



Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

Legislation Text

File #: RS2022-1559, **Version:** 1

A resolution appropriating \$2,600,851 in American Rescue Plan Act funds from Fund #30216 to provide legal representation to low and moderate-income Davidson County renters to defend against landlord eviction.

WHEREAS, on June 15, 2021, the Metropolitan Council passed Resolution RS2021-966, a resolution which accepted grant funds for local government support from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds established by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 ("ARP Funds") from the U.S. Department of the Treasury to The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, which was subsequently signed into law by Mayor John Cooper on June 16, 2021; and,

WHEREAS, Resolution RS2021-966 established a COVID-19 Financial Oversight Committee ("the Committee") whose role is to collect, consider, and recommend appropriate uses of the ARP Funds as designated by the Metropolitan Council disbursement plan. The Committee will submit its reports and recommendations to the Mayor, the Director of Finance, and the Metropolitan Council no later than June 30, 2025; and,

WHEREAS, there are federal requirements for use of ARP Funds that require that these funds be expended or obligated on or before December 31, 2024; and,

WHEREAS, the Committee recognizes that protecting low and moderate-income renters is a critical priority identified by the community and that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused negative financial effects on families across Davidson County; and,

WHEREAS, the Committee has previously recommended allocation and offsets of federal CARES Act and ARP Funds to assist with rent and mortgage assistance through RS2020-478, as amended by RS2020-607, RS2020-657, and RS2021-1116, which were approved by Metro Council; and,

WHEREAS, the Committee seeks to further protect renters by providing a right to counsel when faced with threat of landlord eviction; and,

WHEREAS, the Committee recognizes that renter right to counsel programs are proven to reduce displacement due to eviction, increase housing stability, and reduce inflows into homelessness; and,

WHEREAS, the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland ("Legal Aid") and Conexión Américas have proposed a two-year pilot program that will provide outreach and education, pre-filing legal aid, direct legal representation, and program evaluation, as further described in Exhibit A; and,

WHEREAS, at this time, due to limited available ARP Funds, the Committee seeks to fund 87% of the proposed request in Exhibit A, with the expectation that the remainder of the program may be approved when further ARP Funds become available; and,

WHEREAS, it is to the benefit of the citizens of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County that this resolution be approved.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. The Metropolitan Council accepts this resolution as a recommendation of the COVID-19

Financial Oversight Committee.

Section 2. That \$1,924,292.00 from the Covid-19 American Rescue Plan Fund #30216 is hereby appropriated to Legal Aid to be used to administer the program described in Exhibit A.

Section 3. That \$ 676,559.00 from the Covid-19 American Rescue Plan Fund #30216 is hereby appropriated to Conexión Américas to be used to administer the program described in Exhibit A.

Section 4. This resolution shall take effect from and after its final passage, the welfare of the public requiring it.

Analysis

This resolution appropriates \$2,600,851 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) funds to provide legal representation to low and moderate-income Davidson County renters to defend against landlord eviction.

This would provide funds to the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland and Conexión Américas for a two year pilot program to provide outreach and education, pre-filing legal aid, direct legal representation, and program evaluation. This appropriation funds 87% of the proposed request, which can be found in Exhibit A to the resolution.

The resolution appropriates \$1,924,292 in ARP funding to the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland and \$676,559 in ARP funding to Conexión Américas to administer this program.

Fiscal Note: This \$2,600,851 appropriation, along with the appropriations per Resolution No. RS2022-1558 and Resolution No. RS2022-1560 would be the 24th, 25th and 26th resolutions appropriating from the American Recovery Plan Act (ARP) Fund for a cumulative total of \$110,508,686. The total grant award is \$259,810,600 and the first half of this amount was received in July 2021.