



Legislation Text

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This legislation authorizes the Director of the Department of Development to enter into a grant agreement with the Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority (FCCFA) in an amount up to \$500,000.00 for the purpose of providing funding for barriers, PPEs, training, and crowd control devices and to upgrade public seating to promote physical distancing at the Greater Columbus Convention Center (GCCC).

The Greater Columbus Convention Center is one of the busiest convention centers in North America. Annually, visitors make 43 million trips to Greater Columbus for conventions, trade shows, sporting events and leisure visits, spending \$7.6 billion and supporting 78,600 jobs. Bed tax collections as a result of these visits reached an all-time high of \$49.7 million in 2019.

The live events industry came to a standstill locally with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. According to Tourism Economics, the Columbus MSA has lost 47,000+ jobs through Q2 2020 in the leisure and hospitality sector. This specifically includes over 200+ jobs at the Greater Columbus Convention Center alone. 177 groups scheduled to meet in Columbus in 2020 have canceled, representing 246,722 total hotel room nights and an estimated direct visitor spend of \$207 million.

The investment in PPEs, training, barriers, crowd control devices, and upgrades to public seating areas is part of a larger effort by the GCCC to provide a space where live events can be held and done so safely and comfortably, both during and after the pandemic ends. The reopening of the travel economy will help lead the region back to recovery.

These services provided by Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority cannot be provided by existing city employees because these services are beyond the City's current staffing capacity to provide.

Emergency legislation is requested in order to encumber funds in a timely manner so the FCCFA can expend the funds before the end of the year.

Contract Compliance: the vendor number is 004912 and contract compliance is pending.

Fiscal Impact: Funding is provided to the City of Columbus from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act passed by Congress and signed into law March 27, 2020, and available in the Department of Development's CARES Act budget (fund 2207, subfund 220703).

To authorize the Director of Development to execute a grant agreement with Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority in an amount up to \$500,000.00 for the purpose of providing funding for PPEs, training, barriers, crowd control devices, and upgrades to public seating areas at the Greater Columbus Convention Center; to authorize an expenditure up to \$500,000.00 from the CARES Act Fund; to authorize the payment of expenses starting March 1, 2020; and to declare an emergency. (\$500,000.00)

WHEREAS, the Greater Columbus Convention Center is one of the busiest convention centers in North America; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a significant reduction in live events, lay offs of GCCC staff, and reduction of tax revenue to the city; and

WHEREAS, expenditures of CARES Act funding to assist with investment in PPEs, training, barriers, crowd control

devices, and upgrades to public seating areas is part of a larger effort by the GCCC to provide a space where live events can be held and done so safely and comfortably, both during and after the pandemic ends, is necessary to address the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, such expenditures of funds has not been previously accounted for the 2020 budget; and

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the Department of Development in that it is immediately necessary to enter into grant agreement in order to encumber funds in a timely manner so the FCCFA can expend the funds before the end of the year, such immediate action being necessary 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 Development is authorized to enter into a grant agreement with Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority to provide investment in PPEs, training, barriers, crowd control devices, and upgrades to public seating areas at the Greater Columbus Convention Center beginning on March 1, 2020, and ending November 30, 2020 in an amount up to \$500,000.00.

SECTION 2. That the agency identified in Section 1 seeking financial assistance to address an emergency economic need is awarded pursuant to Columbus City Codes, 1959 Section 329.29 and 329.30.

SECTION 3. That for the purpose as stated in Section 1, the expenditure of \$500,000.00 or so much thereof as may be necessary is hereby authorized in fund 2207, subfund 220703 (CARES Act Fund), Dept. 44-02 (Economic Development), in Object Class 03 (Services) per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

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