



Legislation Text

File #: 2300-2020, **Version:** 1

BACKGROUND: This ordinance is necessary to authorize the Director of the Department of Education to enter into contract with I Know I Can to provide funding to organizations operating as Learning Extension Centers in the City of Columbus. Because of the pandemic, urgent action is needed to assist students to keep them engaged in learning despite school building closures, and for an amount not to exceed \$1,620,956.20.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Columbus City Schools, like so many districts across the country, began the 2020-2021 academic year with a fully remote learning model for grades K-12. The District decided to phase-in a blended learning model beginning in mid-October.

This decision has been crucial for the safety and wellness of students and their families, as well as for teachers, bus drivers, administrators, food service workers, support staff, and custodians. However, many challenges and obstacles will, and have, prevented our students from learning, growing and developing to their full potential under these conditions.

Students need more than classroom instruction to succeed. In their schools, they receive critical support services, such as mentoring, college counseling and advising, tutoring, healthcare, access to nutritious food, and services that support their physical and social-emotional health and development. Without in-person learning, students do not have access to these crucial programs.

And though equipped with computers and hotspots, funded by, among others, City of Columbus CARES funds, students and families could have difficulties in engaging in their education virtually.

But, Columbus is America's Opportunity City, and in Columbus, every child has an opportunity to succeed. In Columbus, a group of people and organizations led by I Know I Can came together to strategize ways to keep students supported and engaged in learning despite school building closures. Together, this group developed learning extension centers around the community where students, in grades K-12, can "drop in" to access reliable internet, academic assistance, meals, and wraparound services that would have been available to them in a traditional school setting. It is in the City's best interests to waive competitive bidding to enter into this contract.

FISCAL IMPACT: This ordinance authorizes an expenditure of up to \$1,620,956.20 from funding provided to the City of Columbus from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act supplemental Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) funds through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

EMERGENCY DESIGNATION: Emergency action is requested to allow the financial transaction to be posted in the city's accounting system as soon as possible and to ensure immediate funding can be provided to Learning Extension Centers via I Know I Can.

To authorize the Director of Finance to accept a grant from the U.S. Department of HUD for the CDBG CV supplemental grant program; to authorize the Director of Education to enter into a contract with I Know I Can to provide funding to organizations operating as Learning Extension Centers; to waive the competitive bidding provisions of the Columbus City Codes; to authorize the appropriation of \$1,620,956.20 from the unappropriated balance of the CDBG CV Fund; to authorize the expenditure of up to \$1,620,956.20 from the CDBG CV Fund; and to declare an emergency. (\$1,620,956.20)

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused schools to close and eliminated in-person learning; and

WHEREAS, children who are learning remotely due to the global pandemic do not have ready access to critical support services and programs; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Ginther's vision for Columbus, America's Opportunity City, is that every child has an opportunity to succeed; and

WHEREAS, in America's Opportunity City, the community came together to develop Learning Extension Centers, places around the community where students can access reliable internet, academic assistance, meals, and wraparound services that would have been available to them in a traditional school setting; and

WHEREAS, urgent action is needed to assist students; and

WHEREAS, the City of Columbus, Department of Finance, has received grant funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus supplemental grant program to prevent, respond, and prepare for the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to accept and appropriate these funds to support the CDBG CV program; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to enter into contract with I Know I Can to provide funding to Learning Education Centers and in the City's best interest to waive the competitive bidding provisions of City Code to enter into this contract; and

WHEREAS, the expenditure of CDBG CV funding to support Learning Extension Center is necessary to address the lack of supports for children while they are not in school due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, such expenditure of funds has not been previously accounted for in the 2020 Budget; and

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the Department of Education in that it is immediately necessary to authorize the Director to enter into a contract with I Know I Can to provide crucial support to Learning Extension Centers as soon as possible to ensure immediate funding can be provided, all for the preservation of public health, peace, property, and safety; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

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

SECTION 1. Because of the pandemic, urgent action is needed to assist students.

SECTION 2. That the Department of Finance is authorized to accept a grant award from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus program.

SECTION 3. That the Director of Education is hereby authorized to enter into a contract with I Know I Can to support Learning Extension Centers in the City of Columbus.

SECTION 4. That this Council finds it is in the best interest of the City of Columbus to waive the competitive bidding provisions of the Columbus City Codes, Chapter 329, to enter into this contract.

SECTION 5. That from the monies in the fund known as the Community Development Block Grants Fund, Fund No. 2248, and from all monies estimated to come into said fund from any and all sources during the 12 months ending December 31, 2020 the sum of \$1,620,956.20 is hereby appropriated to the Education Department, Department No. 42, Division No. 4201, per the attached accounting codes.

SECTION 6. That the monies appropriated in the foregoing Section 4 shall be paid upon the order of the Director of the Department of Education, and that no order shall be drawn or money paid except by voucher, the form of which shall be approved by the City Auditor.

SECTION 7. That at the end of the grant period, any repayment of unencumbered balances required by the grantor is hereby authorized and any unused city match monies may be transferred back to the city fund from which they originated in accordance with all applicable grant agreements.

SECTION 8. To pay the cost of the contract, the expenditure of up to \$1,620,956.20 is hereby authorized from the CDBG CV fund, Fund 2248, Subfund 224850, per the attached accounting codes.

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 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 11. 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 10 days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.