



## **Tarrant County**

# **State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Policies and Procedures**

### **I. POLICY STATEMENT**

It is the policy of the Tarrant County Commissioners Court to promote the highest and best use of funds received through the American Rescue Plan Act by leveraging existing resources and prioritizing programs without an alternative source of funding.

The Commissioners Court will direct the equitable use of State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds in four focus areas: Prepare for the Future, Improve Public Health and Wellness, Revitalize the Economy, and Strengthen the Community.

### **II. BACKGROUND**

Tarrant County Commissioners Court is committed to maintaining a transparent and efficient program selection process. In accordance with the U.S. Treasury's Final Rule for State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (FRF) program and in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200, the Commissioners Court adopts the processes detailed herein for internal and external program solicitation, eligibility determination, and contract management.

Tarrant County received its first tranche of Fiscal Recovery Funds on May 19, 2021. Beginning on July 6, 2021, Commissioners Court held public work sessions to discuss how the FRF monies could be programmed, and to hear from community leaders about pressing issues facing Tarrant County in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on early information, on July 20, 2021, the Commissioners Court adopted four Focus Areas to which FRF funds would be allocated: Prepare for the Future, Improve Public Health and Wellness, Revitalize the Economy, and Strengthen the Community. To identify the most immediate community needs, the Commissioners Court authorized a Community Needs and Resources Assessment entailing several months of stakeholder interviews, interactive focus groups, and community surveys that garnered nearly 5,000 responses. The presentations from community partners and the findings from the needs and resource assessment helped inform the selection and funding of projects and programs to address immediate COVID-19 needs and initiate recovery programs.

To determine proposed project eligibility according to the Final Rule, prevent duplication of efforts, and ensure compliance with 2 C.F.R. §200, the County Administrator established the FRF Work Group. The Work Group is comprised of members from the County Administrator's Office, Budget and Risk Management Department, Audit Department, Criminal District Attorney – Civil Division, Purchasing Department, Human Resources, Information Technologies Department, and Facilities Management

Department. The Work Group is responsible for reviewing and recommending projects and programs to Commissioners Court. All agreements and contracts must follow normal county procedures and be publicly posted.

On March 1, 2022, Tarrant County Commissioners Court adopted a budget for both tranches of FRF. Court approved funding allocations by focus area and goal, including line items for certain projects and programs identified as responding to immediate community needs.

### **III. FRF PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

#### **A. Funding Request Received (Internal/External)**

Internal – Budget and Risk Management (BRM) receives FRF request from Tarrant County internal department. BRM evaluates the request based on county policy and budgeting practices. BRM forwards information to Administrator’s Office to create a program checklist for Work Group submission.

External – (Interim Final Rule) Administrator’s Office receives an external proposal from community partner. Programmatic determination is made based on applicability to Commissioners Court focus areas, goals, and stated outcomes. If determined to be an applicable project, a project checklist is developed and submitted to Work Group. All programs and projects that were included in the FRF Budget approved by Commissioners Court on or before March 1, 2022 will follow this process. Any program or project not included in the March 1, 2022 budget will follow the Final Rule process below.

External – (Final Rule) Commissioners Court has issued a Call for Projects for community partners to apply. Commissioners Court has approved the Call for Projects including project criteria, outcomes, and selection process. More detail is provided in the Call for Projects section below.

#### **B. Calls for Projects**

To fulfill the best practices requirements of the Final Rule, Tarrant County Commissioners Court will select projects and programs for funding based on a competitive process. Commissioners Court will issue a call for projects after April 1, 2022 that will solicit proposals from community partners aimed at achieving various outcomes. The call for projects issued in April 2022 will follow this process:

1. Administrator’s Office will present the Work Group with call for projects document including desired programmatic outcomes and expenditure category assignments.
2. Work Group will determine eligibility of call for projects categories, assign expenditure categories, and recommend call for projects and outcomes to Commissioners Court for approval.
3. Commissioners Court will approve the call for projects and issue the call. Respondents will have no less than thirty (30) days to respond to the call and propose programs to accomplish a particular programmatic outcome. Each proposal must respond to at least one defined programmatic outcome; only one expenditure category may be identified for each proposal.
4. After the close of the call, the applications will be screened for completion, court-determined criteria applied, and scored by a third-party consultant. The applications will also be scored based on socio-economic criteria. In addition to the consultant’s scoring,

proposals will be awarded additional points based on program readiness, risk assessment score, availability of matching funds, and alignment with the Needs and Resources Assessment Final Report recommendations.

5. Staff will develop program recommendations for Work Group review and Commissioners Court approval and funding.
6. The Work Group will evaluate and determine eligibility and recommend qualified programs to Commissioners Court.

Certain programs will have an alternative call for projects delivery process. Specifically, programs related to childcare, small business grants, and housing solutions will involve multiple external partners. Commissioners Court will engage the appropriate agencies for administration and support for these specialized calls for projects.

### **C. Completion of FRF Checklist (Administrator's Office)**

Administrator's Office completes a program checklist that includes project description; applicability to focus area, goal, and project; funding availability; Interim Final Rule or Final Rule eligibility; potential for partnership opportunities; and coordination with existing programs. The program checklists are developed, compiled, and sent to the Work Group for evaluation and potential determination of eligibility and recommendation to Commissioners Court.

### **D. FRF Work Group Determination and Recommendation**

The FRF Work Group meets ad hoc and evaluates the FRF eligibility of requested projects and programs. The Work Group ensures that the requested project or program is not supplanting existing funds, is eligible according to the Interim Final Rule or Final Rule (with expenditure category and finding is reasonable and proportional to the public health or negative economic impact), and assigns it to a focus area outcome, goal, and project.

Internal Program: If an existing internal program is being amended or expanded (i.e., a new expense found eligible to an existing program or project) and does not include an increase in budget, the amendment or expansion must be determined eligible. Once eligibility is determined for the expansion, the department may move forward with the program according to normal administrative procedures. If the program or project requires a contract or professional services agreement, all appropriate purchasing processes will be followed and be added to a Commissioners Court agenda.

At the County Administrator's discretion, a program or project may be determined eligible, assigned an expenditure category, and recommended to Commissioners Court for approval and funding.

### **E. Commissioners Court Approval for New Programs/Projects/Scope**

The Work Group's eligibility determination and recommendation are forwarded to Commissioners Court for consideration and approval in an FRF program budget update. The Court considers and takes action to approve or deny funding for the project or program in the FRF budget.

If a program or project has a requested change in scope that materially changes the program or project, its eligibility, or its applicability to a category, the program must go back through the

process including changes to the program checklist, new FRF Work Group determination and recommendation, and Commissioners Court approval of an agreement amendment.

The Commissioners Court reserves the right to approve a proposed project without it first going through the Work Group process if it is determined to be eligible by the County Administrator.

#### **F. External Subrecipient Agreement-/Contract Process**

After Commissioners Court approves a program and/or budgets funds for the program, the Administrator's Office will send the subrecipient the subrecipient guide along with subrecipient templates. The subrecipient must complete the following:

- Program overview
- Program budget
- Program budget narrative
- Risk assessment
- Program evaluation worksheet

Upon reviewing the completed templates, the Administrator's Office may request additional information. If the documentation does not coincide with the information that was used to approve the program, a funding recommendation may not be made to Commissioners Court. Once the subrecipient has completed the required templates and the information is acceptable, the Administrator's Office drafts an agreement based on an approved template (CDA-Civil Division) and sends it back for approval and execution to the subrecipient. The Administrator's Office places the agreement/contract on the next available Commissioners Court agenda for consideration and possible approval.

If approved, the agreement receives a Court Order Number and is transmitted to the Administrator's Office. The executed agreement is filed and sent to the subrecipient along with a federal award checklist, program reporting template, and monthly reimbursement request template.

#### **G. Internal Process/Vendor Requisitions**

For internal program and project proposals determined eligible and recommended through the Work Group or Commissioners Court, the County will follow the normal approval process. If the program or project requires a contract or professional services agreement, all appropriate purchasing processes will be followed and be agendized on a Commissioners Court agenda (professional services agreement and other agreements under the department's section and vendors under purchasing department). Requisitions will be entered by Budget and Risk Management.

#### **H. Request for Program Change of Scope**

If an internal or external program or project has a requested change in scope, the program or project's eligibility must be determined and recommended again through the Work Group. If the change in scope is for an external program, the contract or agreement must be amended through Commissioners Court action.

A modification to the approved program budget that does exceed ten (10) percent allowed in certain contracts is not included in this process insofar as the scope of the project does not change.

## **I. Reporting, Reimbursement, and Compliance Review**

Internal - internal programs and projects report program information to Budget and Risk Management for evaluation. Programs and projects are evaluated based on efficiency, efficacy, and ability to accomplish the required focus area outcomes. Positions and programs will be evaluated after June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. All internal programs must be determined eligible for the next fiscal year, recommended to Commissioners Court, and approved.

External – external programs submit program reporting information with reimbursement documents. The external subrecipient will submit agreed-to reporting documents and the reimbursement template with required documentation. The reimbursement information submitted by the subrecipient will be reviewed by the Auditor’s Office for compliance and eligibility. The Administrator’s Office will approve the reimbursement request and the Auditor’s Office will submit for payment through the normal administrative process.

Program Income – Any program income generated by an FRF funded program must be identified and applied to the cost of the program prior to any reimbursement request. Program income should be noted in the reporting and reimbursement submission so that it may be tracked and reported to U.S. Treasury. Program income use must be eligible and within the approved program.

Evaluation – internal and external programs and projects will be reviewed for efficiency, efficacy, and equity according to the Final Rule. Program evaluation for internal and external programs will be performed based on agreed-upon performance metrics, the U.S. Treasury Final Rule, and all relevant reporting criteria.

## **J. Closeout Process**

All internal and external programs will complete a closeout process.

# FRF Process Outline

