
Sponsor: Finance

Meeting Date: 6/1/2021

Title: Authorization to Accept Various COVID-19 Grants

File Number: 2021-278

Background and Rationale:

On March 17, 2020, the County Board declared Ramsey County to be in a Local State of Emergency effective the 14th day of March 2020 due to COVID-19. The County Board also authorized the County Manager to approve purchases up to \$1 million until the County Manager, acting on the advice of the Director of Emergency Management and Homeland Security and the Director of Public Health, notifies the Board Chair that the State of Emergency is no longer warranted. Since that time, Ramsey County has been actively responding to the needs within our community to address the effects of COVID-19.

This request seeks authority to accept \$53,446,701.50 of the total grant amount of \$106,893,403 million from the US Treasury Local Government American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The second installment will be sent to the County from Treasury in May 2022. As discussed at the April 20, 2021 Board Workshop, the ARPA funding must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and can be spent through December 31, 2026. This allows time for planning and investment in various tiers from immediate needs through bold investments that impact the systems and residents of Ramsey County. At this point, Finance is only requesting authority to accept the funds. RBAs for immediate needs, authorization to spend the funds and larger, longer term investments will come forward for consideration individually.

Finance is also seeking authority to accept three additional grants in Public Health related to COVID-19 response and vaccines. The first is for \$462,662 from the Minnesota Department of Health COVID-19 Vaccine Grant Award through Local Public Health and is for the time period of February 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021. The second is for \$2,560,870 for vaccine implementation through the Minnesota Department of Health and is for the time period of April 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021. These funds support outreach and education, translation services, staff, supplies, equipment, and partnerships with community agencies. The final Public Health grant is for \$351,032 in funding for vaccine distribution from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Finally, Finance is seeking authority to accept the Emergency Rental Assistance grant from the US Treasury. The ARPA bill included a second allocation of Emergency Rental Assistance funding, referred to as ERA2. This appropriation funds financial assistance for rent, utilities and related costs for low-income tenants experiencing housing instability due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ramsey County has been allocated \$7,580,175 million dollars through the federal ERA2 Program. The Housing Stability Department will administer the funds through a landlord assistance program and tenant-based program.

No ARPA funds will be authorized for spending until we return to the County Board for additional authority. This RBA seeks authority to enter into agreements and execute amendments to agreements for the two Minnesota Department of Health grants, the Federal Emergency Management Agency grant and the Emergency Rental Assistance grant, in accordance with the

County's procurement policies and procedures, provided sufficient funding is available.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:


1. Authorize the County Manager to accept \$53,446,701.50 from the US Treasury Local Government American Rescue Plan Act funds.
2. Authorize the County Manager to accept \$462,662 in COVID-19 response grant funds for vaccination implementation from the Minnesota Department of Health.
3. Authorize the County Manager to accept \$2,560,870 for vaccine grants from the Minnesota Department of Health.
4. Authorize the County Manager to accept \$351,032 for vaccine distribution from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
5. Authorize the County Manager to accept \$7,580,175 for Emergency Rental Assistance from the US Department of Treasury.
6. Authorize the County Manager to enter into agreements and execute amendments to agreements for the two Minnesota Department of Health grants, the Federal Emergency Management Agency grant and the Emergency Rental Assistance grant, in accordance with the County's procurement policies and procedures, provided sufficient funding is available.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Reinhardt, seconded by Commissioner MatasCastillo.

Motion passed.

Aye: - 6: Frethem, MatasCastillo, McDonough, McGuire, Ortega, and Reinhardt

Absent: - 1: Carter

By: 

Abby Goldsmith, Interim Chief Clerk - County Board