

# Agenda Report

November 9, 2020

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Department of Housing

**SUBJECT: INCREASING CAPACITY OF LOCAL FOOD BANKS TO ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY RESULTING FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the "general rule" that CEQA only applies to projects that may have an effect on the environment; and
2. Appropriate \$206,200 to Account 10518001-811400-56901, Parks, Recreation and Community Services, and authorize staff to make necessary adjustments to the budget should 100 percent reimbursement not occur with utilization of Unassigned fund balance if available or the General Fund Operating Reserve if necessary. This appropriation will cover food pantries and meal programs expenses from November 1, 2020 – January 31, 2021; and
3. Authorize the City Manager to expend an amount not to exceed \$206,200, without Competitive Bidding pursuant to City Charter Section 1002(F), contracts for professional or unique services, with various Pasadena food pantries and meal programs as described in this agenda report; and
4. Grant the proposed expenditures an exemption from the Competitive Selection process pursuant to P.M.C. Section 4.08.049(B), contracts for which the City's best interests are served; and
5. Prioritize federal funding to increase the capacity of food bank programs in Pasadena to alleviate food insecurity experienced by City residents as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

# INCREASING CAPACITY OF FOOD BANKS TO ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY

November 9, 2020

Page 2 of 4

## **BACKGROUND:**

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in millions of job losses across the country, leaving families without adequate food. Statistics published by the Pew Research Center found that food insecurity across the country has risen significantly since the pandemic sidelined 14 million workers from February to May, 2020. According to the Center for Disease Control, food insecurity is expected to continue to increase for many households with more children not attending childcare and school in-person (a source of nutritious meals for many students) and with changes in employment status during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Feeding America, the largest hunger-relief organization in the United States, reports a record increase in the number of people needing help, with an average increase of 60% across the country. Between March and June, 2020, roughly 4 in 10 people visiting food banks had not received food assistance before the pandemic. The organization estimates that 54 million people (including 18 million children) in the country could become food insecure because of the pandemic. With food insecurity surging in the United States, local food banks are struggling to meet the need. The COVID-19 pandemic has hit Pasadena hard and continues to ravage the local economy. Furthermore, the impacts are expected to be felt well after the local emergency declaration is lifted. Certainly, one area of major impact pertains to the eviction moratoria that are currently in place pursuant to City ordinance and State law. At some future point, the moratoria will be lifted, resulting in the acceleration of tenant back rent obligations and eviction cases. As these situations play out, the exacerbation of economic hardship and food insecurity experienced by affected Pasadena residents is anticipated.

## **Pasadena Programs Addressing Food Insecurity**

Presently, 20 food banks and pantries operate in Pasadena to provide for residents experiencing food insecurity, as listed in Attachment "A". The City has provided funding totaling \$245,807 to support the operations of ten (10) programs for the period May through October 2020. It is recommended that Council approve additional funding in the amount of \$206,200 for the programs summarized below, which will enable them to operate through the end of January, 2021 at the same level of services.

Food Banks and Pantries*	\$98,700
National Day Labor Organizing Network	\$20,000
Pasadena Senior Center	\$15,000
San Gabriel Valley YWCA	\$17,500
Harvest Village Ministries (delivery only)	\$55,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$206,200</b>

\*First African Methodist Episcopal Church (\$25,000), First Church of the Nazarene (\$2,200), Foothill Unity Center (\$45,000), Friends In Deed (\$10,000), Morning Star Outreach Ministry (\$2,000), Salvation Army (\$10,000), St. Andrews Church (\$4,500)

In addition to these food banks and pantries, the City participates in the state-sponsored Great Plates Delivered program which provides meals prepared and delivered by local

## INCREASING CAPACITY OF FOOD BANKS TO ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY

November 9, 2020

Page 3 of 4

restaurants for older adults who are at high risk and unable to access meals during the City's Safer at Home pandemic emergency order period. At its meeting of November 9, 2020, Council will consider whether to continue funding the Great Plates Delivered program.

Another potential source of funding to increase the capacity of the City's food bank programs is the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. On September 11, 2020, the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced to the City a special allocation in the amount of \$1,220,949 in CDBG funds under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CDBG-CV funds). With this special allocation, HUD has provided a total of \$2,453,511 in CARES Act funding to the City to support programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, CDBG-CV funds may be used for any activity to prevent, prepare for and respond to COVID-19. Currently, CDBG-CV funds are utilized on the City's Emergency Rental Assistance program which provides a total of \$1 million in back rent assistance to low income tenants.

Staff is recommending that this most recent allocation of \$1.22 million be prioritized by the City to increase the capacity of local food banks/food pantries to alleviate food insecurity experienced by Pasadena residents as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. If the CDBG-CV funds were to be allocated to support Pasadena food bank programs, sub-recipient vendors would be required to draw the funds on a cost reimbursement basis, they must have adequate accounting systems in place, and funds must be expended by September 2022. In addition, twenty percent (20%) of the funding are allowed to be used for program administrative costs. Should Council direct staff to utilize this funding source to increase the capacity of food banks in Pasadena to address food insecurity, staff will return with recommendations pertaining to a Memorandum of Understanding and program scope to be administered by Parks, Recreation and Community Services, budget authorization, and amendment to the City's Annual Action Plan as required by HUD. If Council acts to prioritize CDBG-CV funds for food banks and pantries, it is anticipated that the funds will be available for disbursement in early-January 2021. The recommended allocation of \$206,200 would provide for a continuation of service until this time.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

The action proposed herein pertains to the potential funding of food bank programs in Pasadena and any related direction from City Council thereto. This action is exempt from the California Environment Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the "general rule" that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that an activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. The proposed action will not have the potential for significant effect on the environment and, therefore, is not subject to CEQA.

INCREASING CAPACITY OF FOOD BANKS TO ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY

November 9, 2020

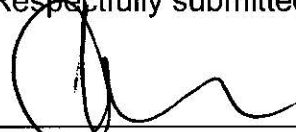
Page 4 of 4

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

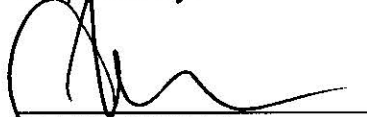
Funding for the action to support the continued operation of the specified food programs through January 2021 is expected to come from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for 75% - \$154,650, from California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) for 18.75% - \$38,662.50 and the General Fund for 6.25% - \$12,887.50 and be charged to the budget account 10518001-811400-56901. The General Fund portion will be appropriated from Unassigned fund balance or the General Fund Operating Reserve if necessary. There also exists the potential that the special allocation of federal CDBG-CV funds discussed in this report may be available to reimburse, in part or in whole, the City for these expenditures.

However, there is no fiscal impact associated with the action to prioritize the CDBG-CV funding to increase the capacity of food banks and pantries in the City. If Council provides direction to move forward with these federal dollars, staff will return to Council with recommendations to effectuate such a program including budget authorization.

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
for WILLIAM K. HUANG  
Director of Housing

Prepared by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
JAMES WONG  
Senior Project Manager

Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
STEVE MERMELL  
City Manager

**ATTACHMENT:**

Attachment "A" – Food Banks and Meal Programs in Pasadena