



How to strategically invest your stimulus funding

A guide for Community Action Agencies
and Head Start programs on CARES Act
funding allocations

Increase your strength to better help your communities

With the release of COVID-19 stimulus funds through the CARES Act, now is an excellent time to consider how you can invest in your own agency, in both infrastructure and direct services, to better serve your community.

Community Action Agencies are receiving \$1 billion dollars in Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), and the Head Start network is also receiving \$750 million dollars (updated from prior defined allocations via [ACF-PI-HS-20-03](#)) for one-time activities in response to COVID-19. The funds are designed to address the increased demand for human services needs in response to COVID-19, which can be directed at a variety of actions or activities, including actions necessary to maintain and resume the operation of programs, as well as investing in technology infrastructure to create more stable and sustainable organizations.

With the flexibility of how these stimulus dollars can be allocated, our team can help strategically evaluate your operations and prioritize your spending so you can address broader needs, improve quality of services and increase capacity to deliver.

Working with us today to create a plan to invest in yourself will help pay long-term dividends for your community. Our team can provide you with services across a number of areas.

Reopening, ramping up or refocusing your agency and services

Demand for your services is increasing during a time when you have to rethink how you deliver those services and what tools your staff now needs. Whether you're looking to ramp up or refocus, Wipfli is here for you. As we begin to look at what it means to reopen, ramp up or refocus, organizations themselves are considering:

- How can we build plans to reopen, ramp up or refocus our own organizations?
- Will each of our programs or services be impacted differently?
- What are the scenarios that we should be prepared for, and what impact will each of these scenarios have on our workforce, technology, finances, risk and public relations?
- How should we prepare for a potential resurgence of COVID-19?
- How will our decisions impact our key stakeholders (clients, constituents, staff, children, families, communities, etc.)?
- How can we get organizational leaders to contribute to the design of these action plans so that we can rapidly respond when we need to and minimize the shock to the organization and community?

In a rapid and process-driven fashion, Wipfli developed a process to develop action plans for the best, worst and most likely scenarios to help build your strategy for:

- Ramping up
- Services impact
- Organizational change
- Stakeholder impact analysis
- Finances
- Technology
- Workforce
- Risk
- Public relations

Invest in the right technology

Many Community Action and Head Start programs plan to invest a portion of their stimulus funds on technology. The experiences they have had when shifting to remote working and service delivery have shined a light on their lack of technology preparedness. For too many years, technology has not received the time or investment to create the proper security, accessibility and collaboration necessary to support a high-performing organization.

If you want to determine how to best invest your money in technology, you need a multi-year, prioritized roadmap. You need to know what the next 3-5 years should look like for where you need to spend on technology, as well as what your immediate needs are.

We have performed countless [Technology Health Checks](#) with agencies to assess the current state of their technology environment, looking at all applications and infrastructure needs. Together we identify key gaps and build priorities for short-term, mid-term and long-term investments to help ensure the sustainability of your agency. We also help implement and manage the technology infrastructure to keep your organization compliant and your data safe. We even can continue to advise on an on-going basis.

Now is the time for migrating to a better financial system

Many of you have shared stories of your accounting challenges. A short list of these challenges includes:

- Paper-based processes resulting in slowed AP and AR processes
- Requiring staff to go into the office to cut checks
- Sending someone to run around to multiple locations to grab vendor invoices
- Needing to have written signatures for approvals of invoices
- Challenges with an accounting team working with each other when working remotely
- Inability to access system
- System outages



This crisis finally highlighted why it is so crucial to build efficient, electronic workflows that do not require the paper shuffling we are accustomed to. [Sage Intacct](#) is a fully cloud-based system that the AICPA recommends. In addition, Wipfli has invested a multi-year due diligence process to verify that this system meets the needs of our CAP and Head Start clients.

And it does.

We can help evaluate your specific needs and determine how a new financial package can improve your efficiency and reliability. You can also utilize a customizable [Request for Information \(RFI\)](#) that allows you to inquire from vendors and firms on how they could help improve your fiscal processes and/or systems. Fill in your information on the righthand side of the page to get your copy.

Make your data and technology more secure and accessible

During this crisis, Community Action and Head Start organizations became increasingly aware of the need to move some of their key systems and processes to the cloud (email, document storage). Agencies experienced limited or no accessibility to some systems, slow performance, or increased risk in a time when things needed to work to keep staff performing and delivering.

Wipfli has designed a specific set of tools in partnership with the Community Action and Head Start networks to migrate these key systems and processes to the cloud. [Wipfli's Remote Workforce Services](#) are essential for any organization that is looking to reduce or eliminate IT maintenance costs, reduce the IT burden on staff, and increase the security of key data, not to mention to be prepared for any time that staff need to be working remotely.

Provide education to leaders and staff from reliable sources

You probably think about [professional development](#) in terms of your frontline staff. Leaders, this is the time to ensure you are getting up to speed on what it means to run your agency in an environment where you need to not only meet the needs of the community but also run a business.

Understanding each of your funding sources' regulatory requirements, what money is restricted and unrestricted, how you can spend money, how you need to allocate money, how to generate in-kind/match in some of your programs, and so much more – these areas are so important in professional development.

Let us take care of your today and transform your tomorrow.

Contact us at GFPBD@wipfli.com