



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE RESOLUTION

PROPOSED RESOLUTION FOR AN ARPA VITAL COMMUNITIES PROGRAM INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTED BY THE BUREAU OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2021, the federal government authorized the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (“ARPA”) which includes \$1.9 trillion in federal stimulus funds to hasten the United States’ recovery from the economic and health effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, specifically, the federal government has authorized and allocated a federal award of approximately \$1,000,372,385B of ARPA funding to Cook County to assist the County in its recovery from the economic and health effects of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on June 24, 2021, the Cook County American Rescue Plan Act Framework (the “ARPA Framework”) was presented to the Cook County Board of Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, the Cook County Board of Commissioners via Resolution 21-3654 accepted the ARPA federal award allocated to Cook County to assist the County in its recovery from the economic and health effects of COVID-19 in the amount of approximately \$1,000,372,385.00; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 21-3654 further authorized the Cook County Budget Director and Comptroller to create and implement a Special Purpose Fund for the ARPA award and other accounting measures to track the acceptance and spending of the federal award; and

WHEREAS, the Cook County Board of Commissioners authorized the Chief Financial Officer, Budget Director, Chief Procurement Officer and applicable using agencies to issue grants, contracts and agreements for ARPA programs approved via Resolution 22-0637; and

WHEREAS, to further the Policy Roadmap Goals, the Bureau of Economic Development (BED) has developed a menu of Vital Community programs and initiatives, including the Water Affordability Program, which have undergone review and approval through the Project Management Office process to utilize ARPA funding for such programs and initiatives pursuant to the issuance of grants, contracts, and agreements; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 22-0637 provided that any grants issued regarding ARPA programs in an amount over \$1M shall require the approval of the Cook County Board of Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 23-3116 authorized the Bureau of Economic Development to enter into a Subrecipient Agreement with Elevate Energy in an aggregate amount of up to \$7,820,000 to begin implementation of the Water Affordability Program; of which \$7,500,000 was intended to be provided to CEDA to administer a household water utility assistance program; and

WHEREAS, BED, Elevate Energy and CEDA worked to design the household water utility assistance program and jointly determined that such program would not be feasible and cost-effective to administer, and the funding initially intended for such program will be allocated to Elevate Energy for the programs provided herein; and

WHEREAS, ARPA funding is available within the Water Affordability Program, and the Bureau of Economic Development desires to provide additional funding to Elevate Energy to support their implementation of the remaining components of the Water Affordability Program which include residential water efficiency efforts; a municipal bulk household debt relief strategy in income-qualified and high water-burdened communities; and a water affordability technical assistance program for municipalities in suburban Cook County; and

WHEREAS, the remaining \$8.5 million in BED's Vital Communities Water Affordability Program will be transferred to the Connected (formerly Smart) Communities Pillar to support Build Up Cook water capital projects.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Cook County Board of Commissioners hereby approves the issuance of the following agreement amendment by the BED, subject to annual appropriation by the Board:

1. Amend the Subrecipient Agreement with **Elevate Energy** to increase the total funding by **\$3,680,000**, from the original approved amount of \$7,820,000 to a revised aggregate amount of up to \$11,500,000 to continue their implementation of the **Water Affordability Program**. Elevate will operate several components of the Water Affordability Program: residential water efficiency efforts, including a leak repair assistance program; a municipal bulk household debt relief strategy in income-qualified and high water-burdened communities that incorporates water affordability best practices; and a water affordability technical assistance program for municipalities in suburban Cook County.
2. Under this amendment, BED will implement the municipal bulk household debt relief component with the following requirements for participating municipalities:
 - a. If water service has been disconnected solely due to nonpayment, service is restored immediately.
 - b. If water service is pending disconnection, disconnection efforts will cease while payment to the municipality on behalf of the resident is processed.
 - c. Water service for assisted residents shall be maintained for up to six months from the date the payment is received.
 - d. Proof of customer credits shall be provided by the municipality to Elevate.
 - e. Proof of water supplier payments in an amount greater than or equal to total payments received from the County shall be provided by the municipality to Elevate.
 - f. Participating municipalities will waive late fees and interest charges for residents receiving assistance and Elevate will encourage participating municipalities to extend such waivers to other residents.
 - g. Elevate will seek to pay 80% of residents' debt, with municipality covering the balance, but may adjust this parameter based on municipal feedback.
 - h. Elevate will work with participating municipalities to identify entities/owners that are not acting in good faith to pay water bills for a high number of subject accounts/properties and remove them from the program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Cook County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the Chief of the Bureau of Economic Development or its designee to modify the agreements and funding allocations to all BED selected organizations based upon need and utilization.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that funding for the BED ARPA Programs shall be subject to availability of funds from the United States Government and appropriation of funding by the Cook County Board of Commissioners.