. This included more than **50 bilingual engagements**.

SUMMARY OF SBAP FUNDING

	Approved Applications	Initial Award	Bonus Award	Total Award	Highest Award	Average Award
Round 1	77	\$666,073	\$181,205	\$847,279	\$15,000	\$11,004
Round 2	69	\$482,530	\$166,000	\$648,530	\$12,500	\$9,399
Sole P	30	\$112,369	\$0	\$112,369	\$4,500	\$3,746
Round 3	29	\$145,000	\$145,000	\$290,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
	205	\$1,405,972	\$492,205	\$1,898,177		\$9,259

TESTIMONIALS FROM RECIPIENTS

"I have three employees and myself. When I shared with them that the City had helped us with this money, two cried and one just said that this made her feel less alone. I know I cried; this pandemic has left us all so isolated, and knowing that the City cared if we continued to stay in business was a huge morale boost for all four of us."

"To not have to worry about our rent, we were able to focus on making sure our staff were taken care of and were able to keep their jobs."

FUNDING BY THE NUMBERS

71% of recipients have 1-10 employees

\$9,259 average award amount for the 205 recipients, awards ranged from \$3,500 - \$15,000

82 women-owned businesses received funding

21 minority-owned businesses received funding

6+ yr 65% of the recipients have been in operation for over six years

INDUSTRIES SERVED



*Data was collected from the applications and a survey of recipients, 174 responded



RESIDENTIAL SUPPORT/ SOCIAL RECOVERY

Outcome: Supported innovation and adaptability to meet the most critical community needs and keep people in their homes

FunQuest Summer Program

Camp FunQuest is a well-established summer day camp program run by the Recreation Department, which pre-COVID was budgeted to run June 1 – August 14. CARES dollars were not initially deployed to support this program, however additional staff were hired to support lower ratios and smaller cohorts due to COVID-19 guidelines for childcare. In the fall, the program then shifted to providing remote learning support for students when the school district was in virtual and hybrid phases.

FUNQUEST PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **855 weekly enrollments** between June 1-August 14
- Up to **100** children attended daily
- **1,705 total students** served June 1 – December 30



Utility Assistance Program

The City's Utilities CARES Act program provided financial assistance for both residential and commercial customers with past due utility bills. **\$547,648** was distributed to **1,323 residential** and **43 commercial customers**.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS TAKEN BY UTILITIES

- Late fees and reconnection fees were paused beginning in since April 2020.
- Utilities disconnects were suspended since April 2020.
- The **Utilities Payment Assistance Fund** distributed **\$323,591** to **847** income-qualified customers with past-due bills.
- Donation campaign raised **\$61,380** (record amount). Allowed more income-qualified customers to be supported.
- Additional Payment Assistance Fund distribution agencies recruited to build capacity for distributing funds.
- Staff worked with local partners to provide additional "gap" funding to customers who owe more than \$1,000.

VirtuVisit program

The VirtuVisit program, launched at the end of October 2020, connects isolated older adults to family, friends and volunteers supporting them. The no cost program provides seniors with user-friendly digital tablets and startup support by trained volunteers. After training, participants are more easily able to connect with friends and family and attend virtual classes, appointments and events.

Numerous program participants shared that the ability to connect virtually with family and friends, along with critical services was very important during the pandemic.

32 Participants

26 Volunteers

As of
Early Jan. 2021



One VirtuVisit participant, a 101-year-old hospice patient, is now able to visit with her family on a regular basis because of the program.



Mind Matters Museum Exhibit

In October 2020, the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery opened the special exhibit “Mental Health: Mind Matters”. The goal of the interactive exhibit was to build a greater understanding of the importance of mental health and create a safe space for important conversations about mental illness during the crisis. The exhibit was free to the community.

Legal Defense Fund

City staff allocated CARES Act funding for a mini-grant program with a competitive application process to identify and contract with community partners for eviction avoidance education programs, outreach, legal clinics, and direct client representation for Fort Collins community members.



8 Community partner organizations coordinated efforts, providing:

- Outreach materials
- Self-advocacy training sessions
- **Free legal advice**
- Representation of clients facing eviction due to COVID-19
- **4,320 informational flyers** distributed in English & Spanish
- **28 families kept in housing** through direct legal representation and legal advice from the Colorado Poverty Law Project
- **150** calls received by Fuerza Latina hotline related to housing insecurity, rent assistance, legal assistance, landlord communication support or other housing issues.
- Callers were directed to resources offered by community partners funded by CARES.
- **3 Know Your Rights** training sessions held
- **2 virtual legal clinics**
- Reached approximately **150** residents*
**97 of those reached from targeted populations based on factors that contribute to vulnerability to housing instability due to COVID-19*
- **3 eviction cases** from Fort Collins went to court hearing, supported by direct legal representation and legal advice from the Colorado Poverty Law Project

Housing & Homelessness Shelters

The City, through the Social Sustainability Department (SSD), supported COVID-19 response work of local homelessness service providers by deploying CARES-CVRF to both congregate and non-congregate shelters. These projects focused their pandemic response work on the safety of those experiencing homelessness in our community. A non-congregate shelter program, hosted at a local hotel, supported those most at-risk of complications due to COVID-19. Congregate shelters expanded capacity to allow for increased physical distancing and safety protocols.



Northside Aztlan Center Emergency Shelter Program

In late March, Northside Aztlan Community Center was transitioned into a 24/7 shelter that allowed for proper physical distancing and safety protocols.

A temporary outdoor shelter space was also approved in Heritage Park and officially opened in mid-April. Both indoor and outdoor shelters operated into mid-June.

All told, the indoor shelter served **7,432 overnight guests** and provided over **30,901 meals**.

Fort Collins Rescue Mission Temporary Shelter at Blue Spruce

The Fort Collins Rescue Mission temporarily moved to a larger space, Blue Spruce, where it has serviced up to **150 men per night** since early November 2020.

Catholic Charities Temporary Shelter for Women and Families

Catholic Charities built a temporary heated structure in their parking lot for women and families to stay warm and protected while waiting to enter the shelter each evening. In November and December of 2020, **2,025 women and 167 families** were sheltered overnight.

Homeward Alliance

Expanded its daytime hours at the Murphy Center and was able to purchase heaters for their outdoor seating area.

Non-Congregate Shelter (NCS)

A non-congregate shelter, setup at a local hotel in August 2020, provided safe, temporary housing for our community's most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness.

The NCS was created for those 65+ and/or with medical conditions at highest risk of complications from COVID-19.

From August-December 2020, NCS provided safe shelter for **51 people**, 16 were successfully moved into permanent housing.

The Food Bank provided **8,608 lunches and dinners**, and Precision provided **2,027 hours** of on-site security.



Community Assistance Grant Program



The City, through the Social Sustainability Department, launched a community response grant program in August 2020 and deployed CARES-CVRF funding assistance to 17 local organizations. Selected projects focused their pandemic response work toward childcare, food insecurity, housing stability and various vulnerable populations including seniors, community members with a disability, and victims of domestic violence and abuse. In total, **\$954,000** was awarded to the local community through this program.

FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS FROM RECIPIENTS

Boys and Girls Club of Larimer County opened a comprehensive in-person summer program, serving more than 500 youth daily.

Innovative online-gathering resource created by **Partners for Age Friendly Communities** to support our aging population navigate physical isolation.

9 staff trained in virtual care programming by **Ensign Skills Center**

Salvation Army provided 16 households with eviction prevention assistance

Fort Collins Museum of Discovery provided 2,000 cumulative contact hours of in-person hybrid learning services within 1.5 months.

COVID exacerbated incidences of domestic violence and interpersonal abuse. **Crossroads Safehouse** served over 900 clients.

149 adults and children used the **Family Housing Network** day center for laundry, kitchen access, play area, showers, and napping room.

“The funding supported additional site staff to ensure that students had the support they needed, including implementing enrichment activities, troubleshooting challenges with online learning access, and supervising free-learning time.”

– **Fort Collins Museum of Discovery**

FUNDING BY THE NUMBERS

30k health screenings
Homeward Alliance

40+ households received academic support services
The Matthews House

11,334 individuals served and

35 organizations supported
Food Bank for Larimer County

502 hours of one-on-one virtual childcare and mentorship
La Cocina

100 children and 45 foster and adoptive families served
Kids At Heart

50 households received \$10,000 for direct consumer needs
Disabled Resource Services

900 survivors of childhood abuse were served through remote therapy and telehealth
ChildSafe

386 evictions prevented and
323 households received rent assistance
Neighbor to Neighbor*

231 students received in-person remote-learning support
Teaching Tree

6,294 cumulative hours of out-of-school care
Respite Care

KEY TAKEAWAYS—LESSONS LEARNED

Summary

Key themes of resiliency, innovation, and collaboration emerged across all the projects and programs supported by CARES funding.

Resilience meant drawing on the capacity to meet short- and long-term community needs. Staff utilized innovative problem-solving and approached programs and services in new and different ways. Furthermore, there was an ongoing commitment to **adaptability** as community conditions and needs changed. The importance of continued **collaboration** internally, as well as with external partners was one of the biggest takeaways.

Outcomes

Stronger Connection to the community.

- Connected to the community in new ways.
- Held virtual City Council meetings and hosted remote listening sessions in English and Spanish.
- Sparked more authentic conversations with community members about needs and struggles.
- Strengthened existing partnerships and formed new ones with external partners and businesses throughout the City and the region.
- Deepened business engagement to support businesses that have traditionally been underserved.

Delivered critical services with greater impact.

- Delivered critical services to our community's most vulnerable, which would not have been possible without CVRF funding.

Adapted new work environment to meet emerging priorities.

- Balanced flexibility and adaptability with the funds with consistent framework and process.
- Hired and redeployed staff for implementation/ management on projects.
- Balanced coordinating processes across the City and providing autonomy to design and manage projects.
- Implemented rapid-cycle continuous improvement processes.
- Prioritized the greater good of the organization.
- Balanced leadership oversight and mid-level management autonomy to enable responsive decision-making.

Lessons Learned

Demonstrated opportunities for internal efficiencies.

- Found that a-typical funding structures like CARES require adaptation to processes as they do not always fit the traditional reporting structure of the City.
- Created a greater need for cross-departmental and cross-service area coordination. Weekly project manager meetings were a successful way to share information and project stories. Bringing in the financial analysts sooner in the process would help streamline systems, as well as having a lead financial coordinator on the grant.
- Highlighted opportunity to reevaluate personnel structures and utilize temporary staffing positions, in some cases to deploy underutilized employees to add greater value.
- Consolidated process for reporting and storytelling would have created efficiencies.

Magnified the gaps that exist within the community.

- Elevated the need for an equity office, as well as new and different programs and approaches to address root issues in the community.
 - **Highlighted greater opportunity to** leverage internal and external experts to drive programs and funding.
 - Demonstrated a greater opportunity to leverage partners in the development and cocreation of projects to lead to better outcomes and to break down silos. Examples include Colorado State University, Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Development Authority (DDA), nonprofit partners, equity leaders, and boards and commissions.
 - **Created ongoing need for adaptability to navigate challenges of ever-changing** policies, requirements, and deadlines at the State and Federal level.
 - As competitive funding opportunities continue to become available, a need will remain to stay informed on key legislative and policy changes and priorities.

Long-term recovery planning

In January of 2021, the City began shifting into recovery planning. The City's Recovery Plan will involve analyzing existing city plan(s), conducting a gap analysis, alignment with regional recovery efforts, and engaging the community on what is most needed to build an equitable and resilient recovery plan for the City.

The American Rescue Plan Act, signed into law by President Joe Biden on March 11, has established \$1.9 trillion in COVID-19 relief funding to hit American cities across the nation, including \$350 billion in aid to state and local governments. Colorado will receive \$6 billion for state and local governments, which includes \$27.5 million for the City of Fort Collins.

This funding will be used to address the pandemic and its negative economic impacts. All funding must be spent by 2024. The structural economic and social changes brought on by COVID-19 will continue to inform strategic direction and decision-making as the City continues the path of resiliency. Plans are underway to align funding with community needs.