

**Columbus Consolidated Government
Council Meeting Agenda Item**

TO:	Mayor and Councilors
AGENDA SUBJECT:	Elections and Registration grant for upcoming election
AGENDA SUMMARY:	Approval is requested to accept an award from the Center for Tech and Civic Life in the amount of \$412,245, or as otherwise awarded, for personnel and equipment to help the Elections and Registration respond to needs arising as a result of COVID-19 in the upcoming election, and amend the Multi-governmental Fund by the amount awarded. There are no local match funds required.
INITIATED BY:	Elections and Registration

Recommendation: Approval is requested to apply for and accept an award from the Center for Tech and Civic Life, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, in the amount of \$412,245, or as otherwise awarded, for personnel and equipment to help the Elections and Registration respond to needs arising as a result of COVID-19 in the upcoming election, and amend the Multi-governmental Fund by the amount awarded. There are no local match funds required.

Background: Funds are being made available to help the Muscogee County Elections and Registration office deal with the effects of COVID-19 during the various elections being held this year.

Analysis: The June 9, 2020 General primary saw a 420% increase in the number of absentee applications processed and ballots received and counted. The county struggled to provide a safe environment for early voting workers, poll workers, elections staff and voters. Additionally, we faced a time of community unrest and had to staff early tabulation, early voting, and preparation of election equipment during peaceful protests outside the government building that houses elections operations. For the general election, the number of total registered voters is expected to be between 135,00 and 140,000. Plans are being made with the expectation of a 90% turnout or 126,000 voters casting ballots either in person or by absentee ballot. The desire is to deliver a smooth and positive voting experience but meeting this challenge will require a collaborative effort as well as additional funding. An executive order issued by the Governor of the state limits the number of people that can gather in a public place which limit will limit access to the voting process and the need to mitigate wait times by providing alternatives. Each additional alternative will require more resources in an increasingly competitive environment. This document offers an assessment of resources needed for Muscogee County to prepare for the general election safely and thoroughly.

Financial Considerations: The City will incur no financial obligations as a result of this grant. There is no local match requirement.

Legal Considerations: The City is eligible to receive this grant award. If accepted, the City will be obligated to abide by the terms of the grant contract.

Recommendation/Action: Authorize the application for and acceptance of a grant award from the Center for Tech and Civic Life in the amount of \$412,245, or as otherwise awarded, with no local match required, for Elections and Registration, and amend the Multi-governmental Fund by the amount awarded.

A RESOLUTION

NO.

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT A GRANT AWARD FROM THE CENTER FOR TECH AND CIVIC LIFE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$412,245, OR AS OTHERWISE AWARDED, WITH NO LOCAL MATCH REQUIRED, FOR FUNDING TO ASSIST ELECTIONS AND REGISTRATION IN RESPONDING TO NEEDS ARISING FROM COVID-19 DURING THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS, AND TO AMEND THE MULTI-GOVERNMENTAL FUND BY THE AMOUNT AWARDED.

WHEREAS, funds are being made available to help the Muscogee County Elections and Registration office deal with the effects of COVID-19 during the various elections being held this year; and,

WHEREAS, the June 9, 2020 General primary saw a 420% increase in the number of absentee applications processed and ballots received and counted. The county struggled to provide a safe environment for early voting workers, poll workers, elections staff and voters. For the general election, the number of total registered voters is expected to be between 135,000 and 140,000. Plans are being made with the expectation of a 90% turnout or 126,000 voters casting ballots either in person or by absentee ballot; and,

WHEREAS, an executive order issued by the Governor of the state limits the number of people that can gather in a public place, which limit will limit access to the voting process and the need to mitigate wait times by providing alternatives; and,

WHEREAS, these funds are available to the City with no local match requirement and no further obligations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA, AS FOLLOWS:

That approval be granted for the City Manager to apply for and accept an award from the Center for Tech and Civic Life, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, in the amount of \$412,245, or as otherwise awarded, with no local match required, for personnel and equipment to help the Elections and Registration respond to needs arising as a result of COVID-19 in the upcoming election, and amend the Multi-governmental Fund by the amount awarded.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia held on the _____ day of _____ October 2020 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of ____ members of said Council.

- Councilor Allen voting _____.
- Councilor Barnes voting _____.
- Councilor Crabb voting _____.
- Councilor Davis voting _____.
- Councilor Garrett voting _____.
- Councilor House voting _____.
- Councilor Huff voting _____.
- Councilor Thomas voting _____.
- Councilor Tucker voting _____.
- Councilor Woodson voting _____.