



Legislation Text

File #: 1121-2021, **Version:** 1

BACKGROUND

In the Fall of 2019, President Pro Tempore Elizabeth Brown, the Mayor's Office, and the Columbus Women's Commission were awarded a CityStart grant from Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund (CFE Fund) supporting the creation of a Financial Empowerment Roadmap to help women and families achieve financial security. Prior to the pandemic, one in four women were financially insecure, with women of color facing disproportionate financial challenges. With the knowledge that an extreme economic shock such as a global health crisis could have an outsized impact on families already experiencing financial insecurity, CFE Fund developed a new funding opportunity for existing grantees shortly after the pandemic struck. The City of Columbus applied successfully for \$80,000 to launch the Financial Navigator program to support families' increased need for resource navigation during the health crisis.

The City successfully launched the Financial Navigator program in the Fall of 2020 with the partnership of the Legal Aid Society of Columbus and HandsOn Central Ohio, and is now seeking to continue the program through at least the end of the year. The Financial Navigator program enables residents to seek the help of trained financial navigator staff to understand and connect to new and existing federal, state, and local resources intended to support them through financial struggles. With the funding support authorized by this ordinance, the Legal Aid Society of Columbus will support the administration of the Financial Navigator program and direct service to residents for resource navigation.

In addition, the Legal Aid Society of Columbus will help with coordination for the City's effort to launch its second initiative from the Financial Empowerment Roadmap, this time dedicated to making investments in financial counseling as a public service. In this role, the Legal Aid Society of Columbus will, among other activities, support partner and public engagement for the City's planning efforts to launch this new public service.

This legislation authorizes the Office of the Mayor to enter into a service contract with Legal Aid Society of Columbus for the Financial Navigator Program and planning for financial counseling Services.

Emergency action is in order to allow Legal Aid Society of Columbus to begin providing this public service as soon as possible.

FISCAL IMPACT: Funding is available in the General Fund, Jobs Growth subfund.

CONTRACT COMPLIANCE: the vendor number is 006124 and expires 4/27/2022.

To authorize the Office of the Mayor to enter into a not for profit services contract with Legal Aid Society of Columbus for the purpose of providing financial empowerment support to residents in an amount up to \$57,500.00; to authorize the appropriation of and expenditure of up to \$57,500.00 from the General Fund, Jobs Growth subfund; and to declare an emergency. (\$57,500.00)

WHEREAS, the success and vitality of Columbus as a whole is inexorably linked to the financial security of families; and

WHEREAS, in the Fall of 2019, President Pro Tempore Elizabeth Brown, the Mayor, and the Columbus Women's Commission launched a partnership to create a Financial Empowerment Roadmap to support the financial security of women and families; and

WHEREAS, the Financial Navigator program represents the first initiative stemming from the Financial Empowerment Roadmap and endeavors to connect residents to trained financial navigator staff to support them through financial struggles; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor's Office lacks the necessary personnel and expertise in financial empowerment programs and services to administer the Program and it is desirable that the funds be administered by a nonprofit partner with greater expertise; and

WHEREAS, the Legal Aid Society of Columbus is an Ohio nonprofit organization that works to improve the lives of low income residents and senior citizens of Columbus and Central Ohio by providing civil legal aid and advocacy to help people rise out of poverty; and

WHEREAS, as a part of the Financial Navigator program, the Legal Aid Society of Columbus has been supporting program administration and providing direct services to residents, and they will continue this work throughout the remainder of 2021 through the funding support authorized by this ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Legal Aid Society of Columbus will also support the City's effort to launch its second initiative from the Financial Empowerment Roadmap, for which the City will be making investments in financial counseling as a public service in the future; and

WHEREAS, this contract is awarded pursuant to the provisions of City Code Chapter 329 relating to not for profit services; and

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in that it is immediately necessary to authorize a contract to avoid any delay in initiating this critical public service; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

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

SECTION 1. That from the unappropriated monies and from all monies estimated to come into said fund from any and all sources and unappropriated for any other purpose during the fiscal year ended December 31, 2021, the sum of \$57,500.00 is appropriated in Fund 1000 (General Fund), Subfund 100015, Dept-Div 40-01, in object class 03 (Services) per the account codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 2. That the Office of the Mayor is hereby authorized to enter into a not for profit services contract with Legal Aid Society of Columbus for the purpose of providing financial empowerment support to residents.

SECTION 3. That this contract is awarded in accordance with the relevant provisions of Columbus City Code Chapter 329 relating to awarding not-for-profit service contracts exceeding fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00).

SECTION 4. 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 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. 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 passage and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.

