



Legislation Text

File #: 20-1811, **Version:** 1

Resolution Requesting \$50,000 in Additional Funds for Barrier Busters Unmet Needs Fund for Direct Assistance to City of Ann Arbor Residents (**8 Votes Required**)

The Barrier Busters Network consists of more than 100 social service agencies committed to improving services for Washtenaw County residents in need. The network, and the accompanying Unmet Needs Fund for emergency assistance, has been managed by the Washtenaw County Office of Community & Economic Development (OCED) since 2001.

The Unmet Needs Fund provides residents with an efficient way to prevent housing, utility, health, transportation and other basic need crises. Residents in need connect with a Barrier Busters member agency to access the basic needs financial assistance.

City Council has included their annual allocation of \$20,000 to the Barrier Busters Unmet Needs fund along with the annual contribution to the Coordinated Funding, most recently as part of Resolution R-17-394.

Budget/Fiscal Impact: Since the state of emergency declaration declared by Governor Whitmer in March, the spread of the pandemic has most negatively impacted those most vulnerable members of our community, and Barrier Busters emergency requests have shown a three-fold increase in requests compared to 2019. OCED recently provided the City a Barrier Busters report during the period of July 1, through September 30, 2020, reflecting that 77 City households received assistance to stabilize their households expending more than \$54,000, more than the city's annual allocation and 22% of County-wide funds dispersed during the same time period. As additional requests are coming in weekly, we would like to request an additional \$50,000 for the Barrier Busters unmet needs fund to provide additional support to vulnerable community members from immediate financial emergencies associated with the COVID-19 pandemic through June 30, 2021.

Prepared by: Teresa Gillotti, Director, Office of Community & Economic Development

Reviewed by: Derek Delacourt, Community Services Area Administrator

Approved by: Tom Crawford, City Administrator

Whereas, The Barrier Busters program, managed through the Washtenaw County Office of Community & Economic Development, assists low to moderate income households via an emergency assistance fund for housing, utility, transportation, health and other basic needs;

Whereas, City Council has used the Coordinated Funding process to distribute its human services funds since 2011, including \$20,000 annually to the Barrier Busters program;

Whereas, With the COVID-19 pandemic, the most vulnerable residents in our community are most negatively impacted; and

Whereas, since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a threefold increase in emergency requests to Barrier Busters and the need is ongoing;

RESOLVED, That City Council affirms the need to continue to support low to moderate income households in our community during the COVID-19 pandemic;

RESOLVED, That City Council hereby authorizes \$50,000 payment to the Barrier Busters program as administered by the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development as we continue to find solutions to assist low income and vulnerable City residents avoid basic needs emergencies;

RESOLVED, That City Council appropriate \$50,000 from the General Fund fund balance to the FY21 General Fund Community Development budget for the purpose of supporting the Barrier Busters program without regard to fiscal year; and

RESOLVED, That the City Administrator be authorized to take the necessary administrative actions to implement this resolution.