



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 20-392, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 7/15/2020

TITLE:

CARES Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) FY 21 Phase 1 Implementation Plan.

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Appropriate CARES CRF funding to support Phase I of the County's CARES CRF Implementation Plan

ITEM TYPE: Regular Action Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Richardson, Birch, Walker, Kamptner, DeLoria, Bessette, Allshouse, Shifflett, Johnson, Russell, Savides

PRESENTER (S): Lori Allshouse, Roger Johnson, Siri Russell, Phyllis Savides

LEGAL REVIEW: Yes

REVIEWED BY: Jeffrey B. Richardson

BACKGROUND: On June 1, 2020, the Commonwealth of Virginia provided an allocation of \$9,538,621 in federal CARES Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) monies to the County of Albemarle. The Board of Supervisors approved the County's CARES CRF Initial Implementation Plan on July 1, 2020. The funding is required to be used for qualifying expenses that:

- 1) are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease2019 (COVID-19);
- 2) were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020 (the date of enactment of the CARES Act); and
- 3) are incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020, and ends on December 30, 2020.

Guidance from the U.S. Treasury states that expenditures must be used for actions taken to respond to the public health emergency that may include expenditures incurred to allow the locality to respond directly to the emergency, such as by addressing medical or public health needs, as well as expenditures incurred to respond to second-order effects of the emergency, such as providing economic support to those suffering from employment or business interruptions due to COVID-19-related business closures.

The County's implementation plan, approved by the Board of Supervisors on July 1, supports the County's following Response Goals: 1) Reduce transmission to staff and public; 2) Protect people who are at higher risk; and 3) Maintain essential services, and that supports the County's following Reconstitution Goals: 1) Protect the health and safety of staff and residents; 2) Support all people and communities; and 3) Facilitate a safe transition to "normal" county operations and community economic recovery.

Five million dollars of the County's CARES CRF funding has been identified for priority programs/reimbursements in the areas of COVID-19-related Business support and Community and Human Services Emergency Relief and Resiliency programs.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Mission: To enhance the well-being and quality of life for all citizens through the provision of the highest level of public service consistent with the prudent use of public funds.

Human Services/Community: To support Food, Housing, and Financial Stability Goals.

Economic Prosperity: Foster an environment that stimulates diversified job creation, capital investments, and tax revenues that support community goals. Project ENABLE Goal 7 is to expand efforts to build the County's tourism sector. Project ENABLE Goal 3 contains strategies to engage in efforts to support issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.

DISCUSSION: Staff's recommendation is that Phase 1 of the CARES CRF Implementation Plan provide \$1.25 million in funding for a COVID-19 CARES CRF Business Grant program and \$1.25 million to support Community and Human Services CARE CRF Emergency COVID-19 Relief and Resiliency efforts.

CARES CRF Business Grant program: The forced closure of non-essential businesses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted small businesses in Albemarle County, particularly in the retail, restaurant, and travel-related sectors. Additionally, Federal data shows that women, minority, and veteran owned businesses need greater access to capital. While some small businesses were able to access loans under the federal Coronavirus, Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), many more small businesses are still in need of financial assistance. The purpose of the CARES Act Grant Program is to provide immediate financial resources to the small businesses that were most negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and are still in need of financial assistance.

A business grant program is the most efficient and expedient means of putting resources into the hands of the County's businesses swiftly. This type of program will help small businesses remain solvent until other resources or the ability to serve a larger number of customers becomes available.

The Albemarle County Economic Development Office reviewed Cares Relief Funding (CRF) activities across Virginia. Staff discovered that local municipalities across the Commonwealth are implementing CRF Business Grant programs to help existing businesses survive. The criteria and structure of Albemarle County's proposed grant program is based upon research of best practices of other COVID-19 related small business programs. Many other counties and cities in Virginia have established similar grant programs, including Loudoun, Fairfax, Culpepper, Fluvanna, Manassas, Arlington, and Alexandria, as well as the City of Charlottesville. Most often, these programs were tailored to fit their respective communities. After additional evaluation of Albemarle County's small business community, staff found objective and anecdotal data that the local hospitality industry was severely and negatively impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. As such, a cross departmental team reviewed the data and established a customized plan to ameliorate the impact of COVID-19 on any for-profit small business, while still favoring the hospitality industry, as well as women, minority, and veteran owned businesses. Details of this plan can be found in Attachment A.

CARES CRF Community and Human Services COVID-19 Emergency Relief and Resiliency efforts: The County's Community and Human Services Emergency Relief and Resiliency Team, which includes staff from the Department of Social Services, Office of Equity and Inclusion, Information Technology, Community Development/Housing, Communication and Public Engagement, and Fire/Rescue, have been developing a plan to provide community-oriented COVID-19 emergency relief and resiliency efforts. The program is still being finalized and is anticipated to include eligible COVID-19 related emergency relief support and for households and to support non-profits' efforts to provide COVID-19 recovery efforts.

CARES CRF Compliance and Documentation Team: Prior to program execution, these programs will be reviewed and approved by the County's CARES CRF Compliance and Documentation Team to ensure that the program designs adhere to the Federal requirements associated with the CARES CRF funding allocation.

BUDGET IMPACT: The funding in the amount of \$2,500,000.00 in revenue that will be provided from the Coronavirus, Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) is recommended to be appropriated as follows: a) \$1,250,000.00 for Community and Human Services COVID-19 Emergency Relief and Resiliency efforts; and b) \$1,250,000.00 for a Business Grant Program. Appropriation of this funding is included in attachments C and D. A budget amendment public hearing is not required for this appropriation pursuant to Virginia Code §15.2-2507 because the amount of the cumulative appropriations does not exceed one percent of the currently adopted budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the attached Resolution (Attachment D) to approve the appropriation described in Attachment C. Staff further recommends the Board authorize the County Executive to execute all required documents, duly approved by the County Attorney, to implement the Business grant program.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A - Overview of the Business Grant Program
- B - Minority, Women and Veteran Owned Business Data
- C - Appropriation Description
- D - Appropriation Resolution