



Legislation Text

File #: 2177-2023, Version: 1

BACKGROUND: This legislation authorizes the Director of the Department of Development to execute Grant Agreements with numerous not-for-profit, social service agencies funded from federal Emergency Rental Assistance funds (ERA 2) for the provision of assisting tenants with housing stability services through the funding of full time housing resource specialist positions for a period from August 1, 2023, to September 30, 2025. See attached Exhibit A for the list of 27 agencies included in this ordinance. The total amount to be awarded to these agencies is up to \$4,396,924.32.

Ordinance 2275-2021 authorizes the City of Columbus to accept and appropriate up to \$90,537,806.23 of federal Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA 2) program funds, as passed by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. Federal guidelines allows for payment of eligible expenses starting March 3, 2021.

Funding these not-for-profit, social service agencies is part of the department's plan to expend the remaining ERA 2 funds. City Council recently approved Ordinance 1569-2023 to expend \$25 million to assist eligible recipients with funding to pay for rent, utility companies, and other service providers so they can remain in their home. These agreements will compliment those funds by providing funding for housing resource specialists to provide housing crisis counseling and assist tenants that are facing housing instability, eviction, and homelessness to navigate resources that are available to them.

The City of Columbus has a need to assist tenants with housing stability services within the ERA2 program as the city has seen a historic rise in eviction filings and housing instability. Funding for housing resource specialists will help facilitate services that will aide tenants who are in a housing crisis with accessing resources, as well as housing problem solving skills. The housing resource specialists will assist tenants in applying for rental and utility assistance that targets at-risk and vulnerable populations facing eviction, housing instability, and homelessness. This funding will provide 27 housing resource specialists that will form a collaborative within the Central Ohio Stable Housing Network to collaborate resources and assistance among nonprofit organizations within Franklin County.

The awards are given with an anticipated renewal in FY2024 and FY2025, pending availability of funds and program performance per agreements with each agency. The department shall submit, under separate legislation, pieces of legislation for additional Grant Agreements for this same purpose.

The department is entering into a Grant Agreement with the agency because funding will be advanced to the agency on a predetermined schedule. Advancement of funds is needed because many of the organizations do not have funding available to be reimbursed for program expenses. The first advance will occur after confirmation of the Purchase Order. Before the second advance is made, the agency shall provide reports and documentation indicating how the funds were used to fulfill the scope of services in the Grant Agreement. This will continue throughout the term of the Grant Agreement.

Emergency action is necessary as the eviction and housing instability rate has reached historic levels. Individuals and families are in need of immediate intervention and supportive services to help with their housing crisis and remaining in their homes.

FISCAL IMPACT: Funding is available within Fund 2208, ERA 2 fund.

CONTRACT COMPLIANCE: See attached Exhibit A for a list of social services agencies and the vendor registration

and contract compliance data.

To authorize the Director of the Department of Development to execute Grant Agreements with numerous not-for-profit, social service agencies, in an amount up to \$4,396,924.32, of U.S. Department of Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance 2 (ERA 2) funds to eligible recipients as part of the department's ERA 2 Strategy; to authorize an agreement start date of August 1, 2023; to authorize the payment of eligible expenses through September 30, 2025; to authorized the advancement of funds on a pre-determined schedule during the term of the agreement; to authorized the expenditure of up to \$4,396,924.32 from the Emergency Rental Assistance 2 Fund; and to declare an emergency. (\$4,396,924.32) **(AMENDED BY ORD. 2638-2023 PASSED OCTOBER 9, 2023) BA**

WHEREAS, the city has disbursed approximately \$23 million, and encumbered another \$25 million for disbursement, of the \$90.5 million of ERA 2 funds received from the U.S. Department of Treasury and the remaining \$62.5 million of ERA 2 funds will be disbursed under two programs; Investment Strategy and Innovations Strategy; and

WHEREAS, the department is building the Investment Strategy Program infrastructure to disburse over \$25 million to eligible recipients before the grant ends in December 2025; and

WHEREAS, 27 organizations are included in this piece of legislation with authorization for others agreements being submitted as separate pieces of legislation; and

WHEREAS, the Grant Agreements will be funded with Emergency Rental Assistance 2 Funds; and

WHEREAS, the Grant Agreements will allow for expenses starting August 1, 2023 and include advance payments to the organizations; and

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the Department of Development in that it is immediately necessary to enter into Grant Agreements with various not-for-profit, social service agencies to help reduce the eviction and housing instability rates as it has reached historic levels, and individuals and families are in need of immediate intervention and supportive services to help with their housing crisis and remain in their homes, all for the preservation of the public health, peace, property, safety, and welfare; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That the Director of Development is authorized to execute Grant Agreements with numerous not-for-profit, social service agencies in an amount up to \$4,396,924.32 for the provision of assisting tenants with housing stability services through the funding of full time housing resource specialist positions for a period from August 1, 2023, to September 30, 2025, and is authorized to advance the funds on a pre-determined schedule during the term of the Gant agreement.

SECTION 2. That the expenditure of \$4,396,924.32 or so much thereof as may be needed is hereby authorized in Fund 2208 (ERA Fund), Dept-Div 44-10 (Housing Division), in object class 05 (Other) per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 3. That this agreement is awarded pursuant to the relevant provisions of Columbus City Code related to executing grant agreements.

SECTION 8. Funds are hereby deemed appropriated and expenditures and transfers authorized to carry out

the purposes of this ordinance and the City Auditor shall establish such accounting codes as necessary.

SECTION 9. That the City Auditor is authorized to make any accounting changes to revise the funding source for all contracts or contract modifications associated with this ordinance.

SECTION 10. That for the reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this Ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.