



Hidalgo County • Department of Budget & Management
American Rescue Plan Act 2021

Agenda Item Briefing
Commissioners Court - December 14, 2021

AI Number: 83779

Project Name: World Radio Network Lease Agreement

Project Number: ARPA-21-200-011

Project Department Name: Budget & Management

Funding Source: American Rescue Plan Act Relief Funds *1-1290-441-61-115-208-1-780*

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Department: Budget & Management

Background Information

Following the Declaration of Local Disaster For Public Health Emergency by Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez in March 2020, the Hidalgo County Information Technology Department pursued the development of innovative learning strategies by implementing a public Wi-Fi network to respond to the public health emergency. The public Wi-Fi network, which was initially funded through the CARES Act, will provide free internet access to identified areas in each precinct and support internet access for mobile devices.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Wi-Fi tower has responded to the public health emergency by assisting citizens of the County with distance learning and teleworking. However, funding of the tower is set to expire with the CARES Act at the end of 2021.

On May 10, 2021 the U.S. the Department of the Treasury announced the launch of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, established by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, to provide \$350 billion in emergency funding for state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments. The bill allows governments to provide funding for broadband infrastructure to respond to the public health emergency's impacts.

Compliance

In compliance with the national preparedness goal under the Presidential Policy Directive (PPD8), the Homeland Security Presidential Directives 5 (HSPD-5) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Capability 12 and pursuant to the 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, requests the Court's approval for the necessary services to address the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic public health emergency.

Administration

Approval of the item is consistent with Hidalgo County's intended purpose of improving broadband infrastructure to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency, and in



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compliance with the U.S. Treasury's Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Interim Final Rule.

Agenda Item Caption

ARPA - American Rescue Plan Act Funds (1290):

Discussion, consideration, and action to approve the use of ARPA Relief Funds for the continued expenditure of the World Radio Network Tower Lease Agreement in order to assist with County functions and compliance with public health measures related to the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency with establishing a Wi-Fi Project to assist the citizens with distance learning, including technology improvements, as well as improving telework capability. (World Radio Network Tower Lease Agreement - Project Number: ARPA-21-200-011)

Recommendations

The Department of Budget and Management recommends approval of the use of ARPA Relief Funds for the continued leasing of the public Wi-Fi tower. Expenditures will be charged from CARES funds to the American Rescue Plan Act Relief Funds.