



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

Hearing Order to Examine the Impact of Expiring Covid-Related Grant Funding and Other Expenditures on City Programs and Staffing

WHEREAS, The City of Boston has received significant COVID-related federal funding, which has supported various city programs, initiatives, and staffing across departments; and

WHEREAS, Under this administration, Boston has utilized once-in-a-lifetime federal funding through the American Rescue Plan (ARPA), as well as other sources, to support a wide range of programs and initiatives. These funds have been instrumental in addressing immediate needs, implementing innovative projects, and delivering relief to residents and businesses; and

WHEREAS, The City of Boston received the following COVID-19-related federal funding:

- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): \$558.7 million
- Coronavirus Relief Fund (CARES Act): \$121 million
- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG-CV) from CARES Act: \$5.2 million
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG-CV) from CARES Act: At least \$10 million

Total COVID-19 Federal Funding for Boston: Approximately \$695 million, which reflects direct federal funding and does not include any additional allocations from state or other federal programs that may have supported Boston during the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, These funds have been instrumental in maintaining essential services, supporting city programs, and hiring additional staff; however, all these funds have been allocated and will run out soon, or in some cases, have already run out, raising concerns about the sustainability of the services and positions currently reliant on these funds; and

WHEREAS, A comprehensive assessment of all city programs, initiatives, and staffing positions dependent on these expiring funding sources is necessary to ensure transparency and to plan for potential financial and operational impacts; and

WHEREAS, To highlight just a few examples, the expiration of funding may jeopardize critical programs such as:

- The Boston Police Department's Mental Health Crisis Response Pilot Program, which received \$18 million in ARPA funding to integrate trained mental health professionals into emergency response teams;

- The Boston Housing Authority (BHA) Healthy Public Housing Initiative, which received \$32 million in ARPA funds to improve health and safety conditions in public housing. This program included upgrades such as enhanced ventilation systems, air purifiers, and other health-related improvements. As these funds are expended, sustaining these health and safety enhancements may become difficult without alternative funding sources;
- The Boston Housing Authority Digital Equity program, which received \$1 million in ARPA funding to provide digital access and literacy to residents. This initiative is crucial for bridging the digital divide, but its continuation beyond the initial funding period may be uncertain without additional financial support.

WHEREAS, It is critical to explore strategies for sustaining these initiatives beyond the expiration of COVID-related funding, including identifying alternative funding sources, budget reallocations, or other fiscal strategies. Without a comprehensive understanding of how this funding has been spent across all programs and initiatives, we are unable to effectively advocate for continued funding or alternative ways to continue these important services;

THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED, That the Boston City Council, in collaboration with the appropriate City departments, hold a hearing to review the full scope of funding currently supporting city programs, initiatives, and staffing, assess the potential impacts of the expiration of funding sources (including grants, staffing expenditures, and other program funding), and discuss plans to address any budgetary gaps to ensure the continuity of essential services.

Filed on the 12th day of February, 2025