

2021 COVID-19 Recovery Grant **Request Summary**

COVID-19 Recovery Grant Application

In response to the strain the COVID-19 virus pandemic is placing on the local healthcare system and community-based organizations, the Desert Healthcare District and the Regional Access Project have made available grant funds to provide additional support and resources to our local healthcare and service providers.

Desert Cancer Foundation, Grant #1199

About the Organization

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Organization Type:

501(c)(3)

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Proposal

Project Title: Patient Assistance Program

Total Project Budget: \$78,000.00

Requested Amount: \$10,000.00

Start Date: 4/1/2021

End Date: 6/30/2021

Project/Program Description

Community Need: *Define a specific need(s) for the project and describe the alignment to ongoing COVID-19 relief, recovery, and assistance efforts.*

Desert Cancer Foundation's (DCF) grant request aligns with DHCD's Strategic Plan Focus Area Priority 3 - Community Health & Wellness. DCF's Patient Assistance Program provides financial assistance to local residents who cannot afford their cancer care and treatment. The Program ensures we are providing access to health/medical services that impact the individual's health status and wellbeing.

According to Health Assessment and Research for Communities (HARC), 1 in 5 local adults (ages 18-64) is uninsured, and nearly a quarter of respondents stated they could not afford health insurance premiums. The number of valley residents dealing with cancer is nearly 45,000; close to the same number of residents needing financial assistance. For an individual who is already marginalized and living on a financial tight rope, a cancer diagnosis can be devastating.

Desert Cancer Foundation's Patient Assistance program can help alleviate the effects of a cancer diagnosis to an individual who cannot afford care. Oftentimes, a cancer patient will no longer be able to work due to the diagnosis; our assistance helps to lighten the financial burden so the patient can focus on healing. DCF ensures that no patient goes without cancer care due to their inability to pay.

The community need is great for cancer care. Over the past few months, screenings have resumed to the usual pace; with this comes a slight surge in cancer diagnosis. Given the economic impact of COVID-19, more individuals are struggling financially due to lower income, losing their job &/or insurance. Meanwhile, we have not yet been able to resume with fundraising events, and show a significant loss in revenue for Q4 of 2020 and Q1 of 2021.

We thank you for your consideration of this grant, and appreciate your continued support of our mission.

Project Description: *What program/service are you performing or providing that is vital to your target population during the current COVID-19 public health crisis and describe its importance.*

DCF's Patient Assistance (PA) program will provide financial assistance and patient navigation for cancer care and treatment for our local residents, living within the DCHD boundaries. In addition to paying for cancer care services, the PA program will navigate patients in need of screening and diagnosis.

For the patients in our PA program, DCF will cover the cost of co-pays, co-insurance, deductibles, prescription medication, and insurance premiums. We also leverage our partnerships with the local healthcare community, to extend all available programs and resources to our patients. In doing so, we greatly improve patient care via access to systems for timely and appropriate care, increasing the likelihood of a positive outcome.

All applications are prepared by our PA Coordinator, and then reviewed by a volunteer PA Committee comprised of doctors/oncologists, social workers, financial counselors, and insurance brokers. Our PA coordinator then works with the staff members at Desert Regional Comprehensive Cancer Center and Eisenhower Lucy Curci Cancer Center to track the patient navigation and access to the appropriate cancer care services.

Per data obtained for our last reporting period to DHCD (June 1 2020 – December 30, 2020), the number of clients served in the district's boundaries is closer to 74% of DCF clients.

Is this a new project or an expansion of a preexisting project? *Please describe if the proposed project has been developed recently or if a preexisting program has been modified to address the impact of the COVID-19 virus*

Desert Cancer Foundation has been serving the local community for over 25 years. Since inception, DCF has served more than 8,250 residents in the Coachella Valley and surrounding communities with the cost of their cancer care needs. We have provided for cancer-related screening, diagnosis, and treatment valued at nearly \$100 million dollars, of which we have paid close to \$10 million, thanks to our strategic partnerships with the local healthcare community.

How will the grant funds be used? *Please describe specifically how the grant funds will be used towards operational and/or programmatic support?*

Requested funding will be used to pay for cancer care services and navigation for uninsured and underinsured residents who need the financial assistance. DCF will cover the cost of insurance premiums, Medi-Cal share of cost, co-pays, co-insurance, and deductibles. This includes coverage for screening, diagnosis, prescription medications, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and other treatments, as prescribed by the treating oncologists.

Per our last report to DHCD, for the period from 6/1/2020 to 11/30/2020, DCF paid \$64,502.31 in cancer care services. The total paid in cancer treatment services is valued at over \$1 million in billed amount.

In 2019, DCF served over 200 patients undergoing cancer care, and paid for treatment in the amount of \$354,638, valued at over 5 Million dollars. For 2020, DCF has served more than 110 patients, with a total amount of \$194,407, valued at close to 2 million dollars. YTD, from January 1 to February 22, DCF has already paid \$39,015 in cancer treatment.

We are grateful for your support and to the opportunity to provide for our community.

Geographical Area Served

Cathedral City; Coachella; Desert Hot Springs; Indio; La Quinta; Palm Desert; Palm Springs; Rancho Mirage; Thousand Palms; Bermuda Dunes

Population Served

Adults (25-64 years old); Seniors (65+ years old); Uninsured; Individuals with a compromised immune system; Individuals with pre-existing medical conditions

How many residents will be served? *Please provide the number of unduplicated number of individuals and/or number of services provided*

45

Evaluation *Please describe how the success and/or impact of on-going operations or the proposed project will be evaluated*

Evaluation

Underserved local residents in the midst of cancer care rely on our services to provide them with the financial assistance they need. Success of this program is the ability to provide for all the clients who apply and qualify for our Patient Assistance Program. We have a duty to ensure that residents receive cancer treatment, regardless of their inability to pay for it. This impacts the health of the individual with cancer, the quality of life for their loved ones, and our community.

The exact number of people diagnosed varies, as do our applicants, but we can forecast that the patients that will need DCF's assistance to be somewhere between 2019 and 2020 numbers. For the grant period of April 1 to June 30, 2021, we can forecast serving approximately 40-50 clients, with about 620 services, covering payment of approximately \$80,000.