



## Commission on Seniors Resolution 20200921-03D

Date: September 21, 2020

Subject: Reallocation of Austin Public Library funds serving older adults

Motioned By: Lugo

Seconded By: Grampp

### **Recommendation**

The Commission on Seniors recommends the reallocation of funds, awarded to Austin Public Library in fiscal year 2020 in the amount of \$11,000. The original intent of funds was to develop educational and cultural programs for older adults. Due to COVID-19 older adults are experiencing greater social isolation and digital divide. The recommendation supports reallocating funds for the purchasing of technological devices, such as, software, hotspots, related training and support to reduce social isolation among older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To the extent appropriate and practical APL should partner with the efforts of the Austin Social Isolation Task force.

### **Description of Recommendation to Council**

The Commission on Seniors supports APL reallocating funds previously designated to serve older adults through technology needs that will help reduce the social isolation among older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic, including:

- Devices and software
- Mobile hotspots
- Training and support for users

### **Rationale:**

Preliminary data conducted by the Austin Social Isolation Taskforce suggests that almost half of the survey participants (49%) do not have broadband internet access; 60% of people who currently use technology, said they still needed someone to help them. Almost all of the survey participants (91%) said they'd be unable to pay for digital literacy training or devices without assistance.

Agencies serving older adults in the Austin area have reported that the social isolation of older adults is of growing concern during the COVID-19 shut downs. More and more services and programs have moved online, including programming directed at older adults from PARD and other city departments. Yet as the survey shows, many older adults lack access to devices, internet connections and skills to take advantage of online programming.

**Vote 11-0 (4 absent)**

For: Briesemeister, Varteressian, Cagle, Grampp, Hauser, Kareithi, Lugo, Nicola, Temperley,  
Van Sickle, Spain

Against: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Angle, Bordie, Garcia-Pittman, Jackson,

Attest:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janee Briesemeister", written over a horizontal line.

Janee Briesemeister, Chair