



Legislation Text

File #: 22-0510, **Version:** 1

Agenda Item Name:

American Rescue Plan: State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds for the Alachua County Central Receiving System

Presenter:

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Description:

Approval of plan to use American Rescue Funds in the amount of \$1,750,000.00 to support the operating expenses of the Central Receiving System for the first 18 months. Use of General Fund Reserves to increase the budget in the general fund account string 001.29.2944.564.34.00 from \$250k to \$500k

Recommended Action:

Approve the plan for the implementation of the Central Receiving System including appropriating \$1,750,000.00 of American Rescue Plan funds. Approve the use of General Fund Reserves and the corresponding budget amendment.

Prior Board Motions:

On August 4, 2020, in a Special Budget Meeting, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) discussed a commitment from the General Fund of \$250,000 in capital expenditures for a planned Central Receiving Facility (CRF), now referred to as a Central Receiving System (CRS), was discussed. At its May 10, 2022 meeting, the Board supplemented its original commitment by \$250,000 for a total of \$500,000. A request from the Board to the City of Gainesville via a Chair Letter for an additional \$250,000 to match the total County commitment was made. The City of Gainesville also submitted a Legislative Budget Request of \$496,500 to the State of Florida for additional capital funds, and this has now been approved with the Governor's signature.

On August 12, 2021, the Board passed a four part motion: 1) Direct County staff to find and organize the funding to move forward with a Central Receiving Facility for Alachua County and surrounding areas; 2) Authorize the Chair to transmit a letter of invitation to the City of Gainesville and area hospitals to participate in this program both operationally and financially; 3) Staff to develop an operational and oversight committee for the CRF and bring back to the Board; and, 4) Request staff and Meridian to work to produce a three to five year plan that shows potential partners and funding sources with the goal that the County is not supported by the County's General Fund in three to five years.

Additionally, at its May 10, 2022, the Board approved that a Central Receiving System be implemented as a bricks and mortar location on the campus of a Public Receiving Facility with a Crisis Stabilization Unit. The Board also instructed staff to proceed with development of a formal

application for American Rescue funds (State and Local Fiscal Recovery) to support the operational needs of the planned Central Receiving System.

Fiscal Consideration:

\$1.75 million in funds designated for Alachua County through the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) Program of the Federal Government (234.00.0064.569.82.00). These costs will be allocated toward the identified start-up and operational budget of the planned facility.

A related amount of \$500,000 in General Revenue funds toward the capital budget for designated construction of a facility on Meridian Behavioral Health Care's main campus.
(001.29.2944.564.34.00)

Strategic Guide:

Social and Economic Opportunity

Background:

The County has engaged in a deliberate planning process to the development of a Central Receiving System (CRS) for the past few years. Recent efforts of the County, through the assistance of its staff and also leaders in the criminal justice and behavioral health systems, have focused on translating a vision into a reality to help meet behavioral health crisis care needs in our community.

The CRS serves as a single point of entry into the behavioral health system for assessment, evaluation and placement of adults experiencing a crisis as defined by the Baker or Marchman Acts. Once operational, the CRS will offer immediate, short-term assessment, stabilization and identification of appropriate placement to such persons, with the goal of completing a care plan within just 23 hours of entry. The plan for the Alachua County CRS will enable it to serve children, too providing them and their families with the same array of services.

This program is recognized as an evidence-based practice by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA). In Florida, this same vehicle is used to address the behavioral health needs of those citizens who reside in over 23 of the State's 67 counties.

There are significant advantages of the CRS model which will finally be available to the County once it is implemented. Chiefly among these advantages are: greater coordination and quality of care for citizens and families; significantly reduced processing time for law enforcement and a valuable mechanism for pre-arrest diversion; and, an alternative to hospitalization, thereby leveraging reduced use of costly hospital visits.

The adoption of this application as outlined in the attached recovery plan document and will formally secure for the County the eligible use of the Federal American Rescue Plan funds for the purpose of implementing the CRS for the community.