



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 0165-2021, **Version:** 1

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**Background:** Columbus City Council, through the office of Councilmember Rob Dorans, has been awarded an additional \$500,000 grant from The Ohio State University, in partnership with the Alliance for the American Dream, in support of Columbus City Council's effort to simplify the record sealing application process and expand access to legal support services for Columbus residents with a criminal record. A \$50,000 grant award (Ordinance 1484-2020), and \$25,000 grant award (Ordinance 3294-2019) were previously accepted, bringing the total grant award from The Ohio State University, in partnership with the Alliance for the American Dream, to \$575,000.

The \$500,000.00 grant award is made available through December 31, 2022. The funds will be used to develop the Opportunity Port platform based on the project presented by Opportunity Port in response to the Second Community Challenge issued by The Ohio State University, in partnership with the Alliance for the American Dream. These funds will be used exclusively for the charitable and educational purpose of developing the project and will be allocated to support legitimate project costs, including the expenses associated with the identification and convening of collaborative partners, co-development of actionable ideas or policies addressing Alliance for the American Dream goals, vetting ideas with key stakeholders/subject matter experts, and developing, testing, and evaluating the Opportunity Port platform.

Smart Columbus, LLC will serve as the administrator for this grant. A waiver of competitive bidding is requested, as Smart Columbus, LLC has been integrally involved in the development process up to this point. It is in the city's best interest and it would be manifestly impractical to bid for administration given the timeline required for expenditure and scope of the project presented by Opportunity Port.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** An additional grant award of \$500,000.00 from The Ohio State University, in partnership with the Alliance for the American Dream, is being awarded to Columbus City Council, through the office of Councilmember Rob Dorans. An acceptance and appropriation of said grant is required. Should expenses post to the grant that are not reimbursed, a transfer of funding from another source will be necessary.

This ordinance is submitted as an emergency so as to allow the financial transaction to be posted in the city's accounting system as soon as possible. Up to date financial posting promotes accurate accounting and financial management.

To authorize and direct Columbus City Council to accept a \$500,000.00 grant from The Ohio State University Alliance for the American Dream, a collaboration with Schmidt Futures; to authorize the appropriation of up to \$500,000.00 from the unappropriated balance of the general government grants fund; to authorize the expenditure of \$235,750.00; to waive the competitive bidding provisions of City Code; to authorize Columbus City Council to enter into contract with Smart Columbus, LLC; and to declare an emergency. (\$235,750.00)

**WHEREAS,** the existence of criminal records hinders the equitable growth and success of Columbus as a whole; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Ohio Justice and Policy Center, 1.3 million Ohio jobs are either completely or partially off limits to Ohioans with previous criminal convictions; and

**WHEREAS**, Ohio Revised Code 2953.32 “Sealing of conviction record or bail forfeiture record,” allows eligible offenders to apply to the sentencing court if convicted in this state, or to a court of common pleas if convicted in another state or in a federal court, for the sealing of the record of the case that pertains to the conviction; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, approximately 1 in 3 American adults has a criminal record; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the same study, among all individuals with criminal records, communities of color are most affected by incarceration and most disadvantaged by their criminal histories when seeking future employment; and

**WHEREAS**, the goal of this grant is to fully develop the Opportunity Port project, including the expenses associated with the identification and convening of collaborative partners, co-development of actionable ideas or policies addressing Alliance for the American Dream goals, vetting ideas with key stakeholders/subject matter experts, and developing, testing, and evaluating the Opportunity Port platform; and

**WHEREAS**, Alliance for the American Dream is a network of communities, each anchored by a public research university, that provides access to capital and access to markets for new ideas to support distressed communities locally; and

**WHEREAS**, The Ohio State University, in partnership with the Alliance for the American Dream, aims to generate innovative ideas to increase economic opportunities for local families; and

**WHEREAS**, \$500,000.00 in grant funds have been made available through The Ohio State University in partnership with the Alliance for the American Dream, in support of City Council’s effort to simplify the record sealing application process and expand access to legal support services for Columbus residents with a criminal record for a period through December 31, 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, it is in the City's best interest to waive the competitive bidding provisions of City Code to allow City Council to contract with Smart Columbus, LLC, who will serve as the administrator for this grant. Smart Columbus, LLC has been integrally involved in the grant process up to this point, and it would be manifestly impractical to bid for administration given the timeline required for expenditure; and

**WHEREAS**, it is necessary to accept and appropriate these funds from The Ohio State University, in partnership with the Alliance for the American Dream; and

**WHEREAS**, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of City Council in that it is immediately necessary to accept these grant funds from The Ohio State University, in partnership with the Alliance for the American Dream, to appropriate these funds to Columbus City Council, to authorize a contract with Smart Columbus, LLC, and approve expenditure, all for the immediate preservation of the public health, peace, property, safety and welfare; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

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

**SECTION 1.** That Columbus City Council is hereby authorized and directed to accept a grant award of \$500,000.00 from The Ohio State University Alliance for the American Dream, a collaboration with Schmidt Futures, in support of City Council's effort to simplify the record sealing application process and expand access to legal support services for Columbus residents with a criminal record for a period through December 31, 2022.

**SECTION 2.** That from the unappropriated monies in the general government grants fund, Fund No. 2220, and from all monies estimated to come into said fund from any and all sources during the grant period, the sum of \$500,000.00 is hereby appropriated upon receipt of an executed grant agreement in Fund No, 2220, Dept-Div 20-01, Grant G202000, Object Class 03 to Columbus City Council, per the attachment to this ordinance.

**SECTION 3.** That this Council finds it is in the City's best interest to waive the competitive bidding provisions of City Code to enter into contract with Smart Columbus, LLC, to serve as administrator of the grant, with the City of Columbus serving as the fiscal agent.

**SECTION 4.** That in regards to the action authorized in Section 3 of this ordinance, the expenditure of \$235,750.00, or so much thereof as is necessary, is hereby authorized per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

**SECTION 5.** 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 6.** That the funds necessary to carry out the purpose of this ordinance are hereby deemed appropriated upon receipt of a signed agreement between the parties, and the City Auditor shall establish such accounting codes as necessary.

**SECTION 7.** That for 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 Columbus City Council, or ten days after passage if Columbus City Council neither approves nor vetoes the same.