



Agenda Item

City Council

Item #: 3.11.

7/13/2021

File #: 21-0339

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THRU: Rick Otto, City Manager

FROM: Bonnie Hagan, Assistant City Manager / Community Services Director

1. SUBJECT

Acceptance and appropriation of \$459,659 in American Recovery Act Program funding for Meal Gap Services.

2. SUMMARY

Staff is recommending the acceptance and appropriation of \$459,659 in American Recovery Act Program funding received through the County of Orange for expenses to implement a grocery store voucher program for seniors, persons with disabilities, and other individuals experiencing food insecurity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. Accept into the City's revenue budget \$459,659 in American Recovery Act Program Funding from the County of Orange, into revenue account 550.7011.45150.30182, Reimbursable Capital Projects - Federal Grant Revenue.
2. Authorize the appropriation of \$22,983 to Reimbursable Capital Projects expenditure accounts 550.7011.56002.30182, Staff Time for CIP and \$436,676 to 550.7011.56510.30182, CIP Other Capital Outlay.
3. Authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to negotiate and execute all necessary documents to implement the Meal Gap Program.

4. FISCAL IMPACT

The total appropriations for this program are funded by the revenue received from the American Recovery Act Program distributed by the County of Orange.

5. STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Goal 1: Provide for a safe community

- e: Develop and implement effective community outreach services and programs to promote public safety.

Goal 3: Enhance and promote quality of life in the community

- e: Develop and strengthen collaborative partnerships to enhance and promote quality of life programs, projects, and services.

6. DISCUSSION AND BACKGROUND

Background

In June 2020, the City received \$229,825 through Orange County Supervisor, Don Wagner via the Coronavirus Relief Fund for the Senior Meal Gap program (SMGP). Using a voucher program, over 350 Orange seniors received \$500 in vouchers to local restaurants for delivered meals and grocery stores. The Orange Senior Center/Orange Elderly Service (OES) was also able to expand its Meals on Wheels (MOW) program to provide meals on the weekends for its MOW participants.

On May 25, 2021 Supervisor Wagner's Office notified the City that the Board of Supervisors approved \$10 million (\$2 million per District) from the American Recovery Act Program funding for an expanded food/meal gap program for seniors, persons with disabilities, and other individuals experiencing food insecurities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Supervisor Wagner is once again remitting his District 3 funds directly to the cities in his District, including the City of Orange. The City's share of these funds is \$459,659 and are required to be used by November 30, 2021.

2021 Meal Gap Program

Following the grant guidelines, staff is proposing to implement a program similar to the first round of funding by distributing grocery store vouchers to Orange residents who are experiencing food insecurities. The City will utilize its partnership with OES and the Friendly Center (FC) to identify Orange seniors, persons with disabilities, and other individuals who are experiencing food insecurities as a result of the pandemic. OES will offer the voucher program to Senior Center participants who are experiencing food insecurities. This includes seniors participating in the congregate meal program, currently operating as a "Grab N Go" program, and seniors who were asked to be put on a waitlist after last year's SMGP ended. The City received feedback through OES that the MOW participants felt the weekend food was too much. If an individual MOW participant needs additional food, they can apply for the individual senior voucher program and OES will assist. The FC will offer the voucher program to individuals and families who meet the criteria.

Program Outline

The new Meal Gap Program (MGP) will provide one, \$500 grocery store voucher to individuals/seniors in one household (1-2 people) and one, \$1,000 voucher to families (2+ people) in one household. Program applicants will be required to fill out an application, which includes their address and a section to self-verify the individual or family is experiencing food insecurities as a result of the pandemic. OES and the FC will begin accepting program applications in July. Applications of recipients will then be turned into the City for tracking and reporting.

The City will purchase grocery store vouchers from Orange grocery stores identified by both OES and the FC as stores regularly patronized by their participants. The City will then distribute the vouchers to OES and FC who in turn will distribute the vouchers to the approved participants. FC staff have shared that summer is the hardest time for their families to secure food, as children are home from school. Both OES and the FC hope to distribute the vouchers before the end of summer.

Staff anticipates that the new MGP will serve approximately 300 families and over 260 seniors. Five percent of the funds (\$22,983) are being allocated to staff time to administer the program and support the cost of supplies. The City is required to provide the County with invoices and receipts within 14 working days of expending the full amount, submit a progress report mid-August, and submit a final report mid-December. Staff is requesting authorization for the City Manager, or his designee, to negotiate and execute all necessary documents to implement the proposed Meal Gap Program. The

City would like to thank Supervisor Wagner for his tremendous support for Orange residents experiencing food insecurities during this time.

7. ATTACHMENTS

- Contract for Meal Gap Services