



Office of Community Involvement



DCA and DCM CBAC

TO: Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Board of County Commissioners (5) pages

FROM: Department of County Assets and Department of County Management
Community Budget Advisory Committee (DCA/DCM CBAC)

DATE: April 27, 2023

SUBJECT: DCA & DCM Community Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendation

The Dept. of County Management/Dept. of County Assets Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) members appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the 2024 budget priorities of these two departments. The perspectives we bring come from our lived experience, professions, education and community work. This year's members' backgrounds include financial services, nonprofit work, retail and customer service, business ownership, public service, contracting, consulting and advocacy. We share common desires to give back to our community and to ensure fiscally responsible use of our tax dollars.

At Chair Vega Pederson's recommendation, our final report will focus on program offers that align best with our key values and principles. The DCA/DCM CBAC believes each of the items below is important to strive for; they are not in a particular order:

- acknowledging systemic racism in government institutions and working to dismantle oppressive systems founded on white supremacy
- being good stewards of public funds and assets
- holding government institutions accountable for providing cost-effective, efficient services with measurable, data-backed outcomes
- viewing budgets as moral documents and commitments to the most vulnerable members of our community
- supporting continual improvements toward County workforce equity, including employee health, safety and well-being
- supporting transparency by making information about DCA and DCM budgets accessible and understandable to the general public.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - This year's CBAC committee focused on security, safety, and data collection strategies that promote equity and fiscal responsibility within DCA and DCM. We interviewed a variety of County leaders and listened closely to their values, concerns, and goals and took that into consideration in our program recommendations. We recognize that the opportunities to promote workplace equity and dismantle systemic racism are subtle within DCA and DCM and acknowledge the County's efforts in applying an equity lens across all departments. We feel that the recommended program offers will further the County's goals of accessible and supportive workplaces and will provide public services that are accessible to the most vulnerable members of the general population.

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PROCESS - To prepare for this year's meetings, CBAC members submitted questions to County leaders, asking them to describe outcomes and challenges from the current fiscal year and priorities for the coming fiscal year. The majority of the interviews occurred prior to 2024 budget submissions. Some members found that the timing of the proposed departmental budgets' release made it difficult to scrutinize specific program offers through direct questioning of the relevant interviewee(s); however, DCM and DCA leadership were always made available through indirect email channels. The team met via video conference with the following County leaders:

- Serena Cruz, Chief Operating Officer/DCM Director
- Travis Graves, Deputy Chief Operating Officer
- Tracey Massey, DCA Director and Chief Information Officer
- Sim Ogle, Deputy Chief Information Officer
- Dan Zalkow, DCA Facilities and Property Management Director
- Eric Arellano, Chief Financial Officer
- Travis Brown, Chief Human Resources Officer
- Mike Vaughn, County Assessor
- Estelle Norris, DCM Equity Manager
- Sophie Wilson, DCA Equity Manager

The DCA/DCM CBAC ended the year with DCA/DCM staff and management reviewing outcomes from Fiscal Year 2022/23, particularly results from the following programs:

- Recruiter Training and Capacity Building
- Justice Center Bus Duct Replacement (Design Phase)
- College to County Interns
- Business Systems Team Procurement and Contracting
- Facilities Administration Position
- Facilities Client Services - Transition to Electric Powered Landscaping
- Regional Construction Workforce Diversity Funder Collaborative

We were pleased to learn these programs had been implemented successfully.

DCA/DCM leadership reported that some work remains to be done for several of this CBAC's recommended FY 2023 programs, including:

- Finance and Risk Management Purchasing MultCo Marketplace Contracts and Optimization - *project is nearing completion*
- FRM Motor Vehicle Tax - *audit portion of the program needs additional ramp up time*
- Walnut Park Renovation - *the County is engaged with a design firm to assess physical development feasibility scenarios, and these studies will determine whether the site will be redeveloped*

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- Information Technology Replacements and Upgrades - *last year's programs were implemented successfully, although the County is still addressing the long-term funding approach to technology replacements*

Additionally, the previously recommended Construction Diversity and Equity Add program did not end up in the 2023 Adopted Budget.

Overall, this CBAC found DCA's and DCM's budgeting processes to be transparent, and county leadership sufficiently addressed any questions or concerns presented by our members.

EMERGING ISSUES & CHANGES - The County continues to emerge slowly but steadily from the COVID-19 pandemic, and some services and operations are still being adjusted to fit the changing needs of various departments. For example, there has been significant upheaval of County work spaces, for which some American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds have been allocated, and which has resulted in widespread adoption of remote and hybrid teleworking. Funding from the American Rescue Plan is present for three federal funding sources. This is less than in past years.

Other emerging issues include:

- Recruiting and retaining specialized staff. This point was mentioned in both DCA's and DCM's list of key issues that affect the budget. The County is facing challenges around filling vacancies in a competitive labor market across all departments, particularly in Information Technology (IT). Retaining experienced and knowledgeable staff and reducing heavy workloads remain top priorities.
- Workplace Security is developing new strategies to enhance workplace safety. Last fiscal year it added three new security professionals, and this year it requested funds for a security operation center for Emergency Management Teams.
- Potential disruptions in services: Several major capital projects are in progress. The library system is undergoing improvements, which has created temporary disruptions in service, particularly in areas where branches have been demolished. Services provided by the Rockwood Health Center may also be affected by planned remodeling. Other projects related to the County's buildings include the Hansen Complex Feasibility Study, for which there is a program offer to consider different demolition strategies, and the Justice Center Bus Duct Replacement, for which there is a project offer to continue with another phase of updating the duct work.
- Technology upgrades: IT upgrades represent an ongoing need for the county, and this CBAC again recommends finding a long-term funding strategy. Three specific programs have been proposed in this year's budget. One program offer will facilitate the transition from paper to electronic records. This will make records more secure, accessible, and less costly to maintain. Another program offer involves cybersecurity funding, which is an in-target program to prevent cyberattacks. The final program offer involves addressing issues with the Workday application. It will address problems around time, absences, and accuracy.

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BUDGET FEEDBACK

DCA budget feedback: Upgrades as it relates to security is an important priority. The security of county technology, the security of county workers, and the security of county buildings are all requiring attention and should not be considered for any potential cuts.

DCM budget feedback: DCM focus on streamlining the recruiting process is an important priority as a diverse and inclusive county workforce is essential. Program offers meant to allieviate post-pandemic county hiring difficulties should not be considered for any potential cuts.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN (ARP) RAMP DOWN - DCA and DCM have adequately planned for the ramp down of ARP funds. DCA and DCM do not currently have any programs utilizing ARP funding. They were shifted to either the General Fund or Other Funds for FY 2024.

PROGRAM OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS - Our specific recommendations are as follows, not in any particular order, each is strongly recommended:

DCA 78003 Countywide Safety and Security Infrastructure

This addresses weaknesses in security. The technologies, buildings, and workers themselves will be safer and have better morale when this offer is prioritized.

DCA 78237/78238/78239 Rockwood Community Health Center Priorities 1, 2, and 3

Because we know that acknowledging systemic racism in government institutions and working to dismantle oppressive systems founded on white supremacy, we affirm that The Rockwood Community Health Center is an important community asset that promotes stability and protects community health in East County which has been historically underserved and has high levels of minority residents.

DCA 78332 Website Digital Services Transformation Strategy

Because we know that budgets are moral documents, we feel that equitable outcomes, communication, and transparency are supported by improving accessibility to county services.

DCM 72017B - Recruiter Training and Capacity Building

We can't get anything done if we don't have people to do it. Departments across the County are experiencing unusually high vacancies. Adding additional human resource analysts will help prevent hiring bottlenecks while allowing the County to attract diverse and qualified talent, which will further the County's equity goals.

DCM 72060 - Future of Work Planning

The County wishes to continue to promote flexibility and to be more adaptable in regards to use of County spaces. By offering hybrid and fully remote teleworking, they must provide these employees with supportive infrastructure to ensure they can maintain workplace synergy and coordination. This program will ensure County assets do not remain vacant or underutilized.

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DCM 72044B - Regional Construction Workforce Diversity Funder Collaborative

Holding true to our values that we must acknowledge systemic racism in government institutions and work to dismantle oppressive systems founded on white supremacy and that budgets are moral documents, this offering, in conjunction with 72044A, would serve to hopefully correct some historical injustices and provide large scale opportunities for firms led by people of the global majority.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee would like to give special thanks to Lisa Whedon and Deb Anderson for their support, coordination, facilitation, responsiveness and enthusiasm. They were essential to the organization and scheduling of our discussions, and provided excellent perspective on all of the budget requests discussed. Additionally, we'd like to thank all of our guests/presenters for their time, informative presentations, and responsiveness to our questions.

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