

Mayor and Council Communication

DATE: 08/04/20

M&C FILE NUMBER: M&C 20-0517

LOG NAME: 36COVID-19 TESTING AGREEMENT WITH TARRANT COUNTY

SUBJECT

Approve Inter-Local Agreement with Tarrant County to Provide Funding for Saliva-Based COVID-19 Tests Provided by Vault Health in Collaboration with RUCDR Infinite Biologics, a Unit of Rutgers University in New Jersey, in an Amount Up to \$2,000,000.00, with Two \$500,000.00 Extensions (ALL COUNCIL DISTRICTS)

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council approve an Inter-Local Agreement with Tarrant County to provide funding for saliva-based COVID-19 tests provided by Vault Health in collaboration with RUCDR Infinite Biologics, a unit of Rutgers University in New Jersey, in an amount up to \$2,000,000.00, with two \$500,000.00 extensions, as needed, from the Grants Operating Federal Fund.

DISCUSSION:

To continue the City's emergency response efforts to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, additional products and services are needed. Testing individuals for the COVID-19 disease is critical to support efforts to control community spread and to assist individuals who test positive for COVID-19 with recovery planning. In July 2020, the surge of COVID-19 cases in Fort Worth placed an extreme demand on readily-available testing. This public demand consumed and exceeded the available testing supply in the local network of partners providing free tests to the community. In addition, the high volume of samples needing to be analyzed created delays. Patients began receiving results many days after testing – between 8 to 14 days in some cases. In some cases, results were received after the estimated 14-day viral lifecycle for a patient.

In July 2020, after thorough review of testing options and coordination with Tarrant County Public Health, Joint Emergency Operations Center (JEOC) staff requested and received approval for an emergency purchase approval for up to \$250,000.00 of spending authority for saliva-based COVID-19 test kits which included on-site training by the vendor. The vendor of the first saliva-based tests for COVID-19 to be approved by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration is Vault Health in collaboration with RUCDR Infinite Biologics, a unit of Rutgers University in New Jersey. The testing technology was developed by Rutgers University and successfully piloted in Passaic County, New Jersey.

The saliva-based tests provide quick and highly accurate results. The pilot program for saliva-based testing made tests available to the public in Fort Worth and Tarrant County on Tuesday, July 21, 2020.

The pilot program was completed over four days, July 21 through July 24, 2020. Over 1,000 tests were administered at J.P. Elder Middle School on NW 21st St. with support from Fort Worth ISD. This location was established due to readily available resources and proximity to the 76106 ZIP code – an area public health data indicated to be experiencing significant COVID-19 cases. The site was operated by city personnel and volunteers, including representatives from Fort Worth Community Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T.), Fort Worth Community Risk Reduction, and Tarrant County Medical Reserve Corps.

Based on the success of the pilot program, Tarrant County entered into a contract with Vault Health to provide saliva testing to Tarrant County residents. The City's obligation under this Interlocal Agreement is to provide funding to Tarrant County for a percentage of the testing costs of Fort Worth residents. The initial financial obligation of the City is \$2,000,000. If the initial \$2,000,000.00 allocation is exhausted, further testing is deemed necessary, and Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Title V funding remains available, up to two extensions, of \$500,000.00 each may be authorized by the City Manager, bringing the total potential expense up to a total of \$3,000,000.00.

The source of funding for the tests will be the CARES Act, Title V funding received from the U.S. Treasury.

The COVID-19 testing will provide services to ALL COUNCIL DISTRICTS.

A Form 1295 is not required because: This contract will be with a governmental entity, state agency or public institution of higher education: Tarrant County

FISCAL INFORMATION / CERTIFICATION:

The Director of Finance certifies that funds are available in the current operating budget, as previously appropriated, in the Grants Operating Federal fund to support the approval of the above recommendation and execution of the inter-local agreement. Prior to an expenditure being incurred, the Code Compliance Department and the Fire Department have the responsibility to validate the availability of funds. This is an advance award.

Submitted for City Manager's Office by: Valerie Washington 6199

Originating Business Unit Head:

Jim Davis 6801

Additional Information Contact:

Mark Rauscher 6803