



Legislation Text

File #: 3089-2023, Version: 1

This ordinance authorizes granting American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery funds, totaling \$15,705,443.00 to the Franklin County Educational Service Center to support the program goals of the Franklin County Digital Action Agenda and take actionable steps to make meaningful progress toward closing the digital divide.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Columbus worked with the Columbus Metropolitan Library, the Columbus Foundation, Jewish Family Services, YWCA as well as SMRT Columbus and other non-profit organizations on making broadband accessible and affordable. An AECOM study done in 2020 provided that over 77,000 residents of Franklin County do not have access to affordable high-speed internet. Reliable internet should be as ubiquitous and affordable as water and electricity. In addition to affordable, high-speed internet access, residents should have access to quality devices with screens large enough to do real work, and skills training to do what they want and need to do online.

This partnership and the study started a comprehensive examination of digital equity in our community and produced the Franklin County Digital Equity Action Agenda which identifies the following program goals: Support the Franklin County Digital Equity Coalition, create a dedicated program office, provide devices and digital skills training for 9,600 households, create a digital community anchor force and digital coaches, provide continued outreach and adoption efforts for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), explore and seek opportunities to establish partnerships to extend city fiber for fiber connectivity opportunity, fund the assessment of ongoing research and digital equity and inclusion outcomes to measure and demonstrate value based outcomes for program activities and create a program library of shared resources content, curriculum and support that ensures high-quality services to program participants across multiple anchor partners.

Fiscal Impact

Funding is provided to the City of Columbus from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund passed by Congress on March 10, 2021, and signed into law on March 11, 2021.

Contract Compliance

Franklin County Educational Service Center of Central Ohio, Vendor no. 021589

To authorize the Director of the Department of Technology to enter into a Subrecipient Agreement - Not-for-Profit Service Contract with the Franklin County Educational Service Center; and to authorize the expenditure of up to \$15,705,443.00 from the Recovery Fund. (\$15,705,443.00)

WHEREAS, the City of Columbus recognizes that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many residents of the city were without access to the internet and continue to lack access to affordable broadband options; and

WHEREAS, The Mayor and City Council are committed to ensuring that these residents are afforded opportunities to reliable high-speed internet; and

WHEREAS, The Mayor shares a vision with the Digital Equity Coalition that all of our residents should have the tools and resources that they need to succeed; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Technology is allocating up to \$15,705,443.00 in American Rescue Plan Act Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund moneys to the to enter into a three-year contract, the term of which begins on the date of a confirmed purchase order by the City Auditor's Office; and

WHEREAS, funds for the above-described allocation are available within the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund to address the above-mentioned needs; and

WHEREAS, such expenditure of funds has not been previously accounted for within the 2023 Budget; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to authorize the Department of Technology to enter into a Subrecipient Agreement - Not-for-Profit Service Contract with the Franklin County Educational Service Center for the preservation of the public health, peace, property and safety; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

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

SECTION 1: That the Director of the Department of Technology is hereby authorized to enter into a Subrecipient Agreement - Not-for-Profit Service Contract with the Franklin County Educational Service Center for opportunities for a three-year term, to begin on the date of a confirmed purchase order by the City Auditor's Office.

SECTION 2: That the expenditure of up to \$15,705,443.00 or so much thereof as may be needed is hereby authorized in the attachment to this ordinance. (See 3089-2023EXP)

SECTION 3: 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 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 this agreement is awarded pursuant to the relevant provisions of Chapter 329 of City Code relating to the process for awarding not-for-profit service agreements.

SECTION 6: That this ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.