



City Council Report

Date: January 24, 2022
To: City Council
Through: Christopher J. Brady, City Manager
From: Natalie N. Lewis, Deputy City Manager
Subject: Proposed Mesa-County-New Leaf AZ@Work Workforce Development and Jobs Access Center
(Citywide)

Purpose and Recommendation

Staff recommends authorizing the City Manager to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with Maricopa County, AZ and a Lease Agreement with A New Leaf in order to launch and operate an AZ@Work Workforce Development/Jobs Access Center to be located at New Leaf/Mesa CAN building at 635 East Broadway Road, in Mesa.

Background

This proposed Workforce Development/Jobs Access Center is a partnership between the City of Mesa, Maricopa County, and A New Leaf and will be focused on the response side of jobs training for low-moderate income households (including those impacted financially by the pandemic) and for those in human services programs supported by the City of Mesa and/or are part of the Housing Path to Recovery. Other workforce development programs are offered by the City, and as depicted in attachment 2.

The City is proposing to invest approximately \$250,000 in American Rescue Act – Local Fiscal Recovery funds to cover startup costs and to fund one-half of a full-time Workforce Development/Jobs Coordinator (who will be a County AZ@Work employee) and possibly one, full-time navigator through 2024. Thereafter, the staffing costs will become part of the Human Services, CDGB, ESG annual allocation process to ensure the program's sustainability.

The partners plan to operate this jobs center at the MesaCAN building (former Mesa Counts on College space) that is owned by A New Leaf and was originally renovated using the City's allocated Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The newly named Education and Workforce Office has been relocated to Mesa City Plaza.

Discussion

Being able to “skill up” Mesa’s formerly homeless, those who are evicted or lost their employment, and households in low-moderate income areas is an important service for people to continue to graduate and advance within the City’s “Housing Path to Recovery” (see attachment 3).

Mesa has several workforce development opportunities throughout the City, most provided by non-profit agencies. Each facility targets very specific audiences and provides programs, some entry level/basic and others more advanced. In addition, there is a County AZ@Work jobs center in Gilbert, which the County is in process of relocating somewhere along the border of Mesa and Tempe, and they expect that relocation to be completed in 2022. The existing Gilbert center serves approximately 100 Mesa residents each month.

This new workforce/jobs access center has three main priorities:

- 1) To serve Mesa residents who are part of existing City programs, i.e., off the streets, voucher recipients, rent assistance, referrals from local non-profits, schools, and other partners. In other words, participants in the City’s Housing Path to Recovery in need of this service.
- 2) To provide ‘skilling up’ services in Mesa’s low-moderate income neighborhoods, those particularly impacted by the pandemic through evictions and/or declining household incomes.
- 3) To facilitate collaborations and a referral process/network with Mesa’s existing jobs training programs to help residents access services that best meet their needs.

Data-driven analysis will measure:

- number of participants or referrals each month,
- participant demographic information,
- program satisfaction levels as well as insights on what services helped participants be successful (via participant surveys), and
- as possible, documenting how many participants secured a new job.

City Council reviewed and concurred to fund this program. Once officially approved by Council, the partners will work together to launch this new access center in spring 2022.

Fiscal Impact

There will be no fiscal impact to the City's General Fund. Instead, the City is proposing to invest approximately \$250,000 in American Rescue Plan Act - Local Fiscal Recovery funds; all other services will be provided in-kind by the partners.

Coordinated With

City Manager's Office, Maricopa County AZ@Work, New Leaf, Community Services Department, Economic Development Department, Finance Department, and the Education and Workforce Development Office.

Attached:

- 1-Resolution, IGA, Lease Agreement documents
- 2- City of Mesa Workforce Development continuum
- 3-Housing Path to Recovery continuum