

STAFF REPORT

Date: February 8, 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 four percent of American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds towards senior-focus programming and initiatives.

From: Noemi Gomez, Community Relationships Program Manager

Department: City Manager's Office

Summary:

Staff has prepared a senior 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 to help combat senior isolation. A summary of the proposed projects are as follows:

Lead	Project	Proposed Budget	Project Length
City of Reno	Technology Classes (English)	\$20,000	2 years
City of Reno	Technology Classes (Multilingual)	\$20,000	2 years
City of Reno	Senior Tours	\$20,000	2 years
City of Reno	Senior Transportation Program	\$200,000	2 years
City of Reno	Senior Program Coordinator	\$240,000	2 years
Food Bank of Northern Nevada	Golden Groceries Community Market	\$500,000	3 years

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

Fiscal Sustainability

Arts, Parks, and Historical Resources

Previous Council Action:

- January 26, 2022 - Council approved 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 programs in the community. An identified priority, 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. This also included full participation in the Nevada Recovers Listening Tour hosted by the State Treasurer's Office. In addition to this public engagement strategy to collect feedback, staff also scheduled four opportunities with the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee (SCAC) for further 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 was not presented.

Discussion:

Based on the community feedback and staff recommendations, a goal and aims were identified for the senior support allocation.

- **Goal:** Help combat senior isolation through:
 - **Aim 1:** Transportation Services and Senior Program Coordination
 - **Aim 2:** Health and Wellness
 - **Aim 3:** Educational Opportunities

The \$1,000,000 allocation is dispersed among five programs and initiatives to successfully help combat senior isolation.

Senior Program Coordination

To ensure the needs of the senior community are being met, a 100 percent full time equivalent (FTE) senior citizen program coordinator will be hired to provide the following services:

- Spearhead, lead, and manage the in-house transportation program
- Provide administrative support towards City of Reno senior initiatives
- Assist with the coordinating of the technology classes and senior tours
- Assist with the planning, coordinating, and execution of senior focus engagement opportunities
- Assist with relationship management and collaborate with other senior agencies
- Connect seniors to services as needed

The senior citizen program coordinator will be an essential function to fulfill the needs of the senior community and to be able to successfully execute proposed projects. They will also support the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee and the Parks and Recreation department on senior-related projects/initiatives.

Amount: \$240,000

Project Length: 2 years

Transportation Services

The City of Reno will manage an in-house transportation program that will provide eligible seniors with a voucher through a transportation agency like Lyft or Uber and/or a bus pass. The goal is to ensure senior transportation barriers are reduced and their opportunity to participate in recreation and programming is maximized.

Through this program, seniors will be able to:

- Use the vouchers to visit any City of Reno park or recreation center
- Use to attend City of Reno programming/events such as technology classes
- Attend City of Reno Senior Citizen Advisory Committee meetings
- Visit the Golden Groceries Community Market

Transportation support for the senior community is an essential service that seniors depend on. This in-house transportation program will have a direct benefit to seniors in the community and the City of Reno.

Amount: \$200,000

Project Length: 2 years

Health and Wellness

In an effort to meet the growing need for food assistance among seniors and better meet their nutritional needs, the Food Bank of Northern Nevada (FBNN) will operate a Golden Groceries senior food pantry that will provide a senior-friendly environment and senior-focused foods.

Through the Golden Groceries Community Market program, the following services will be provided:

- Meet the nutritional needs of our senior communities (low sodium and high protein)
- Serve as the hub for seniors for information and services such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, housing and transportation resources, nutritional classes, and socializing opportunities
- Create equity, provide dignity and preserve client choice to seniors utilizing the community market
- The market will be located in a neighborhood with high need for seniors facing food insecurities (89512 and 89502)

Amount: \$500,000

Project Length: 2 years

Educational Opportunities

Technology Classes

In 2021, the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee invested funds to go towards smart phone 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 to 11.9 seniors per class. These free classes for seniors were well attended and in high demand.

With the use of ARPA funds, the 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: \$40,000

Project Length: 2 years

Senior Tours

The City of Reno Parks and Recreation department offers tours to different locations across the city for the senior community. Previous tours have included concerts, tours of museums and the Candy Dance. Allocating funds to the Parks and Recreation department to help offset some of the cost per tour will lower the price of the tours for seniors.

Senior tours will:

- Help combat senior isolations and give participants an opportunity to engage with other members in the community
- Increase monthly participation and allow more seniors to have access to these events
- Reduce the cost of the tours for senior participants
- Be eligible for seniors who hold City of Reno Health and Wellness passes

Amount: \$20,000

Project Length: 2 years

All programs are designed to intertwine with one another for seniors to be able to maximize the use of services and combat senior isolation.

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, Department of Treasury Final Rule, and City purchasing policies and procedures.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends Council to adopt the proposed senior ARPA plans.

Proposed Motion:

I move to approve staff recommendations for senior ARPA allocations.