



Committee: Joint
Committee Review: Completed
Staff: Vivian Yao, Legislative Analyst
Purpose To receive testimony/final action - vote expected
Keywords: EEE hubs, Children's Opportunity Fund

AGENDA ITEM #7
February 2, 2021
Public Hearing/Action

SUBJECT

Special appropriation to the County Government's FY21 Operating Budget, Children's Opportunity Fund Non-Departmental Account (NDA) - \$3,600,000 for COVID-19 Educational Enrichment and Equity Hubs (Source of Funds: General Fund Reserves) 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.

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

None

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Public Hearing and Action. The Joint Health and Human Services and Education and Culture Committee met on January 28 and recommended (3-0, Councilmembers Glass and Jawando absent) approval of the \$3.6 million special appropriation. The Joint Committee noted, however, that the Board of Education (BOE) was scheduled to consider whether to contribute funding to support the Equity Hubs, and if the BOE approved this funding, the special appropriation should be reduced by the amount approved by the BOE. After the meeting, Council staff learned that the BOE approved funding of \$1.8 million to support the Equity Hubs.

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

The special appropriation provides \$3.6 million to the Greater Washington Community Foundation – Children's Opportunity Fund to allow the continued operation of Educational Equity and Enrichment (Equity) Hubs through March 2021, while Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) continues in a distance learning mode. The Equity Hubs offer before, during and after school child care services to low-income students while MCPS is meeting virtually. Equity Hub services provide supervision and support for their children as they navigate on-line school.

The resolution also amends 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 and add data reporting requirements.

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- 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 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.
- The Council received correspondence in support of funding to support continued operation of the Equity Hubs.
- The Source of Funds is General Fund Reserves.

This report contains:

Proposed Resolution

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Resolution No.: _____
Introduced: January 26, 2021
Adopted: _____

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Lead Sponsor: County Council

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 space, 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 sites and home schools, 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.

Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.
Clerk of the Council