

RESOLUTION NO. 20 - 60
PINELLAS CARES EXPANDED AND ADDED PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, in response to the emergence of a novel coronavirus and the respiratory disease it causes (“COVID-19”), the World Health Organization (WHO) has officially characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic that constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern; and

WHEREAS, on March 1, 2020, Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order Number 20-51, declaring that appropriate measures to control the spread of COVID-19 in the State of Florida are necessary, and accordingly the State Surgeon General and State Health Officer declared that a Public Health Emergency exists in the State of Florida; and

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order Number 20-52 declaring a State of Emergency for the state of Florida in furtherance of efforts to respond to and mitigate the effects of COVID-19 throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, in addition to other subsequent Executive Orders issued by the Governor, the Governor found it necessary and appropriate to take action to slow the spread of COVID-19, and accordingly issued Executive Order 20-91 (EO 20-91) on April 1, 2020, restricting the movements and activities of people throughout the State of Florida as provided therein, shutting down and dramatically negatively effecting many businesses within Pinellas County which continues to date; and

WHEREAS, in order to fully and effectively respond to the developing threats posed by the novel coronavirus and its associated disease (COVID-19), and in coordination with ongoing emergency actions by the state and federal governments, the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners (Board) passed Resolution 20-16 declaring a local state of emergency in Pinellas County (Resolution), and subsequently extensions and orders have been issued continuing the state local emergency based on ongoing threats and taking whatever prudent action is necessary to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community; and

WHEREAS, the Board adopted Resolution 20-20 (Safer at Home Order), and Resolution 20-23 implementing the Governor’s EO 20-91; and

WHEREAS, the County and the Sheriff have issued guidance and enforced the provisions of the Governor’s EO 20-91 and the Board’s Safer at Home Order; and

WHEREAS, on March 27, 2020, Congress passed, and the President signed the “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act” (CARES Act); and

WHEREAS, on April 22, 2020, the U.S. Treasury Department (Treasury) issued Guidance for State, Territorial, Local, and Tribal Governments relating to payments made available under section 601(a) of the Social Security Act as added by section 5001 of the CARES Act (Coronavirus Relief Fund); and

WHEREAS, Treasury issued updated guidance through a series of Frequently Asked Questions on June 24, 2020 (Updated FAQs); and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 public health emergency has impacted Pinellas County in virtually every way addressed in the Treasury Guidance and Updated FAQs allowing for a County to expend CARES Act funds; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary and appropriate for Pinellas County to utilize CARES Act funding to alleviate as many of the impacts from COVID-19 as is possible; and

WHEREAS, the programs the County have and that are to be established to meet these needs qualify for and meet the requirements of the CARES Act funding set forth in section 601(d) of the Social Security Act; and

WHEREAS, the Treasury guidance makes clear that certain expenses of the County associated with the provision of economic support in connection with the COVID-19 public health emergency, such as expenditures related to the provision of grants to small businesses to reimburse the costs of business interruption caused by required closures are eligible expenditures of the Coronavirus Relief Fund allocation; and

WHEREAS, the County is aware that many small businesses have been seriously impacted by the business interruption closures and restrictions necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, although each small business's impacts to the County's economic engine is often small, cumulatively their impact is very large through employment of citizens who spend and support the County economy, support of other businesses and tourism through commerce; and

WHEREAS, the Treasury guidance makes clear that COVID-19-related expenses reasonably necessary to the function of government that satisfy the Fund's eligibility criteria are eligible expenditures of the Coronavirus Relief Fund allocation; and

WHEREAS, the Updated FAQs state in pertinent part that the Coronavirus Relief Fund, "is designed to provide ready funding to address unforeseen financial needs and risks created by the COVID-19 public health emergency;" and

WHEREAS, Pinellas County as a local government with a population in excess of 500,000 people is the only entity within Pinellas County that received the Coronavirus Relief Fund monies; and

WHEREAS, the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners adopted the Pinellas CARES Small Business Grants Program by Pinellas County Resolution Number 20-37, on April 28, 2020 which adopted standards for the program as necessary to meet the impacts from COVID-19 (Pinellas CARES Business Program I); and

WHEREAS, while Pinellas CARES Business Program I was intended as a temporary assistance program to "bridge the gap" for impacted small business, the impacts from the COVID-19 public health emergency continue, and infection rates are rising within Pinellas County causing greater harm and more businesses to be impacted; and

WHEREAS, it is important to buttress previous County support for our Qualified Target Industry (QTI) businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19, as these businesses create high wage jobs in targeted high value-added industries; and

WHEREAS, some QTI businesses have been required to make changes to their workspaces to allow work to safely continue through the

pandemic, or providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to their workforce as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, a number of businesses impacted by COVID-19 have fallen through the cracks in that they cannot qualify for County CARES Act funding due to, language barriers, technological deficits, a lack of business acumen or record-keeping, and other barriers; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency to provide financial assistance and capacity building to aid those businesses with overcoming those barriers to participation in County CARES Act programs; and

WHEREAS, according to an article published by the Brookings Institute reviewing recent surveys, “Prior to the crisis, in 2018, 11.1 percent of households were food insecure and 12.2 percent of households answered the single question in the battery affirmatively. The Urban Institute’s Health Reform Monitoring Survey, in the field from March 25 to April 10, used the six-question short form food insecurity module and found that 21.9 percent of households with nonelderly adults were food insecure. By late April 2020, 22.7 percent of households reported in the COVID Impact Survey not having sufficient resources to buy more food when the food that they purchased didn’t last. Overall rates of household food insecurity have effectively doubled,” and also determined that, “[f]ood insecurity has deteriorated more among households with children;” and

WHEREAS, nonprofit community partners have seen an increased demand for many services and assistance in response to impacts from COVID-19, particularly in the areas of food programs, homelessness, behavioral health, and legal assistance for evictions; and

WHEREAS, as a result of COVID-19 unemployment rates have resulted in historic highs;

WHEREAS, Treasury’s Updated FAQs make it clear that CARES Act funds may be to cover employment and training programs for employees that have been furloughed due to the public health emergency if the government determined that the costs of such employment and training programs would be necessary due to the public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to buttress the employment and training programs to alleviate the impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary overcome many diverse barriers to participation in County CARES Act programs, without which many of the goals to be served by these programs may be frustrated; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary and appropriate to contract with existing community partners to serve as geographically focused navigators to raise awareness of and facilitate individuals and local businesses applying for Pinellas CARES Act programs; and

WHEREAS, as the COVID-19 public health emergency continues it is critical to meet the COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, added capacity for skilled nursing and other medical professionals, ensure sufficient PPE, educate the public on COVID-19 with added community health educators, and other public health measures to protect from or respond to the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, the understanding of impacts from COVID-19 change from day to day and the realized impacts from both the medical public health and the financial impacts to the community often lag behind the data as it develops, therefore it is important for the County Administrator to have wide latitude in reacting quickly to the needs of the community as they become more clear; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to §252.38(1), Florida Statutes, and Pinellas County Charter section 2.04 (k), the County has jurisdictional authority over the entire county for emergency management purposes; and

WHEREAS, as a direct result of the impacts that continue from the COVID-19 public health emergency it is necessary for the County to continue and expand the Pinellas CARES Business Program I program; add additional programs to allow and enable more businesses and families impacted by the pandemic to obtain financial aid, necessities, or expanded employment or business training; and allow for greater public health protections by building local capacity for testing, contact tracing, skilled nursing, PPE, community health educators, or other public health measures providing for protective equipment or for the costs thereof.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AND DECLARED by the Board of County Commissioners of Pinellas County, Florida, this 7th day of July 2020:

The Board of County Commissioners finds in addition to the Whereas clauses above, as follows:

- 1) It is necessary and appropriate for the County to add or expand programs to address the needs of the community as outlined in the Whereas clauses due to the COVID-19 public health emergency as broadly as the limited CARES Act funds allow.
- 2) The impacts to the Pinellas business community from COVID-19 are widespread and ongoing and the Pinellas CARES Business Program I should be expanded to allow greater access to more COVID-19 impacted businesses that may have been excluded under the prior criteria of the program. This may include additional monies to businesses already served, but should focus primarily on providing assistance to businesses that have not received CARES support funding.
- 3) The County Administrator is directed to implement additional programs within the amounts received by the County under the CARES Act consistent with the policies and goals of this Resolution. The County Administrator is further authorized to make such administrative adjustments to the programs, allocations, and expenditures among any CARES Act funded County programs as may be necessary or prudent consistent with the goals and policies herein and within the guidelines established by Treasury as they may be amended or supplemented from time to time.

Severability.

Any provision(s) within this Order that conflict(s) with any State or Federal law or constitutional provision, or conflict(s) with or are superseded by a current or subsequently-issued Executive Order of the Governor or the President of the United States, shall be deemed inapplicable and deemed to be severed from this Order, with the remainder of the Order remaining intact and in full force and effect. To the extent application of some or all of the provisions of this Order is

prohibited on the sovereign land of a federally or state recognized sovereign Indian tribe, such application is expressly excluded from this Order.

Effective Date; Duration.

This Order is effective immediately upon filing with the Clerk of the Circuit Court which will happen at the close of this meeting.

This Order is in addition to the Executive Orders issued by Governor DeSantis.

This Order applies to incorporated and unincorporated areas within Pinellas County, but has no application outside of Pinellas County.

This order and prior resolutions and emergency orders remain in force and effect unless modified or superseded.

Commissioner _____ Welch _____ offered the foregoing Resolution and moved its adoption, which was seconded by Commissioner _____ Long _____, and upon roll call the vote was:

AYES: Gerard, Eggers, Justice, Long, Peters, Seel, and Welch.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT AND NOT VOTING: None.

Approved as to Form. Donald S. Crowell, Chief Asst. County Atty.