



Legislation Text

File #: 1801-2022, **Version:** 1

BACKGROUND: This legislation authorizes the Director of Development to enter into a grant agreement with the Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority (FCCFA) in an amount up to \$900,000.00 using federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to provide enhanced health and safety improvements at the Greater Columbus Convention Center with the installation and improvement of ventilation systems in the public facility. FCCFA will be a “beneficiary” of ARPA funds.

Ordinance 1201-2021 authorized the City of Columbus to accept and appropriate approximately \$187,030,138.00 of federal ARPA funds as signed into law by the President of the United States on March 11, 2021.

The Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority (FCCFA) operates the Greater Columbus Convention Center, a facility that is closely linked to the region’s travel and tourism industry and which is a key component of the City’s economic recovery. 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.

FCCFA’s proposed investment in indoor air quality improvements are required as part of a comprehensive response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The improvements will enhance indoor air quality throughout the Greater Columbus Convention Center which will protect visitors’ health and safety while exceeding guidelines mandated or recommended by the CDC and local health officials.

Airborne transmission was a key factor in SARS-CoV-2 spread. The Greater Columbus Convention Center has taken significant initial steps to protect visitors and guests by upgrading HVAC filters and providing a clean indoor environment. However, additional investment in air-handling systems and technologies will boost the pace of the convention center’s recovery, protect against the spread of airborne viruses and pathogens, and assure visitors and guests that the Greater Columbus Convention Center is a safe and health venue for meetings, conventions, trade shows, and sporting events.

Emergency action is requested to address the impacts of the COVID-19 health emergency.

FISCAL IMPACT: Funding is provided to the City of Columbus from the American Rescue Plan Act passed by Congress and signed into law March 11, 2021.

To authorize the Director of Development to enter into a grant agreement with the Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority in an amount up to \$900,000.00 using federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, to provide enhanced health and safety improvements at the Greater Columbus Convention Center; to modify the terms and conditions of the grant agreement as needed without seeking further City Council approval in order to align with the most current version of ARPA; to authorize the expenditure of up to \$900,000.00 of ARPA funds; and to declare an emergency. (\$900,000.00)

WHEREAS, the Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority (FCCFA) operates the Greater Columbus Convention Center (GCCC), one of busiest convention centers in North America; and

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

WHEREAS, investment in indoor air quality improvements are required as part of a comprehensive response to the COVID-19 pandemic and are necessary to address the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, the proposed improvements are designed to enhance visitors' health and safety while exceeding guidelines mandated or recommended by the CDC and local health officials; and

WHEREAS, such expenditure of funds has not been previously accounted for in the 2022 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 a grant agreement in order to encumber funds in a timely manner so the FCCFA can expend funds before the end of the grant period, 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 the Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority in an amount up to \$900,000.00 using federal American Rescue Plan Act funds to provide enhanced health and safety improvements at the Greater Columbus Convention Center and to modify the terms and conditions of the grant agreement as needed without seeking further City Council approval in order to align with the most current version of the federal laws, regulations, and guidance.

SECTION 2. That for the purpose stated in Section 1, the expenditure of \$900,000.00 or so much thereof as may be needed is hereby authorized in Fund 2209 (ARPA), Dept-Div 44-02 (Economic Development), in object class 03 (Services) per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

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 ordinance.

SECTION 5. 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 passage and approval by the Mayor or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.