

**Columbus Consolidated Government
Council Meeting Agenda Item**

TO:	Mayor and Councilors
AGENDA SUBJECT:	Elections and Registration Grant from USC Schwarzenegger Institute
AGENDA SUMMARY:	Approval is requested to accept an award from the USC Schwarzenegger Institute Democracy Fund Initiative in the amount of \$210,675, or as otherwise awarded, to supplement early voting sites and in-person voting at polling places, 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 accept an award from the USC Schwarzenegger Institute Democracy Fund Initiative in the amount of \$210,675, or as otherwise awarded, to supplement early voting sites and in-person voting at polling places, 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: Columbus/Muscogee County plans to have one full-time early voting location and three mega-voting sites for early voting for November. The county typically has one location with 22 voting units available. With the additional locations, there will be a total of 164 voting units at all sites to provide voters with safe alternatives to voting in person and opportunities for social distancing. These must be sufficiently staffed with 70 staff with \$30 per day of hazard pay to limit worker turnover, handle a surge in voters before polls open, and manage sites in a pandemic environment. It will cost \$88,200 to cover hourly pay for clerks at additional early voting sites with \$30 per day hazard duty pay for each worker. Security must be provided at the early voting locations at \$30/hr for a total of \$18,900.

Columbus/Muscogee County is committed to securing 25 in-person polling locations on election day. To staff these locations, the county will hire 500 election day workers to conduct and facilitate a smooth, in-person operation and provide each worker with adequate PPE. To assist in retention, \$75 per day is desired to pay each worker in the form of hazard pay compensation. Additionally, the county will buy sneeze guards and disposable single use stylus for voting, at a total cost of \$23,575.

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. The funding will allow Columbus/Muscogee County to reduce the risk of exposure to coronavirus for voters, election staff, and poll workers. 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 USC Schwarzenegger Institute Democracy Fund Initiative in the amount of \$210,675, 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 USC SCHWARZENEGGER INSTITUTE'S DEMOCRACY FUND INITIATIVE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$210,675, 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, an executive order issued by the Governor of the state limits the number of people who can gather in a public place, which will limit access to the voting process and increase the need to mitigate wait times by providing alternatives; and,

WHEREAS, Columbus/Muscogee County plans to have one full-time early voting location and three mega-voting sites for early voting for November. The county typically has one location with 22 voting units available. With the additional locations, there will be a total of 164 voting units at all sites to provide voters with safe alternatives to voting in person and opportunities for social distancing. In addition, Columbus/Muscogee County is committed to having 25 polling sites open on election day. The funding from this grant will help pay for polling staff and poll workers, provide hazard pay, pay for additional polling equipment, and pay for Personal Protective Equipment for workers and disposable styluses for voters in order to reduce the risk of coronavirus transmission as much as possible; 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 USC Schwarzenegger Institute Democracy Fund Initiative in the amount of \$210,675, or as otherwise awarded, with no local match required, to supplement early voting sites and in-person voting at polling places, 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 _____ 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	_____.

Sandra T. Davis, Clerk of Council

B.H. "Skip" Henderson, Mayor