



### Council Question and Answer

Related To

Item #2

Meeting Date

May 6, 2021

#### Additional Answer Information

Approve an ordinance to accept \$97,900,000 in funds from the Federal government, United States Department of Treasury, American Rescue Plan; and amending the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Financial Services Department Operating Budget Special Revenue Fund (Ordinance No. 20200812-001) to appropriate \$44,800,000 for public health expenses related to the Coronavirus disease outbreak and recovery efforts and for community navigators to support the community in accessing funding available through the American Rescue Plan.

**QUESTION/ANSWER:** Council Member Fuentes' Office

1) Please provide details regarding the status of the City's COVID response programs funded by CARES, the efficacy of those programs, and the plan to now extend any programming through the use of ARP funds specifically within the APH allocation.

The APH expense projections were \$57m for COVID operations January-September 2021, with the exception of ProLodge which was budgeted through April 2021. The \$44.8m is the difference once FEMA reimbursable items are removed from APH and HSEM budget needs.

The below includes operations through September 2021, unless otherwise noted.

**COVID testing operations (\$21.6)** including technology for the public portal (\$4m), contracts for the operation of the drive thru testing location, home based testing and facility based testing (\$6.3), staffing agencies for community testing sites (\$175k), medical supplies (\$1m) and lab expense (\$9.9m);

**Protection of Vulnerable Populations (\$1.8m)** for the operation of hygiene stations, ProLodge housekeeping and guest services staffing;

**Non-congregate shelters (\$5.7m)** for all ProLodge operations including leases, security, fencing rental, laundry, food, staffing, taxi vouchers, sanitization/cleaning, utilities and pest control for City owned properties through April 2021;

**Food Assistance (\$6.4m)** EAT and Caregiver meals

**Public Health and Safety Measures (\$13.9M)** includes temporary staffing related to epidemiology & public health preparedness (approximately \$6M) and contractual/commodity costs of \$6.7M which include temporary staffing agencies for testing sites, marketing media & promotional items and PPE distribution for the public and childcare providers.

**Miscellaneous category (\$7.4M)** includes temporary staffing related to administrative functions, social services, and health equity & community engagement (\$6.4M). The remaining \$1.0 million is related to contractual and commodity costs that support these functions such as computer and office equipment for temporary staff roles, facility modification and retrofitting to reduce exposure and vehicle and storage rental.

#### Program Efficacy

Austin/Travis County actions in response to COVID-19 has resulted in the lowest confirmed cases among Texas metropolitan areas at 82,526, significantly less than Harris (393,183), Dallas (257,895), Tarrant (216,096), Bexar (180,885) and El Paso (134,441) counties. Similarly, Travis County has experienced significantly fewer deaths due to

COVID-19 with 998 compared to other Texas metro counties such as Harris (6,230), Dallas (3,988), Bexar (3,489), Tarrant (3,022) and El Paso (2,663). These results speak to the effectiveness of the COVID-19 response overall in regards to testing availability, mitigation measure implementation and vaccination efforts.

APH and the EOC have put several initiatives in place to address the pandemic in targeted populations. These include establishing a Social Services Branch of the Emergency Operations structure to support a focused strategy to reduce disparities related to COVID-19. The SS Branch created task forces to inform the response for People Experiencing Homelessness, Seniors, Child care/Schools, Asian Pacific Islanders, African Americans, and Hispanic/LatinX communities. The EOC structure also included Incident Management Teams (IMT) focused on needs of Long-Term Care facilities.

Austin Public Health has also worked extensively with community-based organizations on the testing and vaccination operations. For testing, APH partnered with Austin Area Urban League and Central Texas Allied Health Institute (CTAHI) to provide culturally congruent community-based testing at the Lark Center. This agreement also provided workforce development opportunities for the CTAHI students to achieve certifications and internship credits toward their graduation and supporting a culturally congruent workforce to support COVID operations.

APH awarded seven non-profit providers with demonstrated experience with evidence-based interventions to shape and support outreach efforts to promote the COVID-19 vaccine to populations at a high risk of severe COVID-19 disease. As part of their outreach efforts, the organizations conducted community needs assessments to better understand the vaccine and barriers to getting the vaccine. Findings in the summary report were used to inform focused messaging campaigns and plan pop-up vaccine clinics.

- Austin Area Urban League
- Austin Asian Community Health Initiative
- Boys & Girls Club of the Austin Area
- Del Valle Community Coalition
- People for Change
- SAIVA
- Texas Folklife