



Council Question and Answer

Related To	Item #111	Meeting Date	March 25, 2021
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Additional Answer Information

ARA spending framework

QUESTION/ANSWER: Council Member Alter's Office

- 1) *What are our plans to provide summer programming for youth using our city facilities such as programs run by PARD or programs funded by APH social service contracts run by outside contractors?*

APH staff have reached out to funded providers that offer youth programming during the academic year and the summer. Out of the 14 programs funded, all but two have confirmed either virtual or in-person opportunities for youth will be provided.

Two agencies are still planning delivery methods for summer activities and will update the department once plans are finalized.

PARD's goal is to resume the person summer camp opportunity in a manner that is consistent with CDC guidelines and local health authority recommendations. PARD will also offer a smaller selection of virtual camp options.

PARD is working with Austin Public Health to finalize a modified operational plan for in-person Summer Camps for 2021. At this time in person modified operations (as recommended by public health authorities and the CDC) will require reduced classroom capacity. During typical summer camp operations, PARD has the capacity to expand offerings, but currently, it is not possible to expand in person offerings and comply with the modified operations recommendations. The capacity for After-school Programs is yet to be determined.

As a youth development best practice, PARD does not typically hire youth under the age of 18 to supervise other youth in either Summer Camp or Afterschool. Instead, PARD typically conducts a Teen program that helps to build leadership skills for future employment opportunities. Youth employees under the age of 18 are not able to be counted in staff to child ratios as outlined in Local Standards of Care. In consideration of maximizing summer camp services to school aged children, hiring youth as counselors will further decrease capacity.

The City of Austin does hire youth under the age of 18 via the youth employment program. PARD collaborates with the youth employment program to place youth employees into PARD positions in which they can gain experience in the workforce and be successful. Given the opportunity this summer, PARD will collaborate as it has in the past to place youth in appropriate positions.

- 2) *How does this spending framework anticipate providing opportunities for youth programming during our summer months or other out-of-school-time programming in the next academic year?*

While the framework does not specifically address youth programming, there are opportunities for work-aged youth to participate in workforce training opportunities included in the spending plan (such as ACCC).

- 3) *What are our immediate plans to re-open libraries or otherwise expand digital access for Austinites who may not own personal computers or have internet in their homes? How does this spending framework anticipate investments and expenditures that expand digital access in the short and long-term?*

APL is looking to open our libraries for computer use in the April/May timeframe with the guidance of the health authorities. In the interim, we are providing laptops and hotspots to the community. If additional funding becomes available, we will expand our laptops and hotspots lending efforts. The spending plan recommends financial support towards closing the digital divide via investments in internet access; subscriptions; tablets; digital literacy training; and virtual tech support.

- 4) *Please provide a breakdown of funds used for first responders/public safety by department (APD, AFD, EMS). Please specify how much is allocated for each department's regular salaries and how much is for overtime costs.*

There are no funds being allocated for APD, AFD, or EMS

- 5) *Can staff provide additional detail on why various buckets are being spent out over two years?*

The Treasury Department will allocate local government allocations in two tranches: half within 60 days of enactment and the remaining half next year. While funds are available until December 31, 2024, staff felt that given the significant and pressing need in the community, it would be best to spend the money as quickly as possible.

- 6) *Please provide additional detail on the rationale for spending reserve funds immediately.*

Staff felt that given the significant and pressing need in the community, it would be best to spend the money as quickly as possible.

- 7) *Please describe the restrictions and guidelines the City must follow in spending these funds.*

Per the bill, funds must be spent:

- To respond to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19, or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses, and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries, such as tourism, travel, and hospitality;
- To respond to workers performing essential work during the COVID-19 public health emergency by providing premium pay to eligible workers of the local government that are performing such essential work, or by providing grants to eligible employers that have eligible workers who perform essential work;
- For the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue of such local government due to the COVID-19 public health emergency relative to revenues collected in the most recent full fiscal year of the local government prior to the emergency (fiscal year 2019 for the City of Austin);
- To make necessary investment in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure; or
- To transfer funds to a private nonprofit organization, a public benefit corporation involved in the transportation of passengers or cargo, or a special purpose unit of state or local government.