



Legislation Text

File #: 1818-2021, **Version:** 1

1. BACKGROUND

To authorize the Director of Development to enter into multiple subrecipient agreements with organizations to provide rental and utility assistance and housing stability services to residents in the local area who qualify for the assistance as provided in the laws, regulations, and other guidance provided by the U. S. Department of Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance 1 (ERA 1) program, providing for expenses starting January 1, 2021. The amount anticipated to be awarded to organizations is up to \$10,711,312.20.

Organizations selected to receive these funds will be selected through an application process to be conducted by the Department of Development. The Notice of Financial Award (NOFA) will be issued via direct email to agencies and to partners to send to their networks of agencies, a City press release, and on the City's website. The City will receive and review proposals in July 2021 and anticipate awarding funding to qualified vendors in August 2021.

Because of the timing of NOFA and the pending City Council break in August, the Director of Development is requesting City Council approval to enter into subrecipient agreements selected as part of this process immediately after all applications have been evaluated and organizations selected.

Ordinance 0284-2021 authorized the City of Columbus to accept and appropriate \$26,822,803.20 of federal Emergency Rental Assistance 1 program funds, as passed by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. To date, approximately \$16M of ERA1 funds have been allocated to three subrecipients and this ordinance seeks to allocate the remaining funds. The purpose of the current NOFA is to find and award funding to organizations who are able to provide outreach and intake services to hard-to-reach and vulnerable populations experiencing housing instability.

Selected organizations will manage a program to provide rental and utility assistance, and housing stability services, to residents in the local area who qualify for the assistance as provided in the laws regulations and other current guidance provided by the U. S. Department of Treasury. Rental assistance will be provided to qualifying residents of the local community for up to 12 months plus an additional three months, if necessary, to ensure housing stability.

In these programs, at least 60% of the funding will support households with an AMI at 50% or below and/or have a member of the household who has been unemployed for 90 days; up to 40% of the funding can be used for households with an AMI at 80% or below; and 10% of the funding will be utilized for Administrative costs.

It is expected that the guidance from the U.S. Department of Treasury will be modified while this subrecipient agreement is in effect and it is requested that the Director of Development be given the authority to modify the scope of services and/or terms and conditions of any subrecipient agreement without seeking additional Council Approval in order to align with the most current version of the laws, regulations, and guidance.

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

2. FISCAL IMPACT

Funding is provided to the City of Columbus from the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 passed by Congress and signed into law December 27, 2020, and is available in the department's ERA budget.

To authorize the Director of Development to enter into multiple subrecipient agreements with to-be-determined organizations to provide rental and utility assistance and housing stability services to residents in the local area who qualify for the assistance as provided in the laws, regulations, and other current guidance provided by the U.S.

Department of Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance 1 (ERA 1) program in an amount up to \$10,711,312.20; to authorize payment of expenses starting January 1, 2021; to authorize the Director of Development to modify the scope of services and/or terms and conditions of the subrecipient agreements as needed without seeking further City Council approval; to authorize the expenditure of up to \$10,711,312.20 from the Emergency Rental Assistance 1 (ERA 1) fund; and to declare an emergency. (\$10,711,312.20)

WHEREAS, the Director of the Department of Development desires to enter into multiple subrecipient agreements with organizations that respond to the Notice of Financial Award advertised in July 2021 to provide rental and utility assistance and housing stability services to residents in the local area who qualify for the assistance as provided in the laws regulations and other current guidance provided by the U. S. Department of Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance 1 (ERA 1) program; and

WHEREAS, the total amount awarded to the organizations will be up to \$10,711,312.20 and cover expenses starting January 1, 2021; and

WHEREAS, at least 60% of the funding will support households with an AMI at 50% or below and/or have a member of the household who has been unemployed for 90 days; up to 40% of the funding can be used for households with an AMI at 80% or below; and 10% of the funding will be utilized for Administrative costs; and

WHEREAS, it is expected that the guidance from the U.S. Department of Treasury will be modified while this contract is in effect and it is requested that the Director of Development be given the authority to modify the terms and conditions of the grant agreement without seeking additional Council Approval in order to align with the most current version of the laws, regulations, and guidance; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in much needed assistance when low income households have seen significant decreases in personal income due to COVID-19 and the public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, expenditure of ERA funding to provide low income households with financial assistance is necessary to address reduced income needed to pay rent and utility expenses 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 to enter into agreements with selected organizations to provide rental and utility assistance and housing stability services to residents in the local area and address the impacts of the COVID-19 health emergency, all for the preservation of the public health, peace, property, safety and welfare; and **NOW THEREFORE**,

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

SECTION 1: That the Director of the Department of Development is hereby authorized to enter into multiple subrecipient agreements with to-be-determined organizations to provide rental and utility assistance and housing stability services to residents in the local area who qualify for the assistance as provided in the laws regulations and other current guidance provided by the U. S. Department of Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance 1 (ERA 1) program in an amount up to \$10,711,312.20; and authorized to make payment of expenses starting January 1, 2021; and further authorized to modify the scope of services and/or terms and conditions of the subrecipient agreements as needed without seeking further City Council approval.

SECTION 2: That the expenditure of \$10,711,312.20 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 03 (Services) per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 3: 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 4: 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 legislation.

SECTION 5: That for reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.