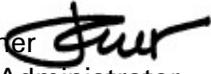




MEMORANDUM

Date: February 27, 2026

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

From: Jan Leshner 
County Administrator

Re: **Additional Information for the March 3, 2026 Board of Supervisors Consent Calendar Item No. 15 – Acceptance of Garcia Family Foundation Grant for Homelessness Prevention Hub**

Item 15 on the Consent Calendar for the March 3, 2026 Board of Supervisors meeting is the acceptance of a 2-year, \$2 million grant from the Garcia Family Foundation to support a Homelessness Prevention Hub. The attached memorandum from Community & Workforce Development Director Dan Sullivan provides further details on this funding opportunity. The proposed Homelessness Prevention Hub is an outgrowth of several successful efforts Pima County launched or expanded in recent years, including the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, Emergency Eviction Legal Services Program, and the commitment of Keeping People Housed funds to the Community Action Agency.

The grant includes funding to staff the Homelessness Prevention Hub along with over \$350,000 annually for flexible direct assistance to clear barriers to keeping individuals and families housed. The Garcia Family Foundation is also separately funding a third-party program evaluation to be conducted by the University of Arizona/Southwest Institute for Research on Women and Arizona Housing Analytics Collaborative.

JKL/dym

Attachment

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator
Chad Kasmar, Deputy County Administrator
Dan Sullivan, Director, Community & Workforce Development



	Date: February 26, 2026
To: Jan Lesher County Administrator	From: Dan Sullivan, Director <i>DS</i> Community & Workforce Development

Re: Homelessness Prevention Hub Grant from the Garcia Family Foundation

At the March 3, 2026 meeting, the Board of Supervisors will consider approving a \$2 million grant from the Garcia Family Foundation (GFF) to fund a Homelessness Prevention Hub within the Community & Workforce Development department (CWD). This memorandum provides additional background on this important and exciting funding opportunity.

Background

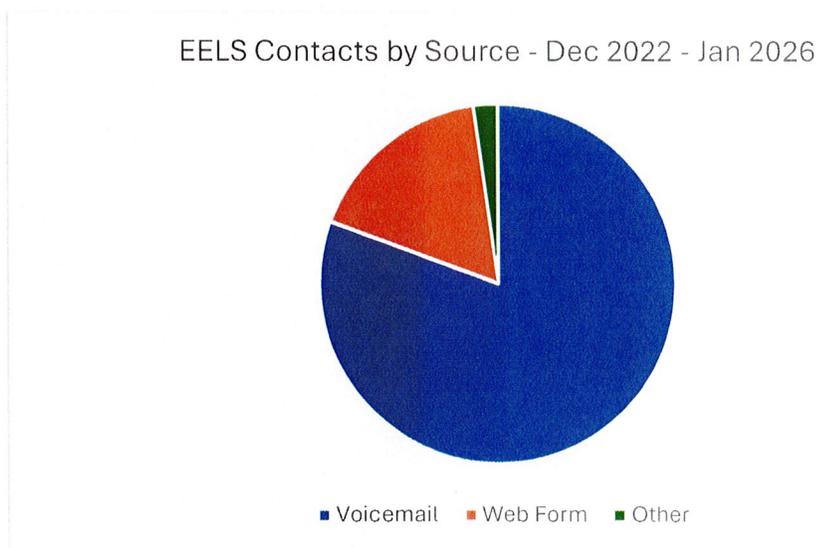
GFF, a private foundation based out of Tempe, approached CWD in January to discuss funding a Homelessness Prevention Hub. CWD proposed a hub that would serve as a central access point for Homelessness Prevention services, which includes staffing a one-stop access point for the full array of CWD Homelessness Prevention services along with flexible direct-assistance dollars to clear barriers to housing stability when other assistance is not available. For the most part, people will access this hub by phone, but walk-ins will also be served.

This proposal is in line with GFF’s interest in supporting programs that provide a single point of entry into an array of wraparound services and that have substantial local support. Pima County interested GFF in part because of its substantial local support for comprehensive eviction- and homelessness-prevention programming, including:

- The prioritization of a Homelessness Prevention Hub in Pima County’s **10-Year Regional Housing Strategy and Funding Plan** allowing those funds to be allocated to other plan purposes for approximately two years.
- The **Emergency Eviction Legal Services (EELS) program**, which connects tenants facing eviction through trained navigators to an array of services, including legal services, rent and utility assistance, job assistance, bridge housing, early childhood education, and more.
- The County’s commitment to efforts to increase access to affordable housing, including the investment of local **Keeping People Housed** dollars in the Pima County Community Action Agency in local rent, utility, and mortgage assistance.
- The **Prosperity Initiative**, which identified improving housing stability as an ongoing policy priority of Pima County.

The concept of a fully staffed Homelessness Prevention Hub builds off of CWD’s experience during and coming out of the pandemic. Through both the EELS and Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), we learned that people in crisis prefer to connect by phone. For example, when CWD took over full operation of ERAP in 2022, it shifted from an online portal that frequently held large backlogs to a fully staffed, community-centered hotline that provided immediate ability to schedule an appointment to determine eligibility for assistance. Trained staff were available to take calls on demand, conduct a basic prescreen for services, schedule appointments (often the same day or within two weeks), connect clients with community resources, and triage urgent eviction cases directly to the EELS team for rapid intervention. This direct, person-to-person approach has replaced the frustration and delays often seen with online systems, which could not immediately answer questions and inadvertently created backlogs. Unfortunately, when ERAP funding was exhausted, CWD was no longer able to operate the hotline.

EELS has similarly shown the value of direct connection via phone. EELS has two connection options: a phone line on which callers can leave a message for future contact by a navigator and a web form that allows people to submit a request for services online. In over three years of tracking data in these systems, and even without the phone line being staffed, a vast majority of 11,584 EELS contacts—9,558 or 81%—have come by the phone line.



Homelessness Prevention Hub Proposal

The current proposal, for which funding has been awarded by GFF, would re-create the hotline with a larger staff, allowing all housing-unstable individuals contacting CWD to speak with a Community & Workforce Specialist to triage their circumstances and connect them with the service appropriate to those circumstances. For example, if an individual calls in with an eviction notice or eviction court date, they will be connected with an EELS

navigator to assess them for referral to legal services, rent assistance, or other services suited to their circumstances. If an individual does not face eviction but needs rent, utility, or mortgage assistance, they can be scheduled to meet with a CAA case manager to enroll them in CAA services. Disparate phone lines (EELS, CAA, etc.) will all be routed to the Hub so that there is no wrong door to entry. Although individuals may be served by different funding sources and programs, the goal is a seamless customer experience that results in services to prevent homelessness.

Additionally, a portion of the grant funds will be set aside for flexible assistance to clear barriers to housing stability. Many of CWD’s funding sources are restrictive, and many customers face barriers not covered by them. Some examples include car repairs, unexpected medical bills, eviction judgments, move-in costs, storage/pet fees, etc. This part of the proposal builds off of a successful pilot in which the Tucson Pima Collaborative to End Homelessness distributed \$600,000 to 260 applicants over 15 months in 2024 and 2025. Like that pilot program, assistance would be low-barrier, easy-to-access, and designed to supplement more restrictive sources.

GFF provides “latitude . . . to innovate,” so the program budget and components may change, but the current annual budget proposal is as follows:

Personnel (9 staff – salary + fringe)	\$585,532.90
Operating (equipment, supplies, software, training)	\$51,340.00
Flexible Direct Assistance	\$363,127.10
TOTAL	\$1,000,000.00

The grant’s period of performance is February 15, 2026 through December 31, 2028.

Program Evaluation

Importantly, GFF will also separately fund a third-party program evaluation of the Homelessness Prevention Hub. The evaluation will be done through the University of Arizona/Southwest Institute for Research on Women and Arizona Housing Analytics Collaborative. Evaluation details remain to be determined but may focus on measures such as outcomes 12 months after receiving assistance and impact on inflow into homelessness. A successful evaluation would form a basis for a request for ongoing funding from GFF or other funders.

Conclusion

The award of \$2 million for the Homelessness Prevention Hub represents a significant investment in providing easy access to successful CWD Homelessness Prevention programming. The proposal builds on programs with a proven track record of successful

Jan Lesher, County Administrator

Re: Homelessness Prevention Hub Grant from the Garcia Family Foundation

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service. Staff recommends acceptance of the award. Staff estimates services could begin 60-90 days thereafter.

cc: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator