



MEMORANDUM

Date: February 25, 2022

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Lesher 
Acting County Administrator

Re: **Funding Update for Casa Alitas/Southwest Border Initiative**

This memorandum provides a funding update relating to the efforts of Pima County and its key partners—Catholic Community Services (CCS) and City of Tucson (COT)—to respond to surging releases of U.S. southern-border asylum seekers by Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agencies in Arizona beginning in early 2021. To defray costs incurred by these efforts, Pima County's Department of Grants Management & Innovation (GMI) pursued specific funding made available through Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) Humanitarian Relief Funds. FEMA EFSP Humanitarian Relief Funds were authorized by Title IV, Section 4008 of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which authorized \$110,000,000 for the Humanitarian Relief Funds program to be administered by FEMA EFSP.

In March of 2021, FEMA EFSP implemented two methods for providing ARPA Humanitarian Relief Funds to assist local non-profit, faith-based, and local government agencies providing aid to surging numbers of asylum seekers released along the U.S. southern border by DHS. One of these methods is the Special Funding Request (SFR) process, which GMI pursued on behalf of the Pima County/CCS/COT partnership (the Southwest Border Operation Partnership). The SFR process provides funding advances – reconciliation and robust documentation of expenses then proceed on a continual basis between local fiscal agents and FEMA EFSP.

As reported in the January 18, 2022 memorandum to the Board of Supervisors, Pima County has received a grand total of \$7,959,704.06 in SFR advances from the FEMA EFSP ARPA Humanitarian Relief Fund. This amount is comprised of three advances for the following amounts: 1) \$2,126,370.72 (received April 2021); 2) \$2,500,000.00 (received November 2021); and 3) \$3,333,333.34 (received February 2022).

Pima County incurred a deficit of revenue received versus actual costs incurred as of December 15, 2021. As of that date, Pima County had received the April and November 2021 SFR advances referenced above from FEMA EFSP for a total of \$4,626,370.72. Expenses for the Southwest Border Operation Partnership as of December 15, 2021, however, were \$5,564,523.92. Therefore, the deficit as of December 15, 2021 was \$938,153.20.

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The expense amount was updated as of December 31, 2021 for a total cost amount rolled up to \$5.8 million (\$5,756,249.88, to be exact). Calendar Year (CY) 2021 ARPA Humanitarian Relief Fund awards received (\$4,626,370.72) versus CY 2021 expenses (\$5,756,249.88) brings the Southwest Border Operation Partnership deficit to \$1,129,879.16.

In addition to the \$3,333,333.34 February 2022 award received Pima County's GMI received notice on February 24, 2022 that Pima County has been awarded an additional \$2,100,000.00 in FEMA EFSP ARPA Humanitarian Relief funding. FEMA EFSP will allow use of these awards to offset any deficits incurred in December 2021. Therefore, Pima County is made whole. The latter two funding awards total \$5,433,333.34. Using this funding to defray the deficit as of December 31, 2021 leaves the Southwest Border Operation Partnership with \$4,303,454.18 (\$5,433,333.34 - \$1,129,879.16) to cover costs incurred between January 1, 2022 and March 31, 2022 (when the FEMA EFSP ARPA Humanitarian Relief program ends).

Monthly costs for the Southwest Border Operation Partnership have averaged \$1.3 million per month from September to December 2021 as DHS releases surged and COVID-19 positivity rates increased. With \$4,303,454.18 now on hand in FEMA EFSP ARPA Humanitarian Relief monies, this revenue will accommodate a monthly rate of costs incurred by the Southwest Border Operation Partnership for January through March 2022 of \$1,434,484.

JKL

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,
Health and Community Services
Mark Napier, Assistant County Administrator
Regina Kelly, Director, Grants Management and Innovation