Legislation Text

File #: 200260., **Version:** 1

Coronavirus Relief Fund Utility Assistance Program (B)

This is a request for the City Commission to approve the Coronavirus Relief Fund Utility Assistance Program.

The Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) is a portion of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act passed by Congress and signed into law by the President in March 2020 in response to the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. Governor DeSantis authorized $120 million of Florida's CRF allocation to Florida Housing Finance Corporation (Florida Housing) to assist renter and homeowner households that have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The CRF Program for impacted homeowners and renters will be administered through the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP) platform though not funded through SHIP.

As required by the State, the CRF grant program must be completed and funds expended by December 30, 2020. In general, assistance with paying monthly rent, mortgage payments or emergency repairs are eligible expenditures through the CRF Program; however, time is of the essence, thus, the Housing and Community Development (HCD) Division is proposing to concentrate only on providing financial assistance towards a Utility Assistance Program for extremely low, very low, low and moderate income city neighbors. The proposed Utility Assistance Program will include financial assistance to assist individuals with electric, water, cable, phone and/or internet services. Continuing with the GNVCares about Neighbors funding concept, eligible recipients can receive up to $1,250 in utility payment assistance. Applications will be submitted through an online application portal.

Through the CRF Program, the City anticipates receiving an allocation of $350,511 with 10% being allocated for program administration. This will allow the City to assist approximately 252 households within this short turn-around period.

The City Commission: 1) approve the Coronavirus Relief Fund Utility Assistance Program; 2) authorize the City Manager or designee to take actions as appropriate to expend funds associated with Coronavirus Relief Fund Utility Assistance Program; and 3) authorize the City Manager to execute any required programmatic and financial agreements to implement the Coronavirus Relief Fund Utility Assistance Program, subject to approval by the City Attorney as to form and legality.