



Human Services Chamber
of Hamilton County

June 16, 2020

Mayor John Cranley
Mayor.cranley@cincinnati-oh.gov
City Council Members
CityCouncil@cincinnati-oh.gov

Dear Mayor Cranley and Honorable Council Members,

On behalf of our 66 member organizations, thank you for your continued commitment to funding human services. The City has made significant gains toward returning its investments in human services to 1.5% of the General Fund, the level dedicated prior to 2005. Unfortunately, over the past 15 years, the City's poverty rate and the need for services have grown and the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these disparities.

Due to the recent shutdown, human services providers are struggling to respond to the increased need for services as revenues from fundraising and service fees have plummeted and social distancing has required the need for investments in technology and capital improvements. While the CARES Act has helped, it has not filled the gap. Many providers have been unable to maintain the level of services they did prior to the pandemic. A recent survey of our members showed that children and their families were the demographic most impacted by this reduction in services.

Every dollar counts right now. We appreciate the proposal by the City Manager and Mayor to fund human services at the same level as last year. We have some additional requests:

1. We strongly urge you to adopt in this budget an alternate source of funding for human services in case HUD does not provide the necessary waiver to use CARES funding as proposed. We know that the Administration and Mayor are working diligently to obtain this waiver. However, we also understand that this waiver is questionable given Congress' prohibition on using CARES funding to pay for items that are in the current year's budget. Adopting an alternative source of funding as part of this budget would prevent an unnecessary disruption of services if the waiver is not obtained.
2. We urge you to continue to honor the 1.5% ordinance by funding the Human Services Fund at a minimum of 1.3% this year, an increase of \$278,708. This funding level can be achieved by returning the Violence Prevention contracts for Santa Maria Community Services, Urban League and Families Forward to the Human Services Fund and providing additional dollars to train agencies to do the reporting that will be necessary if federal CARES Act dollars are used.
3. We urge you to ask the United Way to continue administering the Human Services Fund. This will provide certainty and continuity during this chaotic time.

As always, our members stand ready to serve the community as funding allows.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gina Marsh".

Gina Marsh
Executive Director