

Date: November 25, 2020

To: Legislative Advisory Commission Members

Senator Paul Gazelka
Senate Majority Leader

Senator Julie Rosen, Chair
Finance Committee

Senator Michelle Benson, Chair
Health and Human Services Finance and Policy
Committee

Representative Melissa Hortman
Speaker of the House

Representative Lyndon Carlson, Sr., Chair
Ways and Means Committee

Representative Tina Liebling, Chair
Health and Human Services Finance Division

From: Jim Schowalter, Secretary Legislative Advisory Commission



Subject: URGENT REVIEW | AMENDMENT to #53 Coronavirus Relief Fund Request submitted on July 29, 2020 to Legislative Advisory Commission

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) requests an amendment to LAC Order #53, which was approved by the Legislative Advisory Commission on August 11, 2020. While no additional funding is requested, an amendment is needed to adjust the scope of the project and extend its timeline. This request is submitted under M.S. 3.3005 subd. 4 and 5, which allows for a 10-day review.

LAC Order #53 approved \$1,063,000 in Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) for DHS to contract with the seven Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to provide and coordinate enhanced home care benefits for low-income older Minnesotans who are confined at home due to risk of COVID infections. The services included: chore, homemaker, and community living assistance (such as delivering groceries). The primary use of this project was, and remains, to ensure at-risk individuals maintain their health, well-being, and safety during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

DHS proposes to amend the LAC approval in two ways:

- 1) Extend the end date for the approval from the current date of September 30, 2020 to December 30, 2020. This aligns with the end date for the CRF uses, and allows DHS and the AAAs to continue to provide critical support services to older Minnesotans through end of December, during which both COVID infections and need for such services has continued.
- 2) Expand the scope to award up to \$400,000 of unspent funds to two current DHS contractors. Headwaters Relief Organization/Orion ISO and the YMCA will provide approximately 800 hours per week of direct, telephone support services to about 50,000 older adults and people with disabilities at risk of a severe COVID infection and who are experiencing the emotional and psychological effects of limited interactions with other people, amplified during the winter holidays. This telephonic support program would operate seven days a week until December 30, 2020.

Please contact DHS Assistant Commissioner Daniel Pollock (Daniel.Pollock@state.mn.us) if you have any questions about this proposed modification.

PROCEDURE FOR LAC REVIEW:

The six LAC members have until Monday, December 7, 2020, to provide a recommendation. To expedite the LAC review process, LAC members may respond to this review request directly, recommending their approval or request for further review, instead of waiting the 10-day period.

CC: Bill Marx, House Fiscal Analysis Department
Eric Nauman, Senate Lead Fiscal Analyst
Nancy Conley, House Ways and Means Committee Administrator
Jessica Young, Senate Finance Committee Administrator