



Memorandum

To: Finance Committee

From: Mark W. Lubberda, County Administrator *Mark W Lubberda*

Date: May 12, 2022

RE: Recovery Grant Plan Financial Coaching/Economic Assistance (Walworth County Financial Futures Incentive Program)

Administration

Mark W. Lubberda
County Administrator

Jenny Quill
Office Supervisor-
Administration &
Communications Coordinator

Emily Krabbenhoft
Administrative Assistant

Stephanie Rodgers
Administrative Assistant

Attached is the draft program document for the ARPA program entitled Financial Coaching/Economic Assistance in the Recovery Grant Plan documents, presented at the last meeting, and in the budget document. The secondary name for the program -- Walworth County Financial Futures Incentive Program -- reflects the program and program descriptions created by Amanda Kostman, Outreach Specialist and Human Development and Relationships Extension Educator, of the UW Extension. She would administer the program and provide the training to participants.

At a very high level, this program offers up to three different types of training that helps people living on the edge of financial stability: Money Matters, Financial Coaching, and Rent Smart. It provides financial management and rental training that can help individuals avoid crisis and avoid becoming homeless. The programs have been offered in the past, but this strategy hopes to increase the number of participants dramatically, while providing limited economic assistance to those in need.

The intent is that qualifying individuals who complete the components and follow-up will receive an economic assistance designed to offset some of the negative economic impact of the pandemic. Payments of this nature are specifically allowed by the ARPA legislation. What we have done, however, is to add the educational component as a requirement.

The budget of \$90,000 provides educational training and economic assistance to 180 individuals. For example, it would cover up to 30 individuals per month for a 6-month period or 15 per month for a 12-month period. Rent Smart classes generally require about 6 one-hour sessions and a follow-up coaching session. Financial coaching is a one-on-one process with a similar time commitment. It uses components of the on-line Money Matters training as home work. It is a highly tailored program helping people learn how to manage finances and develop a financial plan.

Those completing the course and qualifying receive \$400 initially and an additional \$100 after a follow-up coaching session. UW-Extension finds the follow-up session helps the information stick. Since both Rent Smart and Financial Coaching are beneficial, a person would be able to participate in the other class if they were successful in the first. Also, with the late start in the year,

remaining program funds would be carried forward to 2023 to complete the participation goal.

When originally proposed the program was described as follows:

“UW Extension could build on their current Financial Coaching program to provide a financial incentive to participants for attending 2-3 coaching meetings and developing a budget. This financial incentive could go toward debt reduction, housing, or other costs. **INTENDED ACTION:** Request UW Extension to prepare a program proposal for Administrator then Committee review.”

Since this initial scope, it was expanded to add the Rent Smart program as an option, and the Money Matters program is identified as a tool used within the Financial Coaching. Despite the additions being considered, the program remains true to the original scope, only now you are being provided with much more detail about the UW-Extension programs. Therefore, my request at this time is that the Finance Committee confirm that this draft project proposal (attached) is consistent with the purpose for the \$90,000 appropriation established in the 2022 budget. A few, minor details need to be established, such as the form of the financial verification the participants will provide, but the attached document describes the program fairly clearly. **I request a motion by the Finance Committee confirming that this program design meets the intended purpose of the appropriation.** If such a motion is approved, we will finalize program details and implement the program.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions.

MWL/sr
Enclosure