

RESOLUTION NO. 20210325-066

WHEREAS, the need to address the negative impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic persists one year after the initial COVID-19 case was reported in Austin, Texas on March 13, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the success of post-pandemic recovery greatly depends on measures pursued by local government in partnership with community organizations; and

WHEREAS, the goal of policy should be to protect public health while addressing the inequitable impacts of the virus across the city, including economic hardship; and

WHEREAS, low-income, minority and marginalized communities have historically faced barriers to accessing health resources, which is now witnessed through COVID-19 vaccination distribution efforts; and

WHEREAS, it is critical to expeditiously and strategically maximize the benefits of federal funds available under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster assistance in the Austin/Travis County area, in addition to other available grant opportunities;

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to offer educational outreach to employers, with a targeted focus on those with vulnerable workforces and frontline personnel, to encourage vaccine support programs that increase access to vaccines by employees and grant time-off to those wishing to secure them.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to identify existing funding, funds the City receives under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, or funding available through FEMA reimbursement, able and available to be used to address the continued impact of COVID-19, consistent with other Council direction, by:

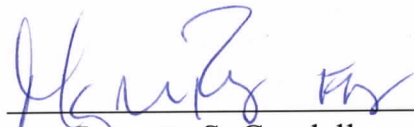
1. Prioritizing a mobile testing program and a mobile vaccine program for seniors, homebound individuals, and minority, low-income communities living in multi-generational settings;
2. Increasing agriculture and nutrition programs for individuals living in areas with limited access to grocery stores. This shall include a staff analysis determining various contracting mechanisms and options to achieve emergency food distribution to those negatively impacted by COVID-19, which could also be activated during a natural disaster;
3. Continuing support for small business assistance, including specific programs for restaurants and live music venues, as well as creating new grants for live music venues, art galleries, and cultural programming venues; and
4. Developing mental health services to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and expanding partnerships with existing partners and contractors to provide mental health services. This shall also include an accessible online platform serving to connect the public to local mental health care services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to report back to Council no later than April 16, 2021 regarding identified funding and methods for implementing or continuing the listed programs related to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the status of educational efforts with targeted employers.

ADOPTED: March 25, 2021

ATTEST:


Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk