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## Where Boone County put its CARES COVID-19 relief funding

BY DESTINY MULLER

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Over \$21 million in federal CARES funds has been doled out through Boone County since the beginning of COVID-19.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, the spending guidelines that expenses had to be directly related to COVID-19 were not already accounted for in the budget approved before March 27, 2020, and were incurred during 2020.

With American Rescue Plan Act funds on the horizon, the county can look at past CARES allocations to assist in making future spending decisions.

CARES funds were spent among seven main categories: public health, school reopening, public safety, higher education, economic assistance, public entity personal protective equipment and not-for-profit community services.

**Public health and Health Department (\$7.6M)**

The largest allocation of funds, over \$7.6 million, went to public health and Columbia/Boone County Health Department expenses.

Within that amount, both payroll and non-payroll costs were paid to the UM system hospital and Boone County Hospital. They were given \$2.1 million and \$1.4 million respectively. Almost \$2 million in public health funds were used by the health department for contact tracing and testing expenses.

## **Payroll for public safety employees (\$6.5M)**

Payroll for public safety employees cost the county \$6.5 million. The city of Columbia was provided \$4.2 million for COVID-19 leave hours and benefits. Nearly \$2.3 million went to Boone County workers; the rest was given to the cities of Centralia (\$20,000) and Ashland (\$16,000) for leave hours and assisting FICA taxes.

## **School reopening (\$3M)**

Funds for the safe reopening of schools was third highest in amount allocated, at nearly \$3 million. Assistance was given to school districts in Sturgeon, Centralia, Hallsville, Harrisburg, Columbia, Southern Boone and other individual schools throughout the county.

## **Higher education PPE (\$1.5M)**

Nearly \$1.5 million was provided to higher education institutions for PPE: \$15,000 went to Stephen's College and the rest to the University of Missouri and its extensions.

## **Economic assistance (\$1.2M)**

Central Missouri Community Action utility assistance and small business grants brought the category of economic assistance to almost \$1.2 million. CMCA assists low-income family with energy costs during summer and winter months. CMCA was given half a million dollars to fund its programs. Small businesses were given around \$675,000.

## **Public entity PPE (non-payroll) (\$850,000)**

The cities of Centralia, Ashland, Hallsville, Columbia and Boone County were given nearly \$850,000 in total in the category "public entity PPE," which excludes payroll.

Some of these funds were also given directly to public service entities instead of sending funds to the city for their discretion to spend. This includes Daniel Boone Library and Southern Boone County fire protection.

- Boone County COVID-19 Portal Software: \$123,000
- Jail Wifi Project: \$108,000
- Boone County Non-Payroll COVID-19 costs: \$360,000
- Columbia Non-payroll COVID-19 costs: \$157,000
- Boone County Family Resources: \$43,000
- City of Centralia: \$10,000
- Daniel Boone Library: \$18,000
- Ashland: \$8,000
- Hallsville: \$2,500
- Southern Boone County Fire Protection: \$667

## **NFP Community Services and other (\$450,000)**

The “not-for-profit community services & other” category received a little less than half a million dollars. Out of the 39 organizations that requested funds, less than half ended up receiving a portion of what they requested. Some of the organizations that received the highest amount of funds are The Bluffs (\$90,000), Columbia Interfaith Resource center (\$58,000) and Coyote Hill Children’s Home (\$56,000).

Boone County Community Support Programs requested over half a million for community health and children’s services, but did not receive anything.

Each not-for-profit’s application was received by the County’s Office for Emergency management. Then a report of the applications were sent to the county commissioners for evaluation for funding.

“The applications from the organizations were examined to determine what constituted eligible expenses under the CARES Act,” said County Commissioner Janet Thompson. “And, if eligible expenses, to determine the community impact CARES Act funding might have.”

#### MORE INFORMATION

Where Columbia put its COVID-19 relief funding

'It's not going to cover everything': Boone County officials deliberate ARPA funds

Columbia Public Library to close briefly in mid-January for tech update

## How Boone County distributed CARES funds

Boone County received over \$21 million in federal CARES Act funds. The county allocated the money to public health, schools reopening, public safety, higher education, economic assistance, public equipment and not-for-profit community services.

Source: Missourian reporting • EILEEN WISNIOWICZ/Missourian

 A Flourish hierarchy chart

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