

AGENDA ITEM BRIEFING

Commissioners Court – August 04, 2020

AI Number: 76680

Information: Requesting authority to implement the Hidalgo County COVID Condolence Program in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency as necessary and eligible under the CARES Act Relief Fund.

Description of AI: (A) Approval of Hidalgo County COVID Condolence Program ; (B) Approval of Eligibility Guidelines and program administration by HCHHS, (C) Approval of transfer of funds

Funding Source: CARES Act Relief Fund

Account No.: 0-1287-441-42-115-096-0-340

Requested by: Laura Matamoros, Economic Development Director

Department: County Judge's Office - Economic Development Division

Prepared by: Merlen Munoz, Budget Analyst

Department: Budget & Management

BACKGROUND:

On March 17, 2020, pursuant to the authority under Texas Government Code Section 418.108, Hidalgo County Judge Richard Cortez issued a Declaration of Local Disaster for Public Health Emergency due to the imminent threat arising from the Coronavirus (COVID-19). On March 22, 2020, in accordance with Texas Government Code Section 418.108(b), the Commissioners Court of Hidalgo County issued an Order of Continuance of Declaration of Local Disaster for Public Health Emergency that affirmed the activation of the Hidalgo County Emergency Management Plan and extends the Declaration of Local Disaster.

The COVID-19 health emergency has impacted the residents of Hidalgo County by loss of employment or reduction of income and the loss of a loved one due to COVID-19 has placed an added burden on individuals. This has necessitated a need to provide these individuals with assistance for funeral services. The COVID Condolence Program is a burial/cremation assistance program to help Hidalgo County residents in select cities and rural areas who have been impacted by the spread of COVID-19.

COMPLIANCE

The COVID Condolence Program is in compliance with the provisions of the CARES Act Relief Funds guidance of providing economic support to individuals for funeral services of a loved one who passed due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

ADMINISTRATION

Approval of the item is consistent with Hidalgo County's intended purpose to provide economic support in connection with the COVID-19 public health emergency. The goal is to provide efficient and effective delivery of services in light of change in technology, the public's expectations, and the area's population and economy. Hidalgo County Health is taking the lead in responding to the COVID-19 health emergency for our community as a whole.

AGENDA ITEM CAPTION

1. Discussion, consideration, and action to approve a necessary CARES Act Relief Fund expenditure to cover costs not accounted for in the current budget and cannot be lawfully funded by line item, allotment or allocation, for the Hidalgo County COVID Condolence Program, in order to assist with expenses associated with provisions of economic support in connection with the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency; the Court having reviewed the Agenda Item Briefing, herein finds that such expenditure is reasonable and necessary for the intended use.
2. Presentation, discussion, and approval of the Hidalgo County COVID Condolence Program eligibility criteria and approval of program administration by the Hidalgo County Health and Human Services Department.
3. Approval of intradepartmental transfer.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The CRF - Economic Development Committee recommends approval of the items to allow the Health and Human Service Department to administer the Hidalgo County COVID Condolence Program. The program will provide Hidalgo County residents with assistance for burial/cremation services to individuals who have had a loss of a loved one due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Expenditures will be charged to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Relief Grant Fund and/or other grant assistance available to address the COVID-19 public health emergency.