

CORE Investments RFP June 21 Q&A

Overview of RFP Question and Response Process

Questions: Responding agencies are encouraged to submit questions related to the CORE Request for Proposal (RFP) process, related documents, and the proposal online-portal to the email: COREfunding@santacruzcountyca.gov.

Responses: To ensure that consistent and transparent responses are provided to all responding agencies, questions sent to the email above regarding the RFP will be grouped in specific themes with the posted County response

Question Deadline: All questions regarding the RFP will have to be submitted to COREfunding@santacruzcountyca.gov by the **deadline of 7/1/24 by 5:00 pm**.

Posting: The “Question and Response” document will be posted to the [HSD CORE website](#) at least two times during the RFP process:

- **1st Question and Response posting on 6/21/24** (posting and responding to questions sent by the close of business 6/17/24)
- **2nd Question and Response posting on 7/8/24** (posting and responding to questions received before the 7/1/24 @5:00 pm deadline)

All questions submitted after 6/17/24 but before the question deadline, will be included in 2nd posting date. Responses are intended to be addressed in the final posting to allow enough time for application completion.

CORE RFP Trainings and Technical Assistance (TA)

We encourage those interested in submitting a CORE RFP Proposal to schedule CORE RFP Trainings and TA sessions:

[CLICK HERE](#) to find a schedule of Trainings and TA sessions, as well as registration details and links.

[CLICK HERE](#) to register for the online portal Technical Assistance session, which will be held on June 26, 20224 from 11am-12pm (will be recorded).

How is this CORE RFP Q&A Document Organized?

Questions and responses are grouped together based on the following themes:

- A. [RFP Item Clarification](#)
- B. [Stable, Affordable Housing Carve-Out](#)
- C. [Should/How do we Apply?](#)
- D. [Age Range Definitions](#)
- E. [Specific Program Scenario](#)
- F. [Miscellaneous](#)

Questions and responses are numbered sequentially within each theme. The personal names and/or the respective agency that sent the question are not identified.

A. RFP Item Clarification

1. **Question:** What is the total CORE funding? Last year was \$5.9million. The gentleman who sat on the panel during the last meeting mentioned over \$7 million. Is the info on the website below accurate? \$3.8 million (with inflation?)

Response: The CORE Investments total annual funding for the Fiscal Years 2025-2028 is \$5,958,853 million divided into the following:

- \$3,790,025 of the total annual funding will be awarded through this CORE RFP focusing on the CORE Conditions of: Thriving Families, Lifelong Learning & Education, and Healthy Environments.
 - \$1.5 million of the total annual funding will be allocated to the CORE Condition of “Stable, Affordable Housing and Shelter” and will be determined by a separate process from the RFP to align with the Homelessness Action Plan created by the local Continuum of Care (CoC, known locally as the Housing for Health Partnership) and announced in accordance with County Policies.
 - A combined allocation of \$668,828 from the total annual funding will be set aside for the elected officials (The Board of Supervisors and the Santa Cruz City Council) to fund unanticipated priorities.
2. **Question:** Can you please provide guidance as to what time period you need the documents below to represent? p. Please include the following documents:
(1) a Statement of Financial Position or Balance Sheet;
(2) a Statement of Activities or Statement of Revenues and Expenses;
(3) a Cash Flow Statement;
(4) a Statement of Functional Expenses; and
(5) W9

Response: The documents are requested for the most recent annual time period.

3. **Questions** (the following are grouped due to similar context):
- **3.i.:** On item A(n): "Provide exact amount of CORE funding requested," are you looking for an annual amount or the total amount requested over the 3 year period?
 - **3.ii.:** Please clarify if the Tiers listed on the RFP are for annual funding or if the amount listed on the RFP should be equally allocated over three years.

Response (address 3.i. and 3.ii): The amount should reflect the dollar amount that the program is requesting for each year in the 3-year funding cycle. The amounts should be the same each year.

4. **Question:** What makes a client “solely benefited by CORE funds”? Are they served 100% with CORE funds or can they be served with a blend that includes CORE funds. Is the percentage of their service funded with CORE funds relevant?

Response: In order to collect information on the impact of CORE funding, agencies are required to report on clients being served using CORE funds. The County and City recognize that in many cases agencies utilize CORE funds in combination with other funding sources, which makes it difficult to report on the clients who are only being served by CORE dollars. In those cases, when an agency is filling out those parts of the application, they should identify total participants and impacts specific to CORE funding only, regardless of any known or proposed leveraged funds.

5. **Question:** How broadly or narrowly will the CORE condition categories be interpreted? Will the Category and Impact statement be the guide and the indicators listed in the link simply examples that can be expanded upon?

Response: It is up to the applicant to demonstrate the connection between the CORE Condition and Impact Statement selected and their proposal. Indicators listed on the DataShare website may be included in proposals but should not be considered the sole source of data or information about the CORE Conditions and Impact Areas.

6. **Questions** (the following are grouped due to similar context):

- **6.i.:** Can you clarify if this is the sole intended focus of Healthy Environments funding this cycle? Safe, affordable, accessible recreation space
- **6.ii.:** Yes I had the same question. In the RFP it only references one of 4 of the CORE aspects in Healthy Environments: the Recreation Spaces one.
 - i. Quality of the natural environment and natural resources
 - ii. Climate change resiliency
 - iii. Safe, affordable, accessible recreational spaces
 - iv. Safe, affordable, accessible transportation system

Response (address 6.i. and 6.ii): Yes, safe, affordable, accessible recreation spaces is the impact (service) area for Healthy Environments in the CORE Funding cycle. Of the total CORE Conditions of Health and Well-Being (Core Condition) and their multiple (impact areas) service areas, this CORE RFP will prioritize and focus on the following CORE Conditions and their service areas (impact area):

- a. Lifelong Learning & Education: Equitable access to high-quality education and learning opportunities
- b. Thriving Families: Increased resilience of children and youth
- c. Thriving Families: Increased resilience among older and dependent adults

d. Healthy Environments: Safe, affordable, accessible recreation spaces

Organizations are encouraged to utilize the TA available to explore more about the CORE Conditions and Impact Statement, as the CORE Conditions and the impact statements are interrelated.

7. **Question:** Can you clarify if the impact statement for Lifelong Learning and Education, "Equitable access to high-quality education and learning opportunities," is intended to be applicable for a specific range of education topics, or if it can be applied broadly to education about any topic? For example, in our program we teach nutrition to adults. Would that be a good fit for this CORE condition?

Response: In the CORE RFP, it is the responsibility of the Responding Agency to establish and demonstrate how their proposed program services/activities is applicable and relevant to the respective CORE Condition and Impact area chosen.

8. **Question:** How is applying for no more than 25% of the CORE funding defined? Will the \$3.79 million amount be used to calculate the 25% limit, or the CORE funding including the affordable housing/shelter carve out, of the \$5,290,025 amount used to calculate the 25% limit?

Response: The 25% limit will be calculated using the available CORE RFP \$3.79 million. The funding limit for proposals per agency would therefore be \$947,506.

9. **Question:** In regards to question 3 on the application, for the following statement "Please select one CORE Condition for Health and Well-being and associated Impact Statement that the program will primarily impact," - beyond indicating that our program aligns with one of the included "Impact Statements," do we need to include how well our program aligns with any of the indicators included on the CORE dashboard on DataShare?

Response: Once a CORE Condition and impact statement are chosen, some application questions refer to this choice and how your program activities/goals fall under this CORE Condition/impact statement. Some questions ask you to identify relevant data from secondary sources and/or primary sources, which can include data and indicators found on DataShare. A proposal does not necessarily need to justify alignment with indicators included on the CORE dashboard found on DataShare.

10. **Question:** If our participant surveys are not adequate to accurately tell the story of the demographics of our participants (for example, in a scenario where, despite all efforts, only 25% of participants fill out demographic surveys), is it acceptable to use county-level

demographic information to approximate demographics of those served? In this example, the program would serve the entire county, geographically.

Response: Question#13 in the CORE RFP Proposal invites programs to 'describe how your program will collect unduplicated participant data and their demographics from the CORE funding'. This question is the opportunity to explain all efforts and approaches that your program will attempt to collect and report data on the CORE program participants.

11. **Question:** I have a question for clarification regarding the CORE RFP: Can an NPO write one RFP for the entire organization? Not just to fund one program? For example, to help cover their funding for staffing so they can continue to provide much needed services in the field of Lifelong Learning to students in Santa Cruz County?

Response: The CORE RFP is intended to allow agencies to submit proposals for specific programs within their agency or for their entire agency. In addition, the CORE RFP is designed to support direct services, activities or actions that directly benefit a target population. The intention of the RFP is to support direct services and includes the work required by an organization to effectively achieve the desired outcomes of the proposal, and the specific budget expenses needed to do so. In carrying out services that directly impact a target population, there may be expenses for activities that support the organization's ability to provide the service.

12. **Question:** When I submit the RFP, is there a separate place for us to attach a Reference Page showing our citations and where our data and research were collected? Or are we expected to include the citation in our answers and the citations are considered part of our wordcount ?

Response There is no separate reference page or attachment for citations.

13. **Question:** WEB LINKS: If a nonprofit CONTRACTOR has an organizational website, it is a requirement of this Contract to provide links to the HelpSCC (URL_1), Santa Cruz County Government (URL_2), and Workforce Santa Cruz County (URL_3) websites. (None of these sites are working)

Response: All material found in Exhibit D: Independent Contractor Agreement (example) is for informational purposes only. This includes the Web Links requirement. If an agency's proposal is selected for funding the County will work with the agency to create an agreement and resolve the Web Links issue.

B. Stable Affordable Housing and Shelter Carve-Out-

1. **Questions** (the following are grouped due to similar context):

- **1.i.:** Will the separate process for “Stable, Affordable Housing and Shelter” awards be open to any eligible agency? Or only agencies that have previously received funding? Or only by invitation? Or some other criteria?
- **1.ii.:** Is there a separate RFP for the Stable, Affordable Housing and Shelter service area? If not and we are supposed to use the same RFP where can I find the specific criteria and application instructions for the Stable, Affordable Housing and Shelter service area?)
- **1.iii.:** When is the affordable housing/shelter services carve-out process going to be presented and will it have the same due date as the CORE application?

Response (address 1.i. through 1.iii): This CORE RFP does not include funding for the CORE Condition of "Stable, affordable housing and shelter". The funding for this CORE Condition will be managed through a separate process to align with the Homelessness Action Plan created by the local Continuum of Care (CoC, known locally as the Housing for Health Partnership) and announced in accordance with County Policies.

C. Should/How do we Apply?

- ### 1. **Question:** My program serves adult survivors of child sexual abuse through therapy groups. We also provide educational and prevention training/workshops for parents, and outreach in the community to provide educational and preventional materials to schools, parents, and other organizations that serve children. Could/should we apply under "Thriving Families" , Impact 2: Increased Resilience Among Adults? It seems we would fit according to:

INDICATORS-Reports of Adverse Experiences During Childhood (adult retrospective)-Data unavailable at this time. INDICATORS Access to Counseling/Support for Healing-Data unavailable at this time. INDICATORS Parental Confidence -Data unavailable at this time (Will more data be available for these indicators?)

Response: An agency must determine how a proposal fits into a specific prioritized CORE Condition, and it is up to the agency to determine the best fit of their program within the prioritized CORE conditions. In the CORE RFP, it is the responsibility of the Responding Agency to establish and demonstrate how their proposed program services/activities is applicable and relevant to the respective CORE Condition and Impact area chosen.

At this time it is unknown if and when more Datashare data and indicators will be available. Applicants may use other relevant data from secondary sources and/or primary sources other than Datashare.

- Question:** This agency has been providing free mediation to landlords and tenants facing eviction proceedings. Funding for this program has not been renewed but the need in the community for this service remains. Does housing mediation or any mediation fit into any of the current categories? --It would seem that mediation would fit under the Thriving Families category, however, that category is divided into children and youth and older and dependent adults. We serve all people of all ages. How do I apply for core funding?

Response: An agency must determine how a proposal fits in a specific prioritized CORE Condition, and it is up to the agency to determine the best fit of their program within the prioritized CORE conditions. In the CORE RFP, it is the responsibility of the Responding Agency to establish and demonstrate how their proposed program services/activities is applicable and relevant to the respective CORE Condition and Impact area chosen.

- Question:** How do you advise we submit an application with one program, which has several activities which are a mix of evidence-based practice and other?

Response: If a program utilizes multiple activities along the CORE Investments Continuum of Results and Evidence, the program should report the activity on the continuum with the most evidence, e.g. Effective Practice or Evidence-based Practice. In question #8 on the RFP, applicants may include in their narrative that they use multiple activities along the continuum.

- Question:** If a program serves all ages of adults and an application to support the program is submitted under Thriving Families, should we estimate the percentage of participants that will be "older adults" and apply for that percentage of program costs?

Response: Applicants submitting a proposal for a program that serves multiple ages within Thriving Families: Increased resilience of children and youth or among older and dependent adults, should focus their response on the primary age group that would be impacted by the funding. In the CORE RFP, it is the responsibility of the Responding Agency to establish and demonstrate how their proposed program services/activities is applicable and relevant to the respective CORE Condition and Impact area chosen.

D. Age Range Definitions

1. **Questions** (the following are grouped due to similar context):

- **1.i.:** Is there a specific age range for any/all of these CORE conditions for "Thriving Families"?
- **1.ii.:** Can you please clarify what the age range is for "older adults" in the impact statement for Thriving Families?
- **1.iii.:** What is the age range for seniors in the thriving families CORE condition and please define "dependent" seniors?
- **1.iv.:** What is the age range for children and youth in the thriving families CORE condition?
- **1.v.:** Can you please clarify what the age range is for "children and youth" in the impact statement for Thriving Families?
- **1.vi.:** In the Thriving Families category, what age group is considered "older adult?" Or more specifically, what is the youngest age included in that category?

Response (address 1.i. through 1.vi): For the purposes of CORE funding and the Thriving Families Impact Statement:

- **Older adults** are considered those **aged 60 and over**.
- **Dependent adults means:** regardless of whether the person lives independently, between the ages of **18 and 60 years** and who has physical or mental limitations that restrict his or her ability to carry out normal activities or to protect his or her rights, including, but not limited to, persons who have physical or developmental disabilities, or whose physical or mental abilities have diminished because of age.
- **Children and youth** are considered those age **0 to 24 years old**.

E. Specific Program Scenario

1. **Question:** In the thriving families, child and youth resiliency condition, does the work need to be limited to just working with the children/youth, or can we include work with the parents of those youth as well, in order to contribute to youth/child resiliency? Would we count just the children/youth as clients in this scenario, or their parents as well?

Response: In the CORE RFP, it is the responsibility of the Responding Agency to demonstrate and establish how their proposed program services/activities is applicable and relevant to the respective CORE Condition and Impact area chosen. Questions in the CORE RFP proposal allow for an explanation and description of the intended population

that will receive the program services/activities, and how those services/activities correlate and contribute to the CORE Condition and Impact area.

2. **Question:** Can a program apply to provide Thriving Family resiliency services to both seniors and children in the same application?

Response: Each proposal should include an identified impact area, though the narrative and the demographic section may be used to identify additional impact areas and/or demographics served.

3. **Questions** (the following are grouped due to similar context):

- **3.i.:** Can a program apply for different activities across different CORE conditions. For example, one program applying for Thriving Families for a youth/children program and the same program applying for Lifelong Learning for adults served with training. It would be the same program name, but different activities and strategies, with different demographics served.
- **3.ii.:** If a single program serves both youth AND seniors, would we submit two separate proposals, with our larger program separated into "sub programs" that include the unique objectives and activities for each separate age demographic?

Response (address 3.i. and 3.ii): While there is no limit to the number of Proposals submitted per agency, there are key multiple-Proposals parameters related to budgeting outlined in section 2.4 of the RFP which includes: agencies may not submit a Proposal for a program or project to more than one funding tier or more than one CORE Condition. Once a program decides their CORE Condition and service area (impact area), it is their responsibility to demonstrate and establish how their proposed program services/activities and target population is applicable and relevant to the respective CORE Condition and Impact area chosen. The RFP defines a program or project as: An organized effort to implement a set of services with a specific purpose, for a specific population, with dedicated staff, policies, and procedures. Other commonly used terms: Services, Plans.

4. **Question:** Can a program that provides services to homeless clients, either children/youth or seniors, or homelessness prevention services to children/youth or seniors apply under the Thriving Families CORE condition, or are they limited to the homeless services cut-out?

Response: An agency must determine how a proposal fits in a specific prioritized CORE Condition. The CORE Proposal questions provide an opportunity for programs to establish who their intended population is, including demographics, and what the intended services/activities are. It is the program's responsibility to demonstrate and establish how the proposed services/activities are applicable and relevant to the respective CORE

F. Miscellaneous

Questions that do not fit into other categories.

1. Question: Can you please send the required participant survey

Response: The current CORE FY 2022-2025 participant survey can be found using this link: [Microsoft Word - CORE FY22-25 Quality Measure Survey Question.docx \(santacruzhumanservices.org\)](#).

More CORE resources for the CORE FY 2022-2025 can be found here: [CORE FY 2022-2025 \(santacruzhumanservices.org\)](#).