



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 20-771A, **Version:** 1

Subject:

Adopt Resolution Approving Pinellas CARES Financial Assistance Program.

Recommended Action:

Adoption of resolution (1.) approving the Pinellas CARES Financial Assistance program to support individuals and families impacted by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic in Pinellas County; and (2.) authorizing the County Administrator to execute program amendments as needed for implementation.

- On April 16, 2020, The Board of County Commissioners adopted Resolution No. 20-29 authorizing the County Administrator to certify eligibility for the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and directing the development or expansion of programs consistent with the CARES Act.
- Assistance program will provide one-time financial assistance to help stabilize individuals and families that have been impacted by loss of income due to the COVID-19 health emergency.
- Eligible residents would be able to receive assistance of up to \$4000.00 to help bridge financial gaps for overdue rent, mortgage payments and utilities.
 - A.) Eligibility criteria:
 - U.S. citizenship and Pinellas resident
 - Demonstrated loss of income due to COVID-19 employment impacts
 - Income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines
 - Less than \$4000.00 in liquid assets in the applicant's checking and savings accounts.
- Building on existing program infrastructure, Human Services will implement and deliver assistance for individuals and families in partnership with 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares (2-1-1).
 - A.) Residents will be able to text or call 2-1-1 for assistance request.
 - B.) 2-1-1 gathers information for preliminary screening and guides through documentation process.
 - C.) The completed case is reviewed for eligibility determination.
 - D.) Assistance is paid directly to the landlord, mortgage holder, utility company, or other service creditor upon approval.
- Funds used for Pinellas CARES Financial Assistance will be maintained and tracked as assistance related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strategic Plan:

Ensure Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

2.1 Provide planning, coordination, prevention, and protective services to ensure a safe and secure community

2.3 Be a facilitator, convener, and purchaser of services for those in need

2.4 Support programs that seek to prevent and remedy the causes of homelessness and move individuals and families from homelessness to permanent housing

Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality

4.2 Invest in communities that need the most

Deliver First Class Services to the Public and Our Customers

5.2 Be responsible stewards of the public's resources

Summary:

Adopting the resolution will provide staff direction to implement Pinellas CARES Financial Assistance for individuals and families that have lost income due to the COVID-19 health emergency. The assistance will help to bridge gaps in expenses such as rent, mortgage payments, utilities and other critical needs.

HS anticipates leveraging an existing assistance infrastructure to quickly provide relief in the community. The program, a partnership with 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares for screening and assistance, will tailor assistance processes for individuals and families in alignment with the CARES Act guidance. Staffing for the expanded assistance process has supplemented by temporary assignment of identified HS and Community Development staff to aid with anticipated assistance requests.

This resolution also seeks authorization for the County Administrator to execute amendments to HS agreements and programs as necessary to expedite assistance availability.

Background Information:

On March 27, 2020, the CARES Act was enacted to provide emergency relief to families and small businesses that have been impacted by the coronavirus. Through the \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund, the CARES Act provides for payments to State, Local, and Tribal governments navigating the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Amounts paid to States, the District of Columbia, U.S. Territories, and eligible units of local government were based on population as provided in the CARES Act. A unit of local government eligible for receipt of direct payment includes a county, municipality, town, township, village, parish, borough, or other unit of general government below the State level with a population that exceeds 500,000.

The CARES Act requires that the payments from the Coronavirus Relief Fund only be used to cover expenses that:

- (1) are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (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) for the State or government; and
 - (3) were incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020, and ends on December 30, 2020.
- Additional guidance on eligible uses of Fund disbursements by governments and FAQs were issued by the Treasury on April 22.

In Pinellas County, impacts to local businesses due to COVID-19 has had an immediate effect on individuals and families with limited ability to pay day-to-day bills while unemployed, furloughed,

and/or having reduced work hours. Through the implementation of Pinellas CARES Financial Assistance, the county is seeking to bridge this gap to stabilize residents.

Fiscal Impact:

Funding in an amount TBD will support the Pinellas CARES Financial Assistance Program.

Staff Member Responsible:

Daisy Rodriguez, Director, Human Services

Partners:

United States Department of Treasury
2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares
Community Development

Attachments:

Pinellas CARES Financial Assistance Resolution
Pinellas CARES Financial Assistance Program Policy & Procedures
Pinellas CARES Financial Assistance Board Memorandum
CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund Treasury Guidance and FAQ