



Legislation Text

File #: 2577-2021, **Version:** 2

BACKGROUND: This legislation authorizes the Director of Development to enter into a not-for-profit service contract with the Community Shelter Board in an amount up to \$4,905,000.00 of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to provide financial support for 38 mental health specialists to the organization's emergency shelter and permanent supportive housing programs and modify the scope of services of each grant agreement as needed without further City Council approval in order to align with the most current version of the federal laws, regulations, and guidance.

Ordinance 1201-2021 authorized the City of Columbus to accept and appropriate approximately \$187,030,138.00 of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds as signed into law by the President of the United States on March 11, 2021.

Emergency shelters and permanent supportive housing locations are experiencing an increase in drug and alcohol use, violence, suicide attempts, and death because of mental health challenges and substance dependence. This trend was discernible before the COVID-19 pandemic and has accelerated during the health emergency.

These kinds of crises result in an excessive number of calls to police and emergency services, which often is not the most appropriate or cost-effective response.

Police officers are placed in dangerous and difficult situations when they are called to respond to and de-escalate volatile mental health crises. These interventions require specialized techniques that aren't addressed in-depth in law enforcement training.

The Community Shelter Board proposes to embed 38 mental health specialists trained in crisis intervention on-site in homelessness programs to reduce deaths and violence, better support our vulnerable neighbors, and reduce police and ambulance runs.

The City proposes funding for the 38 mental health specialists using American Rescue Plan Act funding. Shelter and housing partners have limited funding and are unable to establish these specialist positions with existing resources. American Rescue Plan Act funds can act as a bridge to 2025. The City will continue to work closely with the Community Shelter Board and ADAMH to develop the services and supports to meet the crisis needs of these vulnerable community members.

In coordination with ADAMH, the Community Shelter Board, Columbus State, and Netcare Access will create a workforce development program with training, certification, and continuing education to develop people with the appropriate skills and expertise to fill these new positions. These services cannot be provided by current city employees at this time.

These crisis response specialists will receive specialized training tailored to people experiencing homelessness. Shelter and housing partners will commit to hire program graduates at a competitive, above-living-wage pay rate with good benefits. Graduates will commit to serve in the homelessness system for at least 12 months.

Franklin County will also provide funding for this initiative.

~~Emergency action is requested to address the impacts of the COVID-19 health emergency.~~

FISCAL IMPACT: Funding is provided to the City of Columbus from the American Rescue Plan Act passed by

Congress and signed into law March 11, 2021.

CONTRACT COMPLIANCE: the vendor number is 004795 and expires 02/25/2023.

To authorize the Director of the Department of Development to enter into a not-for-profit service contract with the Community Shelter Board in an amount up to \$4,905,000.00 to provide financial support for 38 mental health specialists to the organization's emergency shelter and permanent supportive housing programs; to authorize the Director of Development to modify the terms and conditions of the not-for-profit service contract as needed without seeking further City Council approval in order to align with the most current version of the federal laws, regulations, and guidance; to authorize the expenditure of up to \$4,905,000.00 of ARPA funds; ~~and to declare an emergency.~~ (\$4,905,000.00) (AMENDED BY ORD. 3304-2021; PASSED 12/13/2021)

WHEREAS, emergency shelters and permanent supportive housing locations are experiencing an increase in drug and alcohol use, violence, suicide attempts, and death because of mental health challenges and substance dependence. This trend was discernible before the COVID-19 pandemic and has accelerated during the health emergency; and

WHEREAS, these kinds of crises result in an excessive number of calls to police and emergency services, which often is not the most appropriate or cost-effective response; and

WHEREAS, the Community Shelter Board proposes to embed 38 mental health specialists trained in crisis intervention on-site in homelessness programs to reduce deaths and violence, better support our vulnerable neighbors, and reduce police and ambulance runs; and

WHEREAS, the City proposes funding for the 38 mental health specialists using American Rescue Plan Act funding. Shelter and housing partners have limited funding and are unable to establish these specialist positions with existing resources. American Rescue Plan Act funds can act as a bridge to 2025. The City will continue to work closely with the Community Shelter Board and ADAMH to develop the services and supports to meet the crisis needs of these vulnerable community members; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in additional need for supportive housing and related services; and

WHEREAS, expenditure of ARPA funding to support organizations providing these services is necessary to alleviate the negative impacts caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, such expenditure of funds has not been previously accounted for in the 2021 Budget; and

WHEREAS, ~~an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the Department of Development in that it is immediately~~ necessary to authorize the Director of the Department of Development to enter into a not-for-profit service contract with the Community Shelter Board to address the impacts of the COVID-19 health emergency, such immediate action is necessary 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 the Department of Development is authorized to enter into a not-for-profit service contract with the Community Shelter Board in an amount up to \$4,905,000.00 to provide financial support for 38 mental health specialists to the organization's emergency shelter and permanent supportive housing programs; and is authorized to modify the scope of services of the contract as needed without further City Council approval in order to align with the most current version of the federal laws, regulations, and guidance.

SECTION 2. That for the purpose stated in Section 1, the expenditure of \$4,905,000.00 or so much thereof as may be needed, is hereby authorized in Fund 2209 (ARPA), Dept-Div 44-01 (Administrative Division), in object class 03 (Services) per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 3. That this contract is awarded in accordance with the relevant provisions of City Code Chapter 329 relating to not-for-profit service contracts.

SECTION 4. That the funds necessary to carry out the purpose of this ordinance are hereby deemed appropriated and the City Auditor shall establish such accounting codes as necessary.

SECTION 5. 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 6. ~~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 passage and approval by the Mayor or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.~~ **That this ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.**