

## BACKGROUND

The Bridge Homeless Recovery Center, located in the heart of downtown Dallas, is a “one-stop-shop” for adults experiencing homelessness in the Dallas area. The Bridge is open 24 hours daily to offer basic needs services, along with access to healthcare, income alternatives, and long-term housing. This “one-stop” approach means that when people need help, they don’t have to find transportation to make multiple visits to several agencies to find assistance; nearly all of the services a person may need to get on the path to permanent housing is in one place. The Bridge serves as the backbone for the delivery of services to the unhoused population in Dallas and six surrounding counties, playing a significant role in the North Texas continuum of care for homeless recovery services. The Bridge is the lead partner of the City of Dallas and State of Texas in supporting this population. Annually, the Bridge serves 85% of the homeless population of Dallas County—nearly 7,000 individuals a year.



## CHALLENGE

The Bridge was historically awarded a Management Services Contract from the City of Dallas to operate the shelter; however, the process was shifted from a vendor agreement to a competitive process for 2022. Since the opening of homeless recovery center in 2008, The Bridge has served as the primary partner contracted with the City of Dallas to address homelessness. Through the years, the staff of The Bridge have successfully secured the contract each year due to their excellence in service and a strong relationship with The City of Dallas and the Office of Homeless Solutions.

While the partnership has been advantageous for both the City and The Bridge, The Bridge needed support to write a competitive proposal in a short period of time.



## OUTCOME

When the RFP was published, The Bridge contracted with Colton Strawser Consulting to submit an application. After meeting with the staff and touring the campus, Colton developed a plan and proposal in response to the City's RFP. Rebecca Cox, Chief Services Officer at The Bridge, said of the Colton Strawser Consulting approach, "I was really impressed by how immersed Colton became in our organization. It felt like he almost became a part of our team." That deep dive approach to understanding the organization in its entirety is what makes Colton Strawser Consulting an excellent partner in the program development and proposal phase of grant applications.

In an unprecedented move, the City Council voted unanimously to approve the contract with The Bridge for more than \$4.5 million each year for five years. As Amy Jane, the interim Chief Development Officer said, "The work of The Bridge is being recognized in the community and that we have a multi-year contract with the City of Dallas is an acknowledgment of our capacity to hold the focus on our mission, empower adults experiencing homelessness in Dallas with the tools to homeless recovery as they move into sustainable housing." The work of The Bridge and the relationships the staff has forged in the Dallas community were the pillars on which this contract stands, but Jane continued, "I want to underscore my gratitude to Colton for the vital and essential work he performed in crafting the competitive proposal in response to the city's RFP. We could not have done this without him."



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If your organization is ready to take the next step in expanding or strengthening your services by applying for federal grants, Colton Strawser Consulting is here to help. Visit us online to schedule a 30-minute consultation and our federal grant readiness assessment.

## BACKGROUND

The Area Agency on Aging has a long history of helping older adults, people with disabilities and their caregivers in Tarrant County. As part of a network of 629 Area Agencies nationwide, and one of 28 in the state of Texas, AAA is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for the Tarrant County community while empowering people to thrive independently.



AAA accomplishes this by creating and implementing innovative, exemplary services; advocating for individuals and families and connecting them to resources that focus on healthy living; and establishing and maintaining support and partnerships for the communities it serves.

## CHALLENGE

The Area Agency on Aging sought project funding for a fall prevention program through the Administration for Community Living.



ACL provides support so that older adults and people of all ages with disabilities are able to live where they choose, with the people they choose, and with the ability to participate fully in their communities. To that end, the proposal included additional regional AAAs in an effort to bring fall prevention programs to different underserved communities and create partnerships with local fire departments in an effort to reduce the number of "life and assist" calls they get from seniors and individuals with physical disabilities.

## OUTCOME

Colton Strawser Consulting partnered with AAA of Tarrant County to apply for the available ACL funding. AAA needed a consultant well-versed in federal grants who could immediately understand and execute the application. "Colton brings a foundational acumen to the table that you can't find elsewhere," said Brian Lee, Deputy Director, Operations and Grant Data for AAA. "He really knows the ins and the outs and the nuances of applying for federal grants. We trust and rely upon that."

Mr. Lee also noted that Colton helped him have a better understanding of how break down the nuances of federal grant applications – particularly knowing how to answer questions to satisfy the scoring rubric. In fact, the application Colton Strawser Consulting worked on for AAA scored more than 93 percent.

“Colton was there every step of the way to make sure that we stayed away from the pitfalls and rabbit trails that we don’t need to be following for the grant process,” said Mr. Lee. “It took away a lot of the anxiety from the day we learned about the grant to putting it together to the scoring... It gave us the confidence to go after bigger grants based on what we’ve learned in this experience.”

The funding for this round of ACL funding was highly competitive, so despite the high score, AAA ultimately did not receive this round of ARPA funding, AAA is partnering with Colton Strawser Consulting on a new initiative and proposal that came out of that initial proposal. Mr. Lee looks forward to many more collaborations. “Colton’s experience, knowledge and character exemplify his organization. There’s a real trust factor there. He’s quick to rely upon and easy to trust. What I love about working with him is that he’s really helpful, and he’s so honest about what we can and can’t do throughout the process. There’s so much integrity in the process; he doesn’t mislead clients to unrealistic expectations. We appreciate that.”

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