

Memorandum

To: Vermont Joint Fiscal Committee
From: Sean Brown, DCF Commissioner
Re: CRF Request for Remote Learning and School Age Care
Date: August 17, 2020

Total Amount Requested: \$11,997,322. The Department for Children and Families (DCF) is seeking funding to expand childcare capacity for school age children on remote learning days and cover the budgetary shortfall in the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) associated with increased school age care need.

The Department for Children and Families proposes to expand current school age childcare capacity to meet the needs of hybrid and remote learning models with the following funding mechanisms:

1. **Regional Hub Grant (\$6,970,040)** – DCF will support the development of regional childcare hubs for school age children to receive childcare on remote learning days. Regional hubs will allow for flexibility based on a regions' remote learning model (i.e. all remote; 4/1; etc.). DCF proposes that regional hubs be set up in workplaces, school buildings, recreational buildings, municipal buildings, and summer camp buildings to leverage existing spaces that historically care for children. DCF will provide the start-up funding to launch the regional childcare hubs and tuition paid by families using the hubs will provide the weekly revenue required for their operating expenses.
2. **Community Lead Grant (\$220,000)** – DCF will provide grant funds to a community partner to support the regional hubs with assistance in leadership, project management, and operational implementation of sites throughout Vermont.
3. **CCFAP Caseload Increase (\$4,807,282)** – As CCFAP families with school age children utilize childcare on remote-learning days, their CCFAP certificates will increase from part-time (afterschool care) to full-time to accommodate the additional hours. This increase will result in an increase to the CCFAP subsidy budget and full-time school age caseload.

Response to the Pandemic: The multiple return to school models being pursued throughout the State because of COVID-19 creates a significant need for school age childcare on remote learning days. As families attend work, they are seeking care for their school age children when they are not attending school in person.

Urgency of Request: Children will be returning to school on September 8th, thus, there is an immediate need for funding to establish this increased childcare capacity.



State of Vermont**Agency of Commerce and Community Development**

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Memorandum

To: Vermont Joint Fiscal Committee
From: Lindsay Kurrle, Secretary - Agency of Commerce and Community Development
Re: CRF Request for Better Places, Safer Places
Date: August 19, 2020

Total Amount Requested: \$8.75 M. The Agency of Commerce and Community Development is seeking funding to support the continuity of safe municipal and business operations this fall and winter.

The proposal has three components:

- **Expand Staff Capacity of 23 State Designated Downtown Organizations (\$1.25M)** - Funding is needed to help businesses market, plan, permit, and organize safe fall and winter outdoor events and promotions to increase visitation and sales (Grand Isle and Essex Counties do not contain a designated downtown; regional funding is proposed to support the village centers in these counties)
- **Launch Better Places, Safer Spaces (\$2.5M)** - Funding will help businesses, nonprofits, and municipalities purchase the equipment and materials needed to modify, streets, sidewalks, parking lots, town greens, and parks and ensure small downtown and village center businesses can safely survive winter, adapt to the new normal, and thrive in the future.
- **Municipalities Facilities Grants (\$5M)** - Funding will help municipalities make health and safety improvements to key public buildings. Municipal operations, civic life, and community activities must be maintained during the Covid-19 pandemic. Town halls, community centers, recreation facilities, libraries, and other municipal or non-profit owned facilities are critical civic infrastructure and must re-open to the public. To do so safely, financial support will be needed to make costly repairs to ventilation systems, access improvements, and sanitary systems.

Response to the Pandemic: Downtown and village centers are the foundation upon which Vermont's culture, brand, economy, and quality of life is built. The pandemic has significantly reduced sales and foot traffic in our traditional centers of commerce, accelerated consumer shopping preference for national online retailers, and limited municipal operations and services.

Urgency of Request: Fall is a critical season for restaurants and retailers and now is the time to make critical investments that will give local businesses and communities a fighting chance to adapt and survive the devastating economic and social impacts of the pandemic – and help Vermont's small businesses and municipalities emerge from the pandemic stronger and more resilient.



State of Vermont
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John Quinn III, State CIO and Secretary
Shawn Nailor, Deputy Secretary

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To: Vermont Joint Fiscal Committee
From: John Quinn, Secretary, Agency of Digital Services
Re: CRF Request for Constituent Management Implementation Project Costs
Date: August 17, 2020

Total Amount Requested: \$1,000,000. The Agency of Digital Services (ADS) is seeking funding for Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) Constituent Management Project costs to provide a Salesforce.com constituent management solution which can be shared across the SOV, allowing for quicker responses and greater accountability from Government services. Unbudgeted implementation costs include implementation vendor costs, ADS implementation staff and software licensing costs.

Response to Pandemic:

Throughout the pandemic, SOV call-centers, email boxes, and online feedback forms have strained to meet the needs of Vermonters. Vermonters found themselves seeking assistance from a range of government services with insufficient coordination across those working on behalf of Vermonters. Each agency has some form of constituent response solution, but the need for a more centralized, shared view has been highlighted during COVID-19. ADS has worked Salesforce and our vendor partner, MTX, to design an enhanced solution that would allow visibility and coordination of Constituent Engagement across agencies. This project will increase productivity, and dramatically improve visibility into the operational data necessary for effective decision-making and cost efficiencies resulting in improved constituent services; delivering rich insight into the entire organization and making it easier to remain accountable to constituents and other stakeholders.

Urgency of Request:

There is a critical need for funding that cannot wait until the appropriations process as it is important for Vermonters to be able to quickly access essential services and information during the COVID-19 pandemic and the Constituent Management tool is an important step towards that goal. The immediate need is most acute as we face the unknowns of the new school year; we anticipate concerns and impacts across a range of constituents and government services (parents, students, teachers, communities, employers, childcare, etc.) where this centrally managed constituent service will be invaluable to providing timely and effective responses.



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Memorandum

To: Vermont Joint Fiscal Committee
From: Ken Gragg, Deputy Adjutant General
Re: CRF Request for National Guard Tuition Due to Delayed Basic Military Training
Date: August 19, 2020

Total Amount Requested: \$72,450. The Military Department is seeking funding to support ten (10) National Guard Members' that are enrolled to start the fall semester at Norwich University.

The Military Department proposes allowing National Guard members who have recently enlisted but have been unable to attend basic training due to COVID-19 to be eligible for the Vermont National Guard Tuition Benefit Program (VTNGTBP). The Vermont National Guard (VTNG) is authorized to execute the VTNGTBP, which provides 100% tuition to Vermont State Colleges, UVM, and up to Northern Vermont University (NVU) rate to private colleges/universities, trade schools and certificates for all VTNG members once they've completed basic military training. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been several members that were scheduled to go to basic military training in the spring of 2020 but have been delayed for up to one year for reasons including Department of Defense travel restrictions, smaller class sizes, and fewer classes because of a required two-week quarantine once the member arrives at the basic military training course. This will be a long-term rolling delay until such time there is significant relief from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Specific to this request is ten (10) guard members If they had been able to attend basic military training as scheduled this past spring, they would be entitled to tuition support up to the NVU rate. For the fall semester that is \$7,245 per member or \$72,450 total.

Response to the Pandemic: To help meet the expectation that our members would stay on-track with their education timeline, the VTNG has engaged the Vermont State Legislature to support an amendment to the current VTNGTBP language that allows guard members awaiting basic military training due to delays from COVID-19 pandemic to receive the tuition benefit. There are several controls in-place as with the baseline program. The members sign a service commitment contract as well as a promissory note, which turns the tuition award into a loan/debt if the member doesn't fulfill their obligations.

Urgency of Request: Access to tuition reimbursement for these 10 guard members cannot wait until an appropriation through other means because eligible members have already started school this fall. Norwich University has agreed to temporarily delay billing and to waive late fees.



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To: Vermont Joint Fiscal Committee
From: John Quinn, Secretary, Agency of Digital Services
Re: CRF Request for Modernization of Human Capital Management (HCM) Systems
Date: August 17, 2020

Total Amount Requested: \$5,000,000. The Department of Human Resources (DHR) and the Agency of Digital Services (ADS) is seeking funding under the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) for critical modernization of the current onboarding and performance management systems, Human Capital Management (HCM), in response to significant increases in remote workforce challenges. The current HCM relies on paper-driven, manual processes which work somewhat successfully when staff are co-located but fall short when teams are working in remote locations. A modern HCM will offer successful processes regardless of the physical location of the employees. Initial investments would be for a portion of the core HCM along with modules that would provide functionality for *Onboarding* employees and employee *Performance Management*. The total amount of this request includes costs for vendor implementation, SOV implementation, and licensing.

Response to Pandemic:

COVID-19 has driven a distinct change in how the state workforce delivers programs to Vermonters. Unfortunately, remote workers have consistently struggled with the current HCM, which was built for an in-person experience, not remote. Staff mostly struggle with onboarding new personnel and the performance management of employed staff. A modernized HCM will allow for the state to work more successfully at remote locations, promoting the health and safety of the state workforce and Vermonters.

Urgency of Request:

There is a critical need for HR specific modernization. The current HR solution, VTHR, is incapable of responding to the innovation necessary to effectively manage the new, remote working conditions of dispersed front and back-office operations across the state. A modernized HCM will enable to state workforce to perform essential functions to efficiently continue government operations during the pandemic.



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Susanne R. Young, Secretary

TO: The Joint Fiscal Committee
FROM: Susan Zeller, Agency of Administration, Chief Performance Officer
CC: Susanne Young, John Quinn, Joe Flynn, Mike Smith, Kristin L. Clouser
DATE: August 18, 2020
RE: CRF Request

Total Amount Requested: \$185,000. The Agency of Administration (AOA) is seeking Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) grant money to purchase Virtual Classroom Software to be used by State of Vermont instructors to conduct remote training. The State does not currently have a tool that meets its virtual training needs. The primary training attendees are State employees, however, future expansion could be made available to partners, including Municipalities, Contractors and Vendors, Human Services Providers and Emergency Management Personnel. The total cost includes one-year software licenses, costs to connect the software to the State's existing learning management software and project management costs.

Response to the Pandemic: The COVID-19 pandemic and the State's response has limited the State's ability to deliver in-person training. Since the beginning of the pandemic, instructors have been working to transition in-person training to online training where possible, and the implementation of a Statewide Virtual Classroom would provide additional functionality needed to engage the participant, boost learning outcomes, and create more virtual accountability while employees continue to work remotely through at least December 31st. The State also expects increased efficiencies since online learning takes 40% - 60% less time to complete compared to traditional learning while increasing information retention by 25% - 60% (Chernev, 2020) and decreasing travel expenses. Necessary software features include whiteboards for virtual classroom brainstorming, break out rooms to boost collaboration in smaller groups, polling to gather immediate feedback and create participation accountability, built in quizzes, and use of other learning materials such as videos.

Urgency of Request: The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many important trainings for state employees and partners to be cancelled and/or postponed. Software that enables more robust instructor-led remote learning will permit more training to be delivered virtually. The earlier the software can be purchased, the sooner instructors will be able to transition more instructor-led training to online instruction, decreasing the need for in-person contact thus reducing the risk of employees and partners contracting COVID-19 while allowing training to occur.



**State of Vermont
Department of Labor**

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MEMORANDUM

To: Joint Fiscal Committee
From: Michael Harrington, Labor Commissioner
Date: August 19, 2020
Subject: Vermont Department of Labor CRF Request

Total Amount Requested: \$20,000,000.

1. **Lost Wage Assistance Additional Benefit (\$20,000,000):** The Department of Labor (VDOL) requests funding to provide an additional \$100 benefit per UI claimant, per week, for up to four weeks, or for as long as the Lost Wage Assistance Program (LWAP) is active, whichever comes first. While the Department intends to meet its 25% required FEMA match for LWAP through existing benefit dollars paid out through the traditional unemployment insurance program, this \$100 per week additional benefit would ensure that all UI claimants, regardless of whether they meet the LWAP requirements, would receive the \$100 supplemental benefit, and that LWAP eligible recipients receive a combined supplemental benefit of \$400.

Vermont has roughly 45,000 individuals currently filing for benefits as of August 8, 2020. At \$100 per claimant for a total of 4 weeks, that equals \$17,600,000. The remaining \$2,400,000 will be used as a contingency, should the number of claims rise above the current number, the existing benefit amount not cover the required FEMA match, or if FEMA identifies any improper payments that must be repaid pursuant to 44 C.R.F. 206.120(f).

The urgency of this request is due to the launch and subsequent implementation of the Lost Wage Assistance Program. Vermont's application will be submitted prior to August 24th and the program will begin processing benefit payments when the application is approved, and funds are allocated by FEMA. It is expected that this process will occur in rather quick succession.

