



Agenda Item Overview

The Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL) COVID-19 Response Grant allowed local jurisdictions from across the United States to apply for funding to support safe and secure elections. The Safe and Secure Voting Grant initiative was developed to cover certain 2020 election expenses June 15, 2020 and December 31, 2020 resultant from COVID-19.

Durham County Government was awarded \$1,466,840 to cover expenses not funded in the Board of Elections base budget resultant from COVID-19. The invaluable grant award will assist with temporary staffing and postage needed for the increase in absentee ballot requests, bolsters technology support and resources for additional personal protective equipment. The dollars will fund an hourly rate increase to attract and retain election poll workers and finance the additional staff needed to meet the State of North Carolina guidelines for the number of one-stop voting poll sites. Finally, the additional resources will support expanded public awareness campaigns to ensure all residents are informed about the safe and secure practices underway for the upcoming unprecedented election. The budget breakdown and spending highlights follow.

Durham County Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL) Grant Award Categories

Absentee Ballot Assembly and Processing Equipment	\$317,475
Early Voting Sites	\$346,975
In-person Voting at Polling Places on Election Day	\$141,390
Personal Protective Equipment, Cleaning & Security	\$286,000
Voter Awareness Education Campaign	\$250,000
Technology Support	\$125,000
Total	\$1,466,840

Grant Expenditure Highlights

The request for absentee ballots has increased exponentially due to COVID-19. During the November 2016 election, over 5,400 absentee ballots were requested. As of September 27, 2020, over 51,000 ballots requested and processed for the November 2020 election. Board of Elections staff anticipate absentee ballots continuing through the October 27th deadline to request applications. As such, \$317,475 was funded to support 20 additional temporary staff postage and equipment and supplies. The additional temporary staff will conduct all absentee-by-mail functions pre- and post-election



Although funds were allocated to support 10 early voting locations, four additional sites were added for one-stop voting pursuant to State Board of Elections requirements based on the Center for Disease Control and NC Department of Health and Human Services guidelines on social distancing. Durham County plans to have 14 full-time early voting locations. These must be sufficiently staffed with over 400 officials with hazard pay to limit worker turnover, handle a surge in voters before polls open, and manage sites in a pandemic environment. It will exceed current budget appropriations by at least \$346,975. The additional resources also address funding gaps for extra staff needed to monitor social distancing. The increase allows for a \$5 per hour allocation for hazardous pay, with Site Workers receiving \$20.00 per hour and Site Coordinators receiving \$25 per hour. Both amounts represent a \$5.00 per hour hazardous pay adjustment above the current hourly rate for election poll workers. We are hopeful the additional funding will help the Board of Elections attract and retain poll workers.

Durham County is committed to maintaining all 57 polling locations in Durham County ahead of the 2020 General Election. To achieve this, the Board of Elections will require 871 election officials to staff the polling places. Of this number, 200 of the poll workers are above previous levels due to the coronavirus pandemic. This additional funding ensures an adequate amount of electronic poll book operators, cleanliness coordinators, ballot distributors, social distancing monitors, and other critical positions required to be staffed in polling places. The funds also cover the cost for renting larger facilities to ensure adequate social distancing occurs. These unbudgeted expenses total \$141,390. These actions will help promote safe and secure access to polling locations.

Although the county has allocated funds to support personal protective equipment and supplies, an additional \$286,000 is needed to increase safety protocols. These expenses include curbside call bell base replacement, sneeze guards for poll workers, sanitizer drums, electrostatic sprayers, stanchions for social distancing and line control, additional absentee envelopes, security for additional one-stop sites, disinfectant and daily cleaning of early voting locations (\$155,000). Further, additional security will be added to ensure safe environments at poll locations (\$131,000).

An additional \$250,000 supports increased county-wide information awareness about voting and to produce more targeted videos with the goal of reaching all demographics through various communication avenues. These funds will be used to distribute county-wide mailings to the household of each registered voter in the county encouraging early voting and providing general information on voting options (\$70,000). Additionally, the dollars will be used to create outreach videos in English and Spanish on safe in-person voting in Durham County and provide for voting awareness campaigns that will occur through multiple media all media outlets such as radio, newspapers (electronic and print), television and social media (\$180,000). In addition, \$125,000 to support technology enhancements and support during elections.



Policy Impact

This facilitation of this service is in accordance with Durham County’s goal to provide a safe and secure election process.

Fiscal Impact

Funding supports election expenses awarded from a grant sponsored by the Center for Tech and Civic Life.

Recommendation

The County Manager recommends that the BOCC accept the \$1,466,840 in grant funds from The Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL) COVID-19 Response Grant program.



CENTER FOR
TECH AND
CIVIC LIFE

September 16, 2020

Durham County, North Carolina
County Manager's Office
200 East Main Street
Durham, NC 27713

Dear Claudia Hager,

I am pleased to inform you that based on and in reliance upon the information and materials provided by Durham County, and the special circumstances Durham County faces administering elections in 2020, the Center for Tech and Civic Life ("CTCL"), a nonprofit organization tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code ("IRC") section 501(c)(3), has decided to award a grant to support the work of Durham County (Grantee").

The following is a description of the grant:

AMOUNT OF GRANT: \$ 1,466,840.00 USD

PURPOSE: The grant funds must be used exclusively for the public purpose of planning and operationalizing safe and secure election administration in Durham County in 2020 ("Purpose").

Before CTCL transmits these funds to Grantee, CTCL requires that Grantee review and sign this agreement ("Grant Agreement") and agree to use the grant funds in compliance with the Grant Agreement and with United States tax laws and the laws and regulations of your state and jurisdiction ("Applicable Laws"). Specifically, by signing this letter Grantee certifies and agrees to the following:

1. Grantee is a local government unit or political subdivision within the meaning of IRC section 170(c)(1).
2. This grant shall be used only for the Purpose described above, and for no other purposes.

3. Due to special circumstances Grantee faces administering elections in 2020, Grantee has produced a plan for safe and secure election administration in 2020, including an assessment of election administration needs and budget estimates for such assessment (“Safe Voting Plan”). The Safe Voting Plan is attached to this agreement. Grantee shall expend the total amount of grant funds listed in the Safe Voting Plan as detailed in the Safe Voting Plan, but may reallocate funds between budget items listed in the Safe Voting Plan or to any other permissible public purpose listed in the online grant application with notice by electronic mail to CTCL. Such reallocation does not require the permission of CTCL.
4. Grantee shall not use any part of this grant to make a grant to another organization, except in the case where the organization is a local government unit or political subdivision within the meaning of IRC section 170(c)(1) or a nonprofit organization tax-exempt under IRC section 501(c)(3), and the subgrant is intended to accomplish the Purpose of this grant. Grantee shall take reasonable steps to ensure that any such subgrant is used in a manner consistent with the terms and conditions of this Grant Agreement, including requiring that subgrantee agrees in writing to comply with the terms and conditions of this Grant Agreement.
5. The grant project period of June 15, 2020 through December 31, 2020 represents the dates between which covered costs may be applied to the grant. The Grantee shall expend the amount of this grant for the Purpose by December 31, 2020.
6. Grantee is authorized to receive this grant from CTCL and certifies that (a) the receipt of these grant funds does not violate any Applicable Laws, and (b) Grantee has taken all required, reasonable and necessary steps to receive, accept and expend the grant in accordance with the Purpose and Applicable Law.
7. The Grantee shall produce a brief report explaining and documenting how grant funds have been expended in support of the activities described in paragraph 3. This report shall be sent to CTCL no later than January 31, 2021 in a format approved by CTCL and shall include with the report a signed certification by Grantee that it has complied with all terms and conditions of this Grant Agreement.
8. This grant may not supplant previously appropriated funds. The Grantee shall not reduce the budget of the County Manager's Office (“the Election Department”) or fail to appropriate or provide previously budgeted funds to the Election Department for the term of this grant. Any amount supplanted, reduced or not provided in contravention of this paragraph shall be repaid to CTCL up to the total amount of this grant.
9. CTCL may discontinue, modify, withhold part of, or ask for the return all or part of the grant funds if it determines, in its sole judgment, that (a) any of the above terms and conditions of this grant have not been met, or (b) CTCL is required to do so to comply with applicable laws or regulations.



10. The grant project period of June 15, 2020 through December 31, 2020 represents the dates between which covered costs for the Purpose may be applied to the grant.

Your acceptance of and agreement to these terms and conditions and this Grant Agreement is indicated by your signature below on behalf of Grantee. Please have an authorized representative of Grantee sign below, and return a scanned copy of this letter to us by email at grants@techandcivicliflife.org.

On behalf of CTCL, I extend my best wishes in your work.

Sincerely,



Tiana Epps Johnson

Executive Director

Center for Tech and Civic Life

GRANTEE

By: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

