

**MEMORANDUM**

January 27, 2021

TO: Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee  
Education & Culture (E&C) Committee

FROM: Vivian Yao, Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: Special Appropriation to the FY21 Operating Budget, Children's Opportunity Fund NDA, COVID-19 Educational Enrichment and Equity Hubs, \$3,600,000; and Amendment to FY21 Operating Budget Resolution 19-472, Section G, FY21 Designation of Entities for Non-Competitive Contract Award Status: Greater Washington Community Foundation

PURPOSE: Review and make recommendation on the proposed special appropriation

***Those expected to participate in the worksession include:***

- JoAnn Barnes, Chief, Children Youth and Family Services, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Deborah Lambert, Office of Management and Budget
- Ruschelle Reuben, Associate Superintendent, Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)

The Joint Committee will review the \$3,600,000 special appropriation to the Children's Opportunity Fund NDA to support continued operation of the Educational Enrichment and Equity Hubs (Equity Hubs) through March 2021, while MCPS continues distance learning. Equity Hubs offer before, during and after school child care services to low-income students while MCPS is meeting virtually. Hub services provide supervision and support for their children as they navigate on-line school. The total amount of the appropriation is based on an estimated cost of \$1.8 million per month over a two-month period to serve 1500 students.

The Joint Committee will also consider an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget Resolution 19-472, Section G, FY21 Designation of Entities for Non-Competitive Contract Award Status: Greater Washington Community Foundation by increasing the existing contract by \$3.6 million and amending the scope of the contract to include reimbursement for services that improve access to the EEE Hubs, including transportation, and add data reporting requirements.

The draft resolution, which was introduced on January 26, is attached at ©1-3. Public hearing and action is scheduled for February 2, 2021.

### ***Racial Equity and Social Justice analysis***

The special appropriation is intended to have positive changes in racial equity and social justice by helping vulnerable children navigate distance learning. Distance learning challenges have disproportionately affected vulnerable, black, brown and low-income students and exacerbated persistent educational disparities.

As of mid-January, COF reported that enrollment at Equity Hubs had reached 1,370 students from 131 home schools. To date, CUPF has permitted classrooms in 71 elementary schools where distance learning and Equity Hubs are located in a comingled fashion. There are over 96 dedicated Equity Hubs classrooms. Of the total 1,370 students, 391 or 28.5% attend Title I schools.

COF has also reported the following demographics of Equity Hub participants:

- Average family income: \$25,927
- Student Race/Ethnicity: 28.92% Black, 7% multiracial, 45.54% Hispanic or Latino, 11% White, 0.68% Asian, 3.11% other
- Language: 34% Spanish, 60.68% English, 1% French, 4% other

### ***Future appropriation***

The Council may need to appropriate additional funding to support Equity Hub operations from April through the end of the school year depending on MCPS' school reopening plans. The Council will be in a better position to assess the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter demand for Equity Hub services in March after receiving more detailed information about MCPS reopening plans and more data from COF about students and families who are being served by Equity Hubs and whether other public subsidies funds are supporting these students.

In addition, the structure and amount of any future appropriation will be informed by work that COF, DHHS, CUPF and MCPS are doing to plan and improve coordination of program administration and service delivery to families.

**Council staff recommends approval of the supplemental appropriation.** The proposed services are needed by youth to allow them to access the MCPS educational program in distance learning. Council staff understands that the Board of Education is considering whether to also appropriate funds to support the Equity Hub program. If the Board of Education acts before the Council, then the amount of the special appropriation will be reduced by the amount that the Board of Education commits.

Resolution No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Introduced: \_\_\_\_\_  
Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

**COUNTY COUNCIL  
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

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Lead Sponsor: County Council

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**SUBJECT:** Special Appropriation to the Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget  
Montgomery County Government  
Children’s Opportunity Fund Non-Departmental Account  
COVID-19 Educational Enrichment and Equity Hubs  
\$3,600,000 (Source of Funds: General Fund Reserves);  
Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget for the Montgomery  
County Government, Resolution 19-472. Section G, FY21 Designation of Entities  
for Non-Competitive Contract Award Status: Greater Washington Community  
Foundation

**Background**

1. Section 308 of the County Charter provides that a special appropriation is an appropriation which states that it is necessary to meet an unforeseen disaster or other emergency, or to act without delay in the public interest. Each special appropriation shall be approved by not less than six Councilmembers. The Council may approve a special appropriation at any time after public notice by news release. Each special appropriation shall specify the source of funds to finance it.
2. On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared coronavirus COVID-19 a pandemic, and it has spread rapidly throughout the world. As of January 12, 2021, there were 51,527 confirmed cases in Montgomery County. There were 1,140 confirmed deaths and 43 probable deaths in Montgomery County.
3. To slow the spread of the disease, Maryland Governor Hogan declared a State of Emergency on March 5, 2020 and issued several Executive Orders that closed schools, closed non-essential business, and required Maryland residents to shelter at home. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). Although some restrictions have eased since the initial closure orders, MCPS will continue the school year in a distance-learning environment through March 15. Consequently, many parents and caregivers who must work outside of the home are unable to provide adequate supervision and support for their children as they navigate on-line school. They may also lack technical knowledge to navigate the virtual environment. Moreover, these challenges are expected to continue to

some degree when students return to the school building in a hybrid model.

4. Despite the MCPS efforts to implement a robust virtual learning environment, distance learning challenges have disproportionately affected vulnerable, black, brown and low-income students and exacerbated persistent educational disparities. Students who live in the communities hardest hit by COVID are not able to effectively engage in virtual learning because of barriers beyond their control and need additional support. They also may be experiencing heightened trauma and need access to safe, supervised consistent learning environments.
5. The Children's Opportunity Fund and the Black and Brown Coalition have partnered with child care providers who are licensed by the State to deliver services in public school spaces to implement Educational Equity and Enrichment (EEE) Hubs. Currently, the hub program reports enrollment of 1,370 students at 38 County public schools and provides care and supervision for school age children during the school day while MCPS is meeting virtually. School-based child care providers and MCPS staff collaborate to identify and target students that need this support.
6. The special appropriation is intended to positively impact racial equity and social justice in the County. The funding will allow the continuation of supervision and virtual learning supports intended to mitigate the negative impact that distance learning challenges have on vulnerable, low-income students of color. The current race/ethnicity make up of participants is 11% White, 45.5% Latino, 28.9% African American, 7% multi-racial.
7. This special appropriation provides \$3.6 million in public funding to the Greater Washington Community Foundation – Children's Opportunity Fund to continue the operation of EEE Hub sites during the 2020-2021 school year. The total amount of the appropriation is based on an estimated cost of \$1.8 million per month over a two-month period to serve 1500 students. The funds must be used to make before, during and after school child care available to limited income students while MCPS is meeting virtually. The rate of tuition reimbursement supported with these funds, including required family co-payments, must be consistent with the DHHS School-Age Child Care Program.
8. To be eligible for tuition support with these funds, children must reside in Montgomery County and be enrolled in Montgomery County Public Schools, and their families must have income at or below 400% of the federal poverty level and apply for State and local child care subsidies if eligible. Tuition reimbursement must be reduced by the amounts received or eligible to be received from existing State and local childcare subsidy programs. For a provider to be eligible to participate, they must comply with COVID health requirements, including appropriate social distancing of students in child care spaces, and be able to access and support the MCPS virtual curriculum for each child.
9. In planning the expansion of programming in specific school communities, the Children's Opportunity Fund must assess and leverage available public and private resources that may support program outreach and implementation. Potential sources may include but are not limited to: Regional Service Centers, the Early Care and Education Initiative, consolidated services hubs, MCPS administrative or school-based staff, community-based non-profit

organizations.

10. Notice of public hearing was given and a public hearing was held.

**Action**

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

A special appropriation to the FY21 Operating Budget of the Children’s Opportunity Fund NDA is approved as follows:

<u>Personnel Expense</u>	<u>Operating Expense</u>	<u>Capital Outlay</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
\$0	\$ 3,600,000	\$0	\$3,600,000	General Fund Reserves

This special appropriation must only be used to implement the program using the guidelines described in paragraphs 7, 8, and 9. The Department of Health and Human Services will administer the funding.

This resolution amends the 2021 Operating Budget Resolution 19-472, Section G, FY21 Designation of Entities for Non-Competitive Contract Award Status: Greater Washington Community Foundation by increasing the existing contract by \$3.6 million and amending the scope of the contract to include reimbursement for services that improve access to the EEE Hubs, including transportation, and add data reporting requirements. The County must execute the amended contract with the Greater Washington Community Foundation consistent with the requirements in paragraphs 7, 8, and 9.

The Executive must require the Greater Washington Community Foundation to provide monthly reports on implementation of the program to the County Council beginning on March 1, 2021 with a final report by July 1, 2021 about the use of these funds that includes: 1) the number of classrooms supported in whole at each service site, 2) the number of students served each month by service site and home school, 3) the number of students served in mixed-income classrooms, 4) the total monthly distributions by service site and expense type, and 5) weekly attendance data for EEE classrooms.

This appropriation is needed to address a public health emergency and to act without delay in the public interest.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

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Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.  
Clerk of the Council