



# Final Report: Covid Budget Equity Tool

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# Introduction

On May 13, 2021, the City Commission directed the Office of Equity and Inclusion to develop an Equity Covid Budget Tool to assist with the equitable spending of the American Rescue Plan funding of \$32 Million. On May 27, 2021, the Commission reviewed and adopted the Equity Covid Budget tool and assigned the timeline for implementation. This report details the process of utilizing the Equity Covid Budget tool, gathering community feedback, and identifies opportunities to improve this process and future Budget Equity Tool processes.

## About the Equity Covid Budget Tool

### Purpose

The Equity Covid Budget tool was designed to integrate explicit consideration of racial equity in decisions addressing programs that would work to alleviate the impact of COVID-19 on our most impacted neighbors. The tool assesses proposals through a series of questions that use an equity lens. These questions focus on utilizing disaggregated data to define the disparity the program seeks to address. In addition, the questions help to identify performance measures and a plan to inform the community of the program's impact. Lastly, the tool is designed to assess individual programs and not an overall budget. To view the Equity Covid Budget Toolkit, please see Appendix 1.

### Rating system

The rating system was designed to assess if proposals are likely to advance equity. In addition to providing a rating, the OEI provided written feedback that identified the opportunities for equity as well as suggestions on how the proposal could be improved to advance equity. The proposals were reviewed on the following rating system:

- Good: the proposal includes at least one way to enhance resources or services to underrepresented communities.
- Better: the proposal includes at least two ways to enhance resources
- Best: the proposal includes at least two ways to enhance resources, is data based, and addresses a systemic problem or has a system-wide approach to building equity.
- Does not advance equity: Proposal was reviewed with staff, and department and concluded the proposal does not lend itself to an equity opportunity

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- Incomplete: 2 or more questions are not filled out, not including “Show data to demonstrate existing disparities and impact of COVID on the population identified, include local data if possible” OR overall responses do not provide sufficient context or details to determine impact on equity

In the process of rating the Covid Budget Equity toolkit proposals, the Office of Equity and Inclusion included the rating of "Incomplete" on some proposals. An "incomplete" rating means that there was not enough detail or context provided for the OEI to provide a rating. An "incomplete" does not mean that the proposal is a bad or harmful idea. The scoring system reflects the OEI's ability to assess proposals through an equity lens based on the information provided.

## Timeline and Implementation

The OEI evaluated 69 proposals from Commissioners and community applicants over a two week period, returning all applications with ratings and feedback on 6/25/2021 (six additional proposals were submitted after the deadline and were not evaluated, but are included in Appendix 7). While evaluating the proposals OEI staff developed a curriculum for community feedback sessions and partnered with Communications and Engagement staff to plan and promote four community feedback sessions. Below is the full implementation timeline:

- Proposals are submitted for evaluation (6/14)
- Evaluations completed and returned (6/25) \*Applicants may re-submit 6/25-7/2
- Four community engagement sessions (3 virtual, 1 in person) (6/28-6/30)
- Commission receives proposals, evaluations and community feedback via backup (8/11/2021)
- Commission provides guidance to City Manager to craft budget (8/19/2021)
- City Manager creates budget (Timing TBD by Commission)
- The Commission approves the proposed budget or gives further guidance if needed. (Timing TBD by Commission)

## Community Engagement

### About

The Covid Equity Budget Tool emphasized the importance of engaging the community, especially people who have been impacted by disparities exacerbated by Covid-19. The OEI hosted four community feedback sessions over three days. Three of the sessions were on zoom

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and one was in person. Each session began with a staff presentation on the ARP funding and the Covid Equity Budget Tool followed by breakout groups to discuss the proposals sorted into four categories: economic, housing, social services, and a catch-all group of proposals about health/broadband/transportation/ grocery/ capital improvement. Community members were given the opportunity to review summaries of proposals and then discussed the proposals using the following questions as a guide:

- How does this proposal align with the goal of advancing equity? Or, what community conditions will improve (ex. Housing, health, education, employment)
- How could this proposal be more impactful in advancing equity? (Is the funding adequate? Are there partnerships that could help support? Is this proposal duplicative of any work that is already happening in the community?)
- What else should commissioners know about this proposal?

In total, 100 neighbors signed up for the community feedback sessions. Of the sign ups, 41 neighbors provided feedback. Their feedback has been included in Appendix 2.

Each breakout room had two city of Gainesville staff members, one facilitating and one taking notes. Following each feedback session participants were sent a form in which they could write additional feedback on the proposals and on the process. The Powerpoint presentation from community feedback sessions can be viewed in Appendix 3.

## Summary of feedback

The following section includes summaries of community feedback on each of the four groups (Economics, Housing, Social Services, Health/broadband/transportation/ grocery/ capital improvement) as well as feedback on the overall process.

**Economics:** Within these discussions, there was general support for job training and Youth Corp programs. Neighbors expressed the importance of job training initiatives because of the shortage of maintenance and trade jobs. There was an expressed desire to keep talent in Gainesville and job training was viewed as a way to do that. There were mixed responses on proposals addressing GRU debt relief. Some neighbors expressed support for the idea because it has been done before. The criticism of the GRU debt relief proposals was primarily due to how vague they were. Neighbors expressed that the proposals were unclear on who the money would help and that there did not seem to be prioritization. One neighbor provided feedback about residents not being able to access GRU payment plans. There were also concerns about

using this funding to pay GRU first. Lastly, neighbors expressed wanting to see support for small businesses. Overall, neighbors who attended these sessions continuously emphasized the importance of focusing on the most impacted neighbors as well as ensuring that relief is going directly to the neighbors first.

**Housing:** Neighbors who attended these sessions recognized the importance of the crisis of affordable housing. There was general support for the issues addressed in these proposals. Neighbors were in favor of keeping residents in their homes as well as providing homeless prevention. Standout proposals discussed included the Community Land Trust, Landlord Mitigation Grants, and Support for Low/Very Low income housing. The Community Land Trust was discussed as an excellent way to address equity because of the protection it would provide underserved neighborhoods against gentrification. There was mixed support for Landlord Mitigation Grants with questions on how much landlords would benefit. Neighbors expressed the hope that this funding would support nonprofits that worked in housing, naming Habitat for Humanity, Family Promise, and Catholic Charities specifically. Neighbors also expressed wanting to see more proposals for homeowners, specifically for people who have mortgages in foreclosure or forbearance. Lastly, neighbors expressed housing being addressed holistically and wanting to see clarity and collaboration in the grants for housing funds.

**Social Services:** Neighbors who attended these sessions expressed appreciation that nonprofit organizations (NPOs) were considered for funding. Neighbors expressed that funding money through established nonprofits was an ideal way to disburse funds to reach people and that collaborating with NPOs was a key way to advance equity. Participants asked for clarification around the process of NPOs accessing funding as well as specific dollar amounts in the proposals. Neighbors expressed interest in NPOs that included food access and local farmers, need prevention, language proficiency, disabled adults and mental health services. Participants in these sessions reiterated the importance of ARP funding meeting the needs of communities that are not being addressed by other city funds.

**Health/ broadband/ transportation/ grocery/ capital improvement:** The discussions for these sessions varied due to the diversity of the topics. Neighbors found payments for vaccinations to be lower priority and wanted more information around the logistics. In response to mental health vouchers, there were questions about the eligibility requirements for vouchers. Neighbors expressed that this program will benefit veterans, re-entry services, and African Americans. Neighbors expressed positive support for the CRP program and encouraged Commissioners to develop partnerships through the program. In response to proposals focused

on health centers, neighbors also expressed the need for partnerships and specificity on the services. Some suggestions included a mental health aspect as well as linking healthy foods from grocery stores. Neighbors mentioned the importance of connecting the mobility hub with other services such as the proposed grocery store and the medical center. There was recognition that transportation is a huge issue. Proposals including Vision Zero, Glen Springs, and improving downtown were not considered a priority. There was also conflicting support for the funding going towards climate justice. Broadband was a big topic for neighbors who attended these sessions. The issue of broadband brought conflicting views. Some neighbors thought that there were more important issues to address, especially as virtual learning decreases. There was concern about broadband being half of the APR funding citing that \$13-\$15 million might be too much. However, there were neighbors that urged the City to enter the fiber business as the internet becomes a utility. There was recognition that this could be important for equity and access if the investment is made in areas lacking broadband.

**The Engagement Process:** Within the sessions, neighbors provided feedback regarding the engagement and application process. The general consensus was there was not enough time to do thorough community engagement. Furthermore, there were concerns that neighbors most impacted by Covid did not have access to these sessions. Neighbors expressed disappointment that these sessions had low attendance and questioned the process of advertising. Some neighbors also found these meetings difficult to access and suggested gathering information in a variety of ways. Neighbors described the process as fast and found it difficult to bring thoughtful input forward. Some neighbors expressed distrust in the community engagement process because commissioners have already submitted proposals for projects they support. Many neighbors expressed disappointment in the vagueness of the proposals. Lastly, neighbors commented on the lack of transparency on the process of community members/organizations applying for the funding.

## Challenges & Opportunities

The Office of Equity and Inclusion have identified several challenges during the implementation of the Equity Covid Budget Tool. Below is a list of challenges, opportunities to improve this process and opportunities to ensure success for future Budget Equity Tool processes such as the yearly budget.

## Challenges

- 1. Insufficient time:** Several steps in the process could have been more successful if afforded more time. Neighbors expressed that the two-week time period to submit applications was not long enough for organizations and individuals to write and submit proposals. One community member expressed a minimum of 30 days would have been needed. An extended timeframe would have benefited OEI staff to review proposals. More time would have allowed commissioners to work with staff to gather data across departments to make the proposals more complete. A longer timeline would have also supported a clearer implementation plan and defined roles and responsibilities from key stakeholders.
- 2. Limited Access to Disaggregated Data:** Data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, income, and geography is often incomplete or unavailable making it difficult to demonstrate existing disparities while evaluating proposals. It is difficult to measure the success of a tool/program without the ability to measure against adequate baselines or later measured to show improved community results.

## Opportunities to Improve the Equity Covid Budget Tool Process

If allotted more time, the Equity Covid Budget Tool process can still be improved. Below are some suggestions that could make this process more impactful and produce proposals and a final budget that will be more likely to advance equity:

- 1. Define the community results that are most important to address with ARP funding:**
  - a. Using available data and community feedback, the City Commission can collectively decide what community results are most urgent and important to address with ARP funding - What conditions of well-being are we trying to improve for the community? (Ex. Housing, healthcare, employment) For more on community/population results, see Appendix 4. Existing proposal ideas can then be assessed for alignment with these top priorities. Feedback from community members most impacted by disparities made worse by Covid should inform these priorities.
- 2. Update incomplete proposals:**
  - a. City staff can support data collection as needed. When data is unavailable, proposals can specify an implementation plan, measures of success and a plan to report back to the community to support accountability.
  - b. City staff can help clarify any known legal or logistical restrictions on ARP funding, and remove proposals that aren't possible.



### **3. Expand community engagement:**

- a. Expanding community engagement will ensure that we have heard from the communities that have been impacted the most by existing disparities made worse by Covid on: 1) What community results are most urgent and important? and, 2) What strategies do our most impacted neighbors endorse/prioritize to achieve these results?
- b. The Commission may determine if a new call for proposals is an option after community results are defined. If this is an option, we recommend a 30-day period based on community feedback.

## **Opportunities to Improve Future Budget Equity Processes**

### **Improve Data Collection Systems and Create a Data Development Agenda**

Whenever possible, the City should be collecting data that is disaggregated by race, gender, ethnicity, income, and geography. The City Commission can create a policy directing the types of data that need to be collected and disaggregated. Standardized categories for demographics can be found in Appendix 5. The Office Equity and Inclusion, Strategic Initiatives and the City Attorney's Office can provide guidance on best practices for collecting and centralizing disaggregated data while maintaining anonymity for our neighbors.

When it is discovered that sufficient data doesn't exist, the missing data should be added to a Data Development Agenda and directed to the relevant department to work with OEI staff to plan for new data collection. Twice a year the Office of Equity and Inclusion can produce a memo updating the Commission and Charters on progress on the Data Development Agenda.

### **Define Performance Measures and Expectations for Implementation**

The implementation process of a Equity Budget Tool is as important as the tool itself. Future Equity Budget Tools, and equity review processes will be more successful if Commissioners and staff have shared expectations on the tool *and* the implementation process. The following questions can be asked by commissioners and/or staff to help clarify expectations and define performance measures:

1. What are the community results the Commission is hoping to impact by using this tool/process? (Community results=conditions of well being for the community. Ex. housing, food security, economic prosperity).

2. What is the implementation plan for using this tool? What is the timeline for each step? Who are the stakeholders who will be involved? What are the key roles and responsibilities?
3. What performance measures are there for the process? What deliverables are expected? By when?
4. Have all stakeholders agreed that the timeline and resources needed are adequate to ensure success?
5. What is the purpose of community engagement? What do we want community members to know? What are we hoping to learn from the community? What's on the table for the community to decide? How will community engagement impact decision making? What level of engagement will staff use on the spectrum of public participation?
6. Are there any legal or logistical restrictions or limitations on what can or can't be done?

### **Route Engagement Directives through the Office of Communications and Engagement**

Requests to engage with the community can be routed first through the Office of Communications and Engagement. The Engagement manager can work with the lead department to assess the timeline and feasibility of the engagement. If the project and timeline are feasible, an engagement plan can be created and presented to Commissioners to ensure that staff and elected officials have a shared understanding of:

- What community results are being considered by the commission? (Community results = conditions of well being for the community.)
- What is the purpose of this engagement?
- What do we want community members to know? What are we hoping to learn from the community?
- What's on the table for the community to decide?
- How will community engagement impact decision making?
- What level of engagement will staff use on the spectrum of public participation?
- Which community members are most impacted and how will we prioritize their feedback?
- What is the engagement plan? How long will engagement be advertised? How many sessions? What is the timing for community engagement? How will we report back to neighbors who participate?

### **Increase the Timeline and Resources to Ensure Success**

A longer timeline will allow Commissioners to build a shared understanding of the community results that are most important, and ultimately craft proposals that are best designed to meet the needs of the community. A proposed implementation process for future Equity Budget Tools is below:

1. City Manager, City Attorney's Office and other staff subject matter experts provide guidance on restrictions and limitations to funding uses.
2. Community engagement to: 1) Inform the community on eligible and ineligible uses of funding and 2) Define the most important community results and community endorsed strategies.
3. Commission meets to review community results and strategies and build shared understanding of which community results are high priority.
4. Inform the community of high priority community results and upcoming workshops.
5. Equity Budget Tool workshops for commissioners and community members to prepare for writing proposals.
6. Open period to submit proposals that align with community results that are identified as high priorities by neighbors who are impacted the most. Commissioners are encouraged to coordinate to avoid duplicate proposals.
7. OEI staff rate and return proposals with notes. City Manager, City Attorney and other staff review proposals for eligible use and legal concerns.
8. Share proposals and ratings with the public to prepare for community engagement including public information campaigns. (Remove proposals that are ineligible or not legal)
9. Community engagement sessions on proposals.
10. OEI staff writes summary of community engagement for the commission to review.
11. Commission meeting to provide direction to the City Manager to craft a budget.
12. City Manager crafts a budget based on Commission guidance.
13. Commission approves the budget or gives further guidance if needed.

### **Learning Resources for Neighbors**

A shared understanding of key terms and ideas related to race and equity is critical to have meaningful conversations about what makes a proposal equitable. Workshops, pre-recorded videos and other materials for neighbors on the difference between equity and equality, the history of racism and existing inequities in Gainesville will help neighbors and Commissioners share ideas and provide needed feedback on how the City can operate in a more equitable way.

Additionally, workshops for neighbors on how to fill out a Budget Equity Tool will encourage those without experience to bring their ideas to the table.

### **Workshops for Commissioners**

There are two areas of focus that can support Commissioners:

1. **Equity Workshops** - Workshops that support Commissioners to create shared understandings of key terms such as equity, equality, diversity, inclusion, race and racism. These workshops also include history on race and racism in Gainesville and an understanding of systemic and institutional racism.
2. **Results Based Accountability** - Results Based Accountability or RBA is an ends to means decision making process that is data driven, and helps move from ideas to action quickly. This system helps develop ideas that are most likely to have the desired impact and creates performance measures to ensure accountability. Integrating a RBA approach to all City processes will make equity tools more successful.

## List of Appendices

1. Equity Covid Budget Toolkit
2. Community Engagement Feedback
3. Community Engagement Powerpoint Presentation
4. Defining Community/Population Results
5. Demographic Categories
6. Tracking Spreadsheet - American Rescue Plan Proposals
7. Rated and unrated Proposals
8. Proposal Matrix

## Acknowledgments

The Office of Equity Inclusion is grateful to everyone who made the Equity Covid Budget Tool possible. Our thanks to all the staff who helped with facilitation and note taking during community engagement sessions: John John, Mo Deel, Laura Rawson, Shakayla Birch, Leslie Ladendorf, Phimetto Lewis, Cary Williams, Anne Wolf, Brian Franklin, Shelby Taylor, Elizabeth Chazule and PJ Jones. Special thanks to the whole team at Communications and Engagement who supported with developing the website, advertising, curriculum development, facilitation, note taking, recording and editing videos and general consultation throughout the process. Lastly, we are grateful for the City Commission for their vision and direction to include an equity lens in consideration of the American Rescue Plan Funding.

## Economic: Session 1

How does this proposal align with the goal of advancing equity? Or, what community conditions will improve (ex. Housing, health, education, employment)

- Two attendees in breakout room
- Job training and youth corps advance equity more than some of the others
- Debt forgiveness creates inequity with those who did pay their bills → maybe a stipend to everyone?
- Lowest paid employees are not the same as front line workers. No bonuses for city workers. Private sector workers were hurting financially too and they also need help
- GRU and rent assistance have been provided before and it's a good idea generally
- Ones that speak to equity: job training and youth corps, Bidwell Center, GRU assistance
- Many proposals are vague

How could this proposal be more impactful in advancing equity? (Is the funding adequate? Are there partnerships that could help support? Is this proposal duplicative of any work that is already happening in the community?)

- Partnerships for job training help stretch the \$\$ to provide services for more people in need
- Need small business support to help reopen storefronts
- Ask what small businesses need to get back on their feet
- Could people get a free city bus pass and show they are travelling for job training or job interviews?
- Afterschool programming that isn't tied directly to schools or ACPS
- Seek out partnerships

What else should commissioners know about this proposal?

- I wish these proposals were more specific. Many of them create questions.
- How many potential people will be served? Which has the greatest impact.
- Impact on the economy directly relates to jobs and businesses. Focusing on that will help get things back to normal

- Re: rental assistance: having it go directly to the rent/landlord, not to the person requesting the money
- Participatory budgeting - would need to know what projects would be first
- If there is a secondary meeting on these proposals, they should be required to define the requests better
- Transition of kids leaving the home environment - keep kids active and learning and help parents transition as well

## Economic: Session 2

How does this proposal align with the goal of advancing equity? Or, what community conditions will improve (ex. Housing, health, education, employment)

- June 29 10am-12 pm meeting
  - 10 people attended

How could this proposal be more impactful in advancing equity? (Is the funding adequate? Are there partnerships that could help support? Is this proposal duplicative of any work that is already happening in the community?)

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What else should commissioners know about this proposal?

- Anything else you'd like us to know about the process
  - Not enough time, should have 3-4 weeks
  - Would love to see much better use on the facebook feed/ utilizing social media- not everyone reads the newspaper or watches local news. Find other ways to get the word out.
  - Communication was so difficult in this time period when there are so many different channels, the timing was the hardest part.
  - Trying to find google drive of proposals. Struggle to read things quickly and respond in real time. If there are ways to circulate the documentation in advance of the meeting, would support the idea.
  -



## Economic: Session 3

How does this proposal align with the goal of advancing equity? Or, what community conditions will improve (ex. Housing, health, education, employment)

- 5 people attended- 4 participated
- \$1000 direct credit on GRU bills---support for this, GRU bill is high, personal experience with dealing with customer service and shutoffs.
- General observation/suggestion-positive that commissioners are on the same page in terms of money spent for GRU bills.
- Shortage of maintenance and trade jobs in Gainesville- some of the initiatives in job training are important/ support for the proposal. Provides more opportunity for people to have impactful jobs.

How could this proposal be more impactful in advancing equity? (Is the funding adequate? Are there partnerships that could help support? Is this proposal duplicative of any work that is already happening in the community?)

- GRU bills- Unclear as to who the money would help. Experience with residents not being able to access payment plans. What outstanding bills are they planning on giving \$1-3M to if there are no payment plans as of 2 months ago?
- GRU bills- More clarity on the amounts submitted in terms of GRU bills and if that amount would cover the actual debt. How do we prioritize if it doesn't cover the whole amount of debt?
- 

What else should commissioners know about this proposal?

- Could be helpful to figure out where the different proposals intersect. The amounts are very all over the place and some of the proposals are so general and not specific while others are very specific.
- In terms of the process, could have done a better job in communicating about submitting proposals with community organizations AND in terms of community engagement
- Should look at hardest hit and most immediate help in terms of this money.
- What is the plan for oversight once the money is used? It's necessary to have a structure in place possibly through OEI that there is accountability through the city.

How do we check in to see who is getting these vouchers/services. *Ongoing* accountability to make sure the money is doing what it is proposed to do.

- There are a lot of complementary and not competing proposals. Suggestion to steer away from broad ideas (example non-profit support)
- More transparency on the proposals and community engagement is necessary. The community engagement is a drop in the bucket in terms of the entire Gainesville community.
  - Found out from city listserv, Gainesville Black Professionals, GINI.
- Participatory budgeting- Unclear on if the money would be spent for future processes or for this COVID funding process.
- Encourage commissioners to not only look at lens of equity but also look at the hardest hit. Example parks and green spaces, this money isn't for that. Keep the word emergency in mind along with equity.

## Economic: Session 4

How does this proposal align with the goal of advancing equity? Or, what community conditions will improve (ex. Housing, health, education, employment)

- 2 attendees in breakout room
- Concerned more money is going to GRU and other things that are already funded
- The relief funds need to go citizens
- Needs to go to people who are hurting and have needs or their homes need improvements (needing windows was mentioned)
- Looks like they're trying to pay GRU first
- Need more specifics with money needed; \$\$ ranges are too big
- Like job training and apprenticeships
  - Community has always been low paying and talent is lost because people move to places where pay is better
  - Plumbing, electricians, HVAC, trade programs, etc.
- Should focus on maintaining skill sets of people living here: improving them here so they'll stay here and grow and thrive and help the community grow and thrive
- Support programs to get kids off the streets and get them involved, especially during the summer
- Don't pay city employees bonuses because it's not equitable → city should just pay the lowest paid employees better and not use this as a way to temporarily fix a problem

- Proposals seem disingenuous since commissioners are submitting projects they already support

How could this proposal be more impactful in advancing equity? (Is the funding adequate? Are there partnerships that could help support? Is this proposal duplicative of any work that is already happening in the community?)

- 

What else should commissioners know about this proposal?

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## Housing: Session 1

- Wednesday, June 30, 6PM Housing Breakout group had 2 Neighbors join.

How does this proposal align with the goal of advancing equity? Or, what community conditions will improve (ex. Housing, health, education, employment)

- All proposals address equity in some way, which proposals give you “the most bang for your buck.”
- Affordable housing crisis is much bigger than just rehab
- Most of the issues people bring to the table are represented in this proposal
- Highly in favor of keeping people in homes and homeless prevention.
- Broad assortment is better than choosing one type of program.

How could this proposal be more impactful in advancing equity? (Is the funding adequate? Are there partnerships that could help support? Is this proposal duplicative of any work that is already happening in the community?)

- Rehab is effective and works.
- Sees value in each of the programs represented, didn’t see any programs that they thought might be wasteful.
- Landlord assistance program is not as “ready made’ as some of the other programs. Many of the other programs are able to get started immediately, but this program would be beneficial if we set up the infrastructure now.

What else should commissioners know about this proposal?

- Loves that we are sending this through the office of equity of inclusion.
- Impressed with the way the city and elected officials are thinking about this program.

## Housing: Session 2

How does this proposal align with the goal of advancing equity? Or, what community conditions will improve (ex. Housing, health, education, employment)

- Community land trust is an excellent way to address equity because it allows protection in underserved neighborhoods. Protection against gentrification.
- Low/ very low housing-deals with housing, it's the main community condition that would be trying to improve.
- Housing proposals generally a good idea, would like to see how they are tied to other things.
- Landlord mitigation grants- would be good, city is about to put in new standards and concerned how it will impact landlords. Good strategy to keep affordable rentals. Think it would improve housing again.
  - Likes that there is a commitment from the landlords to keep their rents at an affordable level. This funding is a real opportunity not to focus so much on infrastructure, but an opportunity to make some practical investment in the community. There is a huge rental market and rental problem.
- Likes proposals on debt relief
- Family Promise- great asset to the community, has been getting more efficient and numbers of people have been increasing.
  - Very well run organization

How could this proposal be more impactful in advancing equity? (Is the funding adequate? Are there partnerships that could help support? Is this proposal duplicative of any work that is already happening in the community?)

- Low/ very low housing- 8 million dollars is a lot of money

- Are there partnerships that could help support-love to see non-profits help (Habitat, Family promise, Catholic charities) that could help leverage those dollars
- Lots of non-profits working on housing but think it's a huge need
- Family Promise- how can it be more impactful, they could use a lot more money and they would use it wisely

What else should commissioners know about this proposal?

- Low/very low income- great that it is targeting low income but it does need to have a holistic approach on how to tackle the housing market. Holistic approach means paying attention to low/very low, but the top and middle still need housing as well. Bigger inventory fight for those in the "top" and "middle." Each thing impacts the other.
- Match the money from the action plan to the proposal for low/very low income housing--would like to see funding tied to the data for this proposal
- Think about the value of being able to invest in capital improvements/ long term things.
- This money is best targeted to low and very low income folks. The need is most acute at lower income levels. The more we can target towards low and very low, the better off we will be.
- Include water efficiency to everything that has something to do with low income housing
- Have the commission think about some sort of limit when addressing landlord mitigation grants. In order to make the program as incentive and willing for the landlord, they have to be able to know they'll be able to meet their needs. Keep an open mind for the rent level because there are adjustments for other levels.
- Make sure there is provision to keep landlords from profiting off of landlord mitigation grants
- Family promise has already started to expand their housing units and this would help them make a bigger impact in the community faster.
- General feedback-not a lot of time from when this was read in the paper to this feedback process. More of a review of the current proposals, timing of it all is very fast and difficult to bring input forward. Hopes the commission stays open to new proposals as they come forward.
- What would a successful timeline have looked like?
  - 3-4 weeks would've been a little easier

## Housing: Session 3

How does this proposal align with the goal of advancing equity? Or, what community conditions will improve (ex. Housing, health, education, employment)

- 

How could this proposal be more impactful in advancing equity? (Is the funding adequate? Are there partnerships that could help support? Is this proposal duplicative of any work that is already happening in the community?)

- Didn't see much about homeowners and had to put homes in forbearance. There needs to be help for people who have mortgages in forbearance. Need to think about that before giving vouchers for new homes.
- Low/ very low housing fund- support for this but the proposal mentions other things in other proposals. Wanting clarity and collaboration with other proposals.
- Landlord mitigation grants for efficiency and stabilization- something to keep in mind to address the extreme need, not only keep rent level but a certain percentage would have to address or offer low rent.

What else should commissioners know about this proposal?

- People have so many things to worry about, they shouldn't have to know someone in City hall to find out about the meeting.
- Once the proposals have been prioritized, to have a moment where we look back on the data on who was hardest hit. Before finalizing the proposals, look at what everyone is agreeing on and check for gaps. Are we missing any of the hardest hit populations?

## Housing: Session 4

How does this proposal align with the goal of advancing equity? Or, what community conditions will improve (ex. Housing, health, education, employment)

-

How could this proposal be more impactful in advancing equity? (Is the funding adequate? Are there partnerships that could help support? Is this proposal duplicative of any work that is already happening in the community?)

- 

What else should commissioners know about this proposal?

- 

## Social Services: Session 1

How does this proposal align with the goal of advancing equity? Or, what community conditions will improve (ex. Housing, health, education, employment)

- Providing access and opps for diff groups of disparities and marginalized areas, looked at access and inclusion for marginalized communities.
- Non-profits do a lot of hard work in community, they have lower salary & with increased funding can hire more people. Did not see anything regarding mental health services. Glad there is some funding made available.
- Some was not quite sure what need is being met like “undocumented immigrant neighbors” and saw no dollar amount but all appeared to be worthy causes.

How could this proposal be more impactful in advancing equity? (Is the funding adequate? Are there partnerships that could help support? Is this proposal duplicative of any work that is already happening in the community?)

- Consolidating. A couple that say the same thing. Bring in more funding under consolidated requests. Work on partnerships would probably be more impactful.
- Need more details in description where available

What else should commissioners know about this proposal?

- Would like to make sure ARP funds are used to meet needs in community that otherwise were not already being addressed by funds City was going to be used for.

## Social Services: Session 2

How does this proposal align with the goal of advancing equity? Or, what community conditions will improve (ex. Housing, health, education, employment)

- Bold and Heroes- how do you verify who people are. Proposal not fleshed out enough to make an opinion

How could this proposal be more impactful in advancing equity? (Is the funding adequate? Are there partnerships that could help support? Is this proposal duplicative of any work that is already happening in the community?)

What else should commissioners know about this proposal?

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## Social Services: Session 3

How does this proposal align with the goal of advancing equity? Or, what community conditions will improve (ex. Housing, health, education, employment)

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How could this proposal be more impactful in advancing equity? (Is the funding adequate? Are there partnerships that could help support? Is this proposal duplicative of any work that is already happening in the community?)

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What else should commissioners know about this proposal?

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## Social Services: Session 4

How does this proposal align with the goal of advancing equity? Or, what community conditions will improve (ex. Housing, health, education, employment)

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How could this proposal be more impactful in advancing equity? (Is the funding adequate? Are there partnerships that could help support? Is this proposal duplicative of any work that is already happening in the community?)

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What else should commissioners know about this proposal?

### **Social Services**

#### 7 Neighbors

Funneling money through established nonprofit organizations in the community that are already working in these spaces of need is the ideal way to disburse funds and reach people. They are rooted in community, a trusted resource and have name recognition for services offered.

Collaborating with NPOs is key to advancing equity. These organizations exist as a tool for local resource delivery.

Some NPOs are overlooked. Some organizations are funded time-and-time again (Catholic Charities/GRACE/ United WAY). Some small/mid-size nonprofits that do great work and great ideas need capacity building. Can money be used for contracts and staff support not just capital?

- Book keeping
- Fundraising/Grant writing
- Strategic planning

There needs to be clarity around how different NPOs can get consideration for access to funds that are dedicated to NPOs.

- Clear criteria for selection – what do you need to see from us? How will you determine which NPOs get funds.
- Submission access and ease
- New programs or only capacity building for established services?
- City support and navigation if there is lots of paperwork and reporting (capacity building)
- When do funds have to be expended?

Areas to focus on NPO:

- Food access (Working Food, Bread of the Mighty)
- Need Prevention (Partnership for Strong Families)
- Language proficiency – apparent during COVID- language access limits ability of non-english speakers to access deeper level services
- Disabled adults should be explicitly named as a group for assistance (dedicated skills training)
- Mental health services

Verde Point Proposal

Complex proposal involving real estate and physical infrastructure. No clear connection to advancing equity or COVID recovery specifically.

Food access and supporting local agriculture

Should consider investment in capital that supports food access and local farmers

- Refrigeration
- Refrigerated transport
- Place for food aggregation
- Commercial kitchen space

## Health/Broadband/Transportation/Grocery/Capital Improvement: Session 1- 6/28/2021

**4 Participants, 2.25 speakers**

How does this proposal align with the goal of advancing equity? Or, what community conditions will improve (ex. Housing, health, education, employment)

- Payments for Vaccinations:
  - Lower priority, had more questions and hesitancy when individuals were targeted.
- Mental Health Vouchers:
  - Are vouchers particularly valuable, how do we energize partners to get the most bang for the buck?
  - How are they going to determine who will be eligible for the vouchers?
- CRP: (4 proposals)
  - Phenomenal, impactful, powerful. positive program, to be able to reach people around health topics.
  - Identifying and revealing challenging issues are found through this type of program.

- Eastside Medical Center/Campus/UF Health Site: (3 proposals)
  - What type of facility will this be: a clinic, urgent care, full service medical services center?
- Eastside mobility hub:
  - It will be fantastic if it gets linked with the other ideas, like the grocery store, and medical center. Cannot think in silos, and get to systemic thinking.
- Vision Zero Capital Implementation:
  - Are there other opportunities to link this to other proposals?
- Broadband: (3 proposals)
  - Internet connectivity has been a topic for our community for years. The FCC has said that money has to be used in areas lacking lines. Which is mostly Eastside and SWAG, low income areas. This would be a great investment, that would provide multiple generations of folks access.
  - If we want community changing infrastructure in the \$13-15mm range would be adequate. The lower amounts, not as much.
  - Local control of our energy and broadband is fundamental to equity and access in our day and age.

How could this proposal be more impactful in advancing equity? (Is the funding adequate? Are there partnerships that could help support? Is this proposal duplicative of any work that is already happening in the community?)

- Payments for Vaccinations:
  - Are there other ways to incentivize that engage community leadership?
- Mental Health Vouchers:
  - What about serving Veterans? This could be impactful for this type of program.
  - Mental health services would be valuable for Re-entry programs.
- CRP: (4 proposals)
  - Equipment piece: continue to develop partnerships like with food systems, or the mental health and re-entry programs.
- Eastside Medical Center/Campus/UF Health Site:
  - Get all the partners in the room to have this conversation
  - Having functional medicine, and urgent care walk in. Focus on prevention as well, including maternal medicine, and food as medicine. A grocery store and medical center closely linked you could get a food prescription. Healthy food from black farmers to service the grocery stores.
- Broadband:

- Partnership with the county would be a valuable thing. It needs to be done all over the county.
- If the County could own GRUcom and GRU was the servicer, and it would be in the public realm where the revenues would be circling back to the City, County and the smaller municipalities.

What else should commissioners know about this proposal?

- Overall:
  - Strengthen programs that help people out and to better provide services.
  - All of the projects are things people would be talking about for years. All great.
- CRP: it is a top priority

## **Health/Broadband/Transportation/Grocery/Capital Improvement: Session 2- 6/29/2021**

How does this proposal align with the goal of advancing equity? Or, what community conditions will improve (ex. Housing, health, education, employment)

- Broadband- very valuable project and it lends itself to being framed through an equity lens because access is disparate by race and income. Super valuable place for this.
- Anecdotal evidence about importance for this money. Would improve service for those in need and everyone.
- Climate action plan- if there is money to be looking at climate impacts, this would be a good place to put some of the ARP money.

How could this proposal be more impactful in advancing equity? (Is the funding adequate? Are there partnerships that could help support? Is this proposal duplicative of any work that is already happening in the community?)

- Broadband- do not subsidize this or use partners. Mistake with GREC.
- Broadband-might include money for tablets or technology for kids education

What else should commissioners know about this proposal?

- Broadband- Broadband is a stand alone entity viable for funding. Thought that it will help everyone across the board. Internet is on the verge of becoming a utility and the City needs to get into the fiber
- business for the rest of the area. The city is in a position to give competition across the board. Please use this money for this.
- Broadband-could be served better to be written in a different lens. Not including diversity-should not be the main reason because there are merits beyond that.

## **Health/Broadband/Transportation/Grocery/Capital Improvement: Session 3**

How does this proposal align with the goal of advancing equity? Or, what community conditions will improve (ex. Housing, health, education, employment)

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How could this proposal be more impactful in advancing equity? (Is the funding adequate? Are there partnerships that could help support? Is this proposal duplicative of any work that is already happening in the community?)

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What else should commissioners know about this proposal?

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## **Health/Broadband/Transportation/Grocery/Capital Improvement: Session 4**

**3 Participants, 2 speakers**

How does this proposal align with the goal of advancing equity? Or, what community conditions will improve (ex. Housing, health, education, employment)

- Payment for vaccination- not opposed to it but would want to know more about how this would be played out
- Mental health- not sure how it would address equity, not sure how large the problem is
- Health clinic seems like it would deal with equity better, maybe they should include mental health with this one. A medical center would be a broader viewpoint
- Mental health in African American community is a large issue, more funds should be allocated there, more resources are needed.
- Transportation- still a huge issue, would the terminal address issues of transportation?
- East side- after hour medical access, no clinic or medical facility and then the bus stops after a certain time.
- Vision Zero- didn't see this as an issue that addressed inequality, maybe down the road but not now
- Broadband- If people are back in school (not virtual learning), there are more issues that are more important that need to be addressed. It's highly important, but not sure about using half of the budget on it.
- Food facility- yes we need it, but we need to make sure security is good.
- Citizen's Field Upgrade- it appears it hasn't been updated in over 30 years, it's long overdue for an upgrade
- Climate- Not sure if these are the funds that would be able to world towards climate justice
- Fire Station 1 refurbishment- if UF wants it, they can find the funds to refurbish it, there are more things that need to be done. Would rather see the city use the space to support the people of the city. Let UF pay for it.
- Glen Springs Purchase- Don't see it as a big equity issue
- Infinity Loop Project- where would the location be? How north and how south would it go?
- Recreation Park in SW GNV- Not alot of parks, so this could be good
- Improving the city's built environment (downtown area)- We shouldn't spend this money on that, there's no equity in this. That's only for those who can afford to hang out there. We do not go down there, party and spend money.
- Bias-free cultural training for staff- This money shouldn't be spent on city employee training, this is needed though, just not with this money.

How could this proposal be more impactful in advancing equity? (Is the funding adequate? Are there partnerships that could help support? Is this proposal duplicative of any work that is already happening in the community?)

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What else should commissioners know about this proposal?

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Other Notes/Feedback:

- Would also hope that we are gathering information from a variety of methods
  - It was difficult to access the meeting
- CRP Program- Did individuals consult with each other?
- More time needs to be spent on gathering information and not rushing through and gathering information
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