



Legislation Text

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Discussion and Approval of Substantial Amendments to 2018-2022 Consolidated Plan and 2019-2020 Annual Action Plan; and Update to the 2018-2022 Citizen Participation Plan to Facilitate Partial Reallocation of FY 2019-2020 CDBG Program Funding and Allocation of the Additional CDBG Program COVID-19 (CDBG-CV) CARES Act Funds for the Gainesville Cares About Neighbors and Gainesville Cares About Businesses (GNVCares) Initiative (B)

The City Commission is asked to consider and approve the Substantial Amendments to 2018-2022 Consolidated Plan and 2019-2020 Annual Action Plan; and update to the 2018-2022 Citizen Participation Plan to allocate CDBG Program funding to the GNVCares Initiative to provide direct assistance to businesses and neighbors impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

GNVCares is an effort to reprogram existing resources as well as to allocate Federal and State dollars the City of Gainesville will receive under the CARES Act.

The City of Gainesville has received a special allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program funds to be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). This allocation was authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), Public Law 116-136, which was signed by President Donald Trump on March 27, 2020, to respond to the growing effects of this historic public health crisis. The CARES Act made available \$5 billion in Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) funds. Of this amount, the Department is immediately allocating \$2 billion based on the fiscal year 2020 CDBG formula. The remaining \$3 billion shall be allocated based on needs using best available data, in the following tranches: \$1 billion shall be allocated to States and insular areas within 45 days of enactment of the Cares Act, and \$2 billion shall be distributed to states and local governments at the discretion of the Secretary. Up to \$10 million will be set aside for technical assistance. Given the immediate needs faced by our Gainesville community, the Department has announced the first allocation of funds. The City's allocation is \$800,608.

The CARES Act adds additional flexibility for both the CDBG-CV grant and, in some cases, for the annual FY2020 CDBG grants in these unprecedented times. The public comment period is reduced to not less than five (5) days, grantees may use virtual public hearings when necessary for public health reasons, the public services cap is suspended during the emergency, and States and local governments may reimburse costs of eligible activities incurred for pandemic response regardless of the date. In addition, the CARES Act authorizes the Secretary to grant waivers and alternative requirements of statutes and regulations the Secretary administers in connection with the use of CDBG-CV funds and fiscal year 2019 and 2020 CDBG funds (except for requirements related to fair housing, nondiscrimination, labor standards, and the environment). Waivers and alternative requirements can be granted when necessary to expedite and facilitate the use of funds to prevent, prepare for, and respond to Coronavirus.

Additionally, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is developing a notice that will further describe the CARES provisions, a Quick Guide to the CARES Act flexibility and other provisions, and

other resources to enable swift implementation of CDBG-CV grants. As these become available, they will be provided to grantees. The Department will also support grantees with technical assistance.

The United States has been ravaged by the Coronavirus Crisis. There is not an individual, family, friend, or business organization that has not been affected in one way or another and we are still within the depths of the crisis. The City of Gainesville leadership and executive staff were tasked with the extremely serious and sensitive job of looking for a way that we can provide relief within our community while maintaining the shelter-in-place social distancing mandates.

In the development of the City's plans for the use of these grant funds, consideration was given to approaches that prioritize the unique needs of low- and moderate income persons and the development of partnerships between all levels of government and the private for-profit and nonprofit sectors. We will explore ways to collaborate and coordinate with state and local health authorities before undertaking any activity to support state or local pandemic response. CDBG-CV grants are subject to oversight, reporting, and requirements to ensure adequate procedures to prevent the duplication of benefits. The City will seek guidance and technical assistance on controlling duplication of benefit, regarding prevention of fraud, waste, and abuse and documenting the impact of this program for beneficiaries.

Furthermore, based on the challenges we are currently facing, it has become necessary to reprogram some of the FY 2019/2020 CDBG Program allocation to provide funding for the GNVCares Initiative. Some of the internal programs of the Housing & Community Development (HCD) Division totaling \$437,170 have been reduced and/or eliminated for the fiscal year to support the GNVCares activities, designed to focus on the City's COVID-19 relief. These activities align with the CARES Act stimulus bill as it relates to applicable CDBG guidance and Memos issued by HUD.

Consistent with Federal guidelines, the following City plans have been amended: 2018-2022 Citizen Participation Plan, 2018-2022 Consolidated Plan and the 2019-2020 Annual Action Plan. These amendments are regulatory required to reprogram FY 2019/2020 CDBG Program allocation and utilize CDBG Program COVID-19 (CDBG-CV) funding. Based on collaborative, cooperative, and strategic planning, the best activities for us to help the citizens of Gainesville is through economic development initiatives and housing-related support for our most vulnerable Neighbors.

Through the CARES ACT, the City anticipates receiving \$800,608 in Community Development Block Grant COVID-19 funds (CDBG-CV); and \$437,170 in 2019-2020 CDBG funds will be reprogrammed from activities that cannot be undertaken based on the mandated social-distancing and shelter-in-place. The subsequent \$1,237,778 in funding may be re-programmed for the use of providing public health, housing, and community and economic development services to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the Coronavirus.

The City Commission: 1) approve the Substantial Amendments to the 2018-2022 Citizen Participation Plan, 2018-2022 Consolidated Plan and 2019-2020 Annual Action Plan; 2) approve reallocating FY 2019-2020 CDBG Program funding of \$437,170 and COVID-19 (CDBG-CV) funding of \$800,608 to the GNVCares initiative; 3) authorize the City Manager or designee to take actions as appropriate to expend funds associated with GNVCares; and 4) authorize the City Manager to execute any required programmatic and financial agreements to implement the GNVCares program, subject to approval by the City Attorney as to form and legality.