

## STAFF REPORT

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**Date:** April 26, 2023

**To:** Mayor and City Council

**Thru:** Doug Thornley, City Manager

**Subject:** Staff Report (For Possible Action): Presentation, discussion, and potential direction to staff regarding the allocation of \$1,000,000 of American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds towards senior-focused programming and initiatives.

**From:** Noemi Gomez, Community Relationships Manager

**Department:** City Manager's Office

**Summary:**

Staff has prepared an updated senior American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) allocations plan for Council discussion and potential adoption. The plan outlines how the four percent of ARPA funds allocation toward senior-focused programming and initiatives will help combat senior isolation. A summary of the proposed projects are as follows:

- **Category 1:** City of Reno Senior program coordinator
- **Category 2:** City of Reno Senior engagement
- **Category 3:** Neighbor Network of Northern Nevada transportation program
- **Category 4:** Reno Food Systems food insecurity program

**Alignment with Strategic Plan:**

Fiscal Sustainability

Arts, Parks, and Historical Resources

**Previous Council Action:**

February 8, 2023 - Council requested staff to get further input from the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee (SCAC) and the community regarding the senior ARPA allocations plan, then bring a plan forward approved by the SCAC.

January 26, 2022 - Council approved the recommended \$24,499,998.50 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocation. Four percent of the funds were allocated for senior support.

**Background:**

The senior ARPA allocation plan provides guidance as to how the funds will be spent to support senior resources in the community. The plan aligns spending with Council's existing strategic priorities and master plan.

Staff began a public engagement campaign in September 2021 that concluded on November 30, 2021. Feedback from the public, stakeholder groups, Council, and staff identified key priorities and potential projects to support the health and safety of the City and recovery from economic impacts caused by the pandemic. Engagement included full participation in the Nevada Recovers listening tour, hosted by the State Treasurer's Office, and four opportunities with the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee (SCAC) for discussion, input, and process updates:

- **SCAC Meeting: February 8, 2022** - Presentation and discussion on ARPA (American Recovery Plan Act) funds allocated to senior resources, for discussion only.
- **SCAC Meeting: April 12, 2022** - Discussion, possible action, or recommendation plans for the committee to address the needs of seniors in the areas of communication, transportation, food insecurity, and engagement, for possible action.
- **SCAC Meeting: September 13, 2022** - Presentation, discussion, and possible recommendation on ARPA (American Recovery Plan Act) funds allocated to senior resources, for possible action.

After extensive outreach, senior citizen input, and program development with community partners, the SCAC was scheduled for a final update on January 10, 2023. The agenda was not approved and the final ARPA updates, based on previous recommendations, were not presented.

On February 8, 2023, the proposed plan was presented to Council and staff was directed to return to the SCAC for further discussion and input on the plan. The committee and community provided further discussion, input, and public comment at the following meetings:

- **SCAC Meeting: February 14, 2023** - Update on ARPA (American Recovery Plan Act) funding related to the senior community. (For Possible Action)
- **SCAC Meeting: March 14, 2023** - Discussion and recommendation for ARPA (American Recovery Plan Act) plan regarding senior services. (For Possible Action)
- **SCAC Special Meeting: March 30, 2023** - Discussion and recommendation for ARPA (American Recovery Plan Act) senior resource plan. (For Possible Action)

### **Discussion:**

Based on the SCAC and community feedback, the following categories were identified for the senior allocations plan during the March 30, 2023 special SCAC meeting. After extensive discussions, the committee voted for the following categories and specific nonprofit organizations to be brought forward to Council for the \$1,000,000 allocation. They are as follows:

- **Category 1:** City of Reno Senior program coordinator
- **Category 2:** City of Reno Senior engagement

- **Category 3:** Neighbor Network of Northern Nevada transportation program
- **Category 4:** Reno Food Systems food insecurity program

### **Senior Program Coordinator**

To ensure the needs of the senior community are being met, a grant-funded, 100 percent full-time equivalent (FTE) Senior Program Coordinator will be hired. The Senior Program Coordinator will be an essential function to fulfill the needs of the senior community and to successfully execute proposed ARPA projects and support the SCAC. The following preliminary job duties include:

- Plans, directs, coordinates, and implements a wide range of activities tailored to meet the specific needs and interests of the elderly;
- Designs program(s) that address the social, physical, and emotional needs of the senior population;
- Assists in the preparation and management of the senior engagement budget;
- Coordinates and directs special events and activities to attract seniors and stimulate interest;
- Collaborates with the Reno Senior Citizen Advisory Committee;
- Collects informational and educational materials to promote public awareness and participation to seniors;
- Provides guidance and, where necessary, assistance, in a wide variety of personal service areas involving the senior population;
- Administers senior programs for the City of Reno and is responsible for planning, organizing, coordinating, and implementing a variety of services to enhance the quality of life and the well-being of Reno seniors;
- Responsible for directing the day-to-day administration of various activities/programs designed to meet the needs of the senior population;
- Coordinates the provision of services to the participants and promotes these programs which address the recreational, social, and emotional needs of seniors;
- Maintains direct contact with Local, County, State, and Nationwide agencies that provide information and services to the senior population;
- Establishes and maintains liaison with community leaders and groups to obtain their cooperation and support of programs and services and coordinates these services with other community agencies, as needed;
- Assesses the needs of the senior population and maintains statistical data pertinent to programming;
- May design publications and monthly calendars to keep participants informed of events and/or changes in the senior community;
- May serve on community committees, as appropriate to seniors;

- Uses computer applications or other automated systems such as spreadsheets, word processing, calendar, e-mail, and database software in performing work assignments; and,
- Maintain appropriate records including financial reports of programs and activities and participation of seniors.

Feedback was received from the SCAC and community as to what the Senior Program Coordinator's main role will be. Based on the preliminary job description, Human Resources staff identified the salary range and related costs.

- **Salary Range:** \$70,205.93 - \$89,578.48 annually
- **COLA:** 2.5% annually
- **Benefits:** 45% annually
- **Merit Pay:** Up to 5% annually

**Amount:** \$337,000

**Project Length:** 3 years

### **Senior Engagement**

Funds are to be used to increase senior engagement across the City of Reno until 2026. The Senior Program Coordinator will manage funds and collaborate with the SCAC to identify senior engagement opportunities. All programs and initiatives are to maximize the use of services and combat senior isolation.

Part of the senior engagement, funds will be used to cover the cost of technology classes that will occur yearly. In 2021, the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee invested funds to go towards smartphone classes for seniors in the community. The classes sought to help the senior community effectively use a smartphone, increase independence, and provide an opportunity to interact with other seniors. A total of 119 seniors participated. Ten classes were offered on a weekly basis, averaging 11.9 seniors per class. These free classes for seniors were well attended and in high demand. The technology classes will:

- Be expanded to teach seniors how to use other forms of technology such as laptops and tablets.
- Continue to be offered free of charge.
- Be offered both in English and in multilingual languages, depending on the needs of the community.
- Be taught by a specialized instructor with a maximum class size of 20 seniors.
- Increase language access opportunities to reach more seniors who have a different primary language other than English.

**Amount:** \$163,000

**Project Length:** 3 years

### **Transportation Services**

Neighbor Network of Northern Nevada (N4), a nonprofit organization, was selected to lead senior transportation services. N4 will offer free rides utilizing its Lyft/Uber program. Each participant will receive an \$80 Lyft/Uber voucher each month. N4 will provide hands-on training to participants to use the Lyft/Uber apps, and they will conduct community outreach activities to include technology workshops for seniors in the Reno community.

If a participant does not have the desire or ability to use a smartphone, they will be offered N4's concierge service at no additional charge. With concierge, the participant and/or their support person simply calls the N4 office to have the ride scheduled for them through a special platform N4 has with Lyft/Uber.

N4 will utilize its marketing contractor to promote the program and ensure project outcomes are met. Participant feedback will be collected on a quarterly basis to evaluate satisfaction and program effectiveness.

The goal is to ensure senior transportation barriers are reduced and their opportunity to participate in recreation and programming is maximized. Transportation support for the senior community is an essential service that seniors depend on. This transportation program will have a direct benefit to seniors in the community and the City of Reno.

**Amount:** \$200,000

**Project Length:** 2 years

### **Food Insecurity Services**

In an effort to meet the growing need for food assistance among seniors and better meet their nutritional needs, Reno Foods Systems, a nonprofit organization, will lead the food insecurity, health, and wellness program. The program's initiatives are as follows:

- **Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP):** This program provides seniors with vouchers to take to any farmer's market and spend on fresh fruits and vegetables. A collaborative approach will be taken with the Department of Agriculture, the Food Bank of Northern Nevada, and the Desert Farming Initiative to increase the consumption, production, and distribution of fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables and to supplement the nutritional needs of Reno seniors.
- **Nutrition Education:** This program provides peer-to-peer instruction/mentoring for seniors who are passionate about cooking with seniors who have little to no experience preparing vegetables for consumption. This program not only provides nutrition for seniors but also helps to combat senior isolation.

- **Mobile Farmers Market:** This program will provide access to fresh produce for seniors with limited transportation and mobility. Mobile markets will be located in Reno Housing Authority senior residences and underserved areas throughout Reno. The Senior Program Coordinator will assist in identifying locations.
- **Garden access for seniors:** In partnership with Urban Roots, this program will build community gardens to help seniors grow their own food. Growing food is beneficial to everyone, but especially to seniors to increase emotional wellness, improve nutrition, and promote physical activity, relaxation, socialization, cognitive stimulation, personal fulfillment, and a sense of purpose.

**Amount:** \$300,000

**Project Length:** 4 years

**Financial Implications:**

If approved, the projects will be funded with \$1,000,000 of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. There is no impact to the General Fund.

**Legal Implications:**

Funds will be allocated and spent in compliance with the American Rescue Plan Act, the Department of Treasury Final Rule, and City purchasing policies and procedures.

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends Council to adopt the proposed senior ARPA allocations plans.

**Proposed Motion:**

I move to approve the senior ARPA allocations plan.