

COUNCIL MINUTES

February 4, 2021

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Study Session Meeting via a virtual format streamed into the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, on February 4, 2021 at 7:30 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

John Giles*
Jennifer Duff*
Mark Freeman*
Francisco Heredia*
David Luna*
Julie Spilsbury*
Kevin Thompson*

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

OFFICERS PRESENT

Christopher Brady
Dee Ann Mickelsen
Jim Smith

(*Council participated in the meeting through the use of video conference equipment.)

Mayor Giles conducted a roll call.

1. Review and discuss items on the agenda for the February 8, 2021 Regular Council meeting.

All of the items on the agenda were reviewed among Council and staff and the following was noted:

Conflict of interest: None

Items removed from the consent agenda: None

2-a. Hear a presentation, discuss, and provide direction on the City's 2021 Emergency Rental and Utility Assistance Program.

Community Services Director Ruth Giese introduced Community Services Deputy Director Mary Brandon, who displayed a PowerPoint presentation. **(See Attachment 1)**

Ms. Giese stated the City of Mesa (COM) has received \$15.7 million in funding by the U.S. Treasury as part of the consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 to provide rent and utility assistance to Mesa residents financially impacted by COVID. She advised 90% of the amount will be going directly to those who need it most, adding the funds are now available and must be expended by the end of the year. (See Page 2 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Giese outlined the eligibility requirements for funding. She indicated the applicant must live within the city limits of Mesa, must demonstrate financial impact due to COVID through a significant life-changing event such as a loss of job, and must be income eligible. She remarked

income eligibility for a family of four would be under \$5,200 per month and under \$4,150 per month for a family of two. She pointed out if the applicant is found to be ineligible, additional resources will be offered. (See Page 3 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Giese commented the guidance from the U.S. Treasury highlights that funding must be given to those Mesa residents who have the most need. She presented the two categories for priority assistance. (See Page 4 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Brandon explained the online application can be found at www.MesaAz.gov/MesaCares. She commented for residents who need assistance applying online or would like a paper application, the COM has partnered with MesaCAN to provide assistance in English or Spanish. She said the library is open as well for computer access. She indicated that landlords are able to apply on behalf of their tenants; however, the tenant must sign the application and provide the necessary documentation. (See Page 5 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Brandon stated that marketing the program begins today and will consist of emailing COM community partners, Mesa Public Schools (MPS), the landlord list, constables, and faith-based leaders. She continued by saying social media and COM websites will be used, a press release will be issued, and flyers will be posted to get the word out to Mesa residents. She mentioned staff have already been doing outreach in the last few weeks to landlords and property managers by emailing, making phone calls, as well as visiting 30 apartment complexes to introduce the program. (See Page 6 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Brandon described the application process and stated once the application is complete the resident will be contacted within 14 days to let them know if additional documentation is needed, they are ineligible, or have been approved. She advised once an application is deemed eligible, the payment will be made directly to the landlord and/or utility provider. She provided the contact information for residents who have questions. (See Page 7 of Attachment 1)

In response to a question from Councilmember Luna regarding how many Latino families have applied for the program, Ms. Giese replied that 30% of the applicants identified themselves as Hispanic which is in line with the demographics of the COM.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Spilsbury, Ms. Giese explained the 2020 application deadline was the beginning of December to ensure all applications received would be covered with last year's funding. She remarked an interested parties list was then initiated in the event future funding became available and on January 25 those interested parties received notification to apply for the 2021 Emergency Assistance Program.

Ms. Brandon commented each day priority applications will be processed, and staff will process the oldest applications first. She reported every application will be reviewed and every eligible application will be funded.

In response to an inquiry from Mayor Giles regarding whether Community Services has the capacity to process and distribute the funding, Ms. Giese confirmed there is a team in place and more staff will be added if needed. She stated of the \$15 million, \$14.1 million will be distributed and 10% will go toward project management.

In response to a series of questions from Vice Mayor Duff, Ms. Brandon remarked that residents are able to receive assistance from this new funding source as long as there is not duplication of funding. She commented the review process is handled internally by City staff. She pointed out

that in the previous rental assistance program, Community Services distributed \$7 million in three months and staff are confident that the \$14 million will be disbursed by the end of the year.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Heredia in regard to internet assistance, Ms. Giese replied MesaCAN is able to assist residents with the application if they do not have internet.

Deputy City Manager Natalie Lewis expanded that the U.S. Treasury is looking into what can be reimbursed under the utility category. She indicated right now major utilities include water, sewer, and electric, and there have been inquiries regarding internet. She stated the COM is not reimbursing for internet expenses and did not with 2020 CARES dollars.

In response to an inquiry from Councilmember Heredia about whether, upon U.S. Treasury guidance, the COM will look into assisting residents with internet, Ms. Giese agreed that internet could be included provided that direction is received from the Treasury.

In response to a question from Councilmember Freeman regarding the turnaround time once approved for payment, Ms. Brandon stated the goal is to have payment out within 14 business days. She added that priority goes to residents who have received an eviction notice.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Spilsbury with respect to the number of days residents can receive assistance, Ms. Giese advised an applicant will be provided assistance for any arrears up to 12 months, as well as one future month.

Mayor Giles discussed the possibility of sending out notices with eviction paperwork to inform residents of available funding. He expressed his concern that evictions are taking place because people are not aware of their rights.

Ms. Brandon reminded Council the eviction moratorium has been extended to March 31 and could be extended again.

Ms. Giese agreed to reach out to the justice courts to follow up regarding the program. She clarified that funding can only be used retroactively to when the pandemic began in March 2020.

Mayor Giles thanked staff for the presentation.

3. Acknowledge receipt of minutes of various boards and committees.

3-a. Parks and Recreation Board meeting held on November 18, 2020.

3-b. Transportation Advisory Board meeting held on November 17, 2020.

It was moved by Councilmember Luna, seconded by Councilmember Thompson, that receipt of the above-listed minutes be acknowledged.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Giles-Duff-Freeman-Heredia-Luna-Spilsbury-Thompson
NAYS – None

Carried unanimously.

4. Current events summary including meetings and conferences attended.

Mayor Giles –	U.S. Department of Treasury meeting with Janet Yellen White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs meeting with Julie Chavez Rodriguez
Vice Mayor Duff –	Mesa Rotary Club 100 th anniversary Historic Preservation design community meeting
Councilmember Spilsbury –	Mesa Chamber of Commerce lunch mob Signal Butte Water Treatment Plant tour
Councilmember Luna –	Lunch 'n Learn with Falcon Field Airport Intergovernmental Affairs White House briefing Maricopa Association of Governments meeting

5. Scheduling of meetings.

City Manager Christopher Brady stated that the schedule of meetings is as follows:

Monday, February 8, 2021, 5:15 p.m. – Study Session

Monday, February 8, 2021, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council meeting

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 8:07 a.m.


JOHN GILES, MAYOR



ATTEST:


DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 4th day of February 2021. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.


DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK

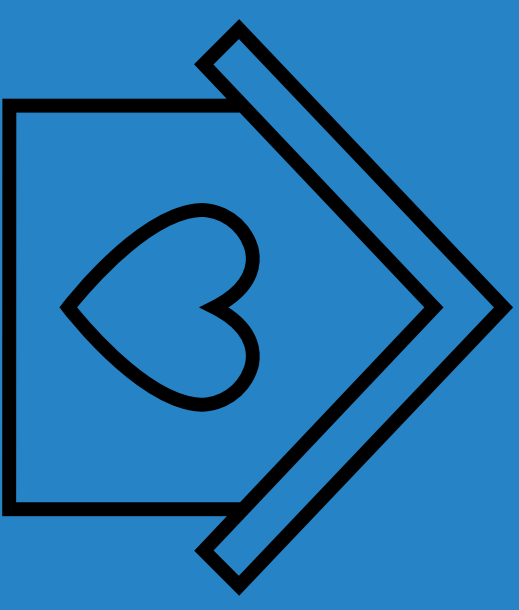
2021 Emergency Rental/Utility Assistance Program

RUTH GIESE, COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

MARY BRANDON, COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPUTY DIRECTOR

2021 Emergency Rental/Utility Assistance Program

- \$15.7 million funded by the U.S. Treasury, Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021
- \$14.1 million (90%) to Mesa residents who are financially impacted by COVID to prevent eviction and homelessness
- 10% for program administration



Who Qualifies?



Mesa Resident



COVID Impact



Income Eligible

Priority for Assistance

Total Gross Household
Income is at or below
50% Area Median
Income

OR

Any Adult Household
Member unemployed
for the last 90 days or
longer due to COVID

How can Mesa residents apply?

www.MesaAZ.gov/MesaCares

Online



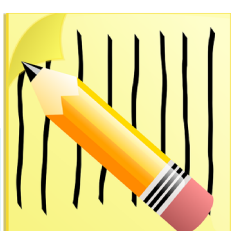
- Apply online with home computer, phone, or tablet

No home device



- Visit MesaCAN's computer lab to apply online

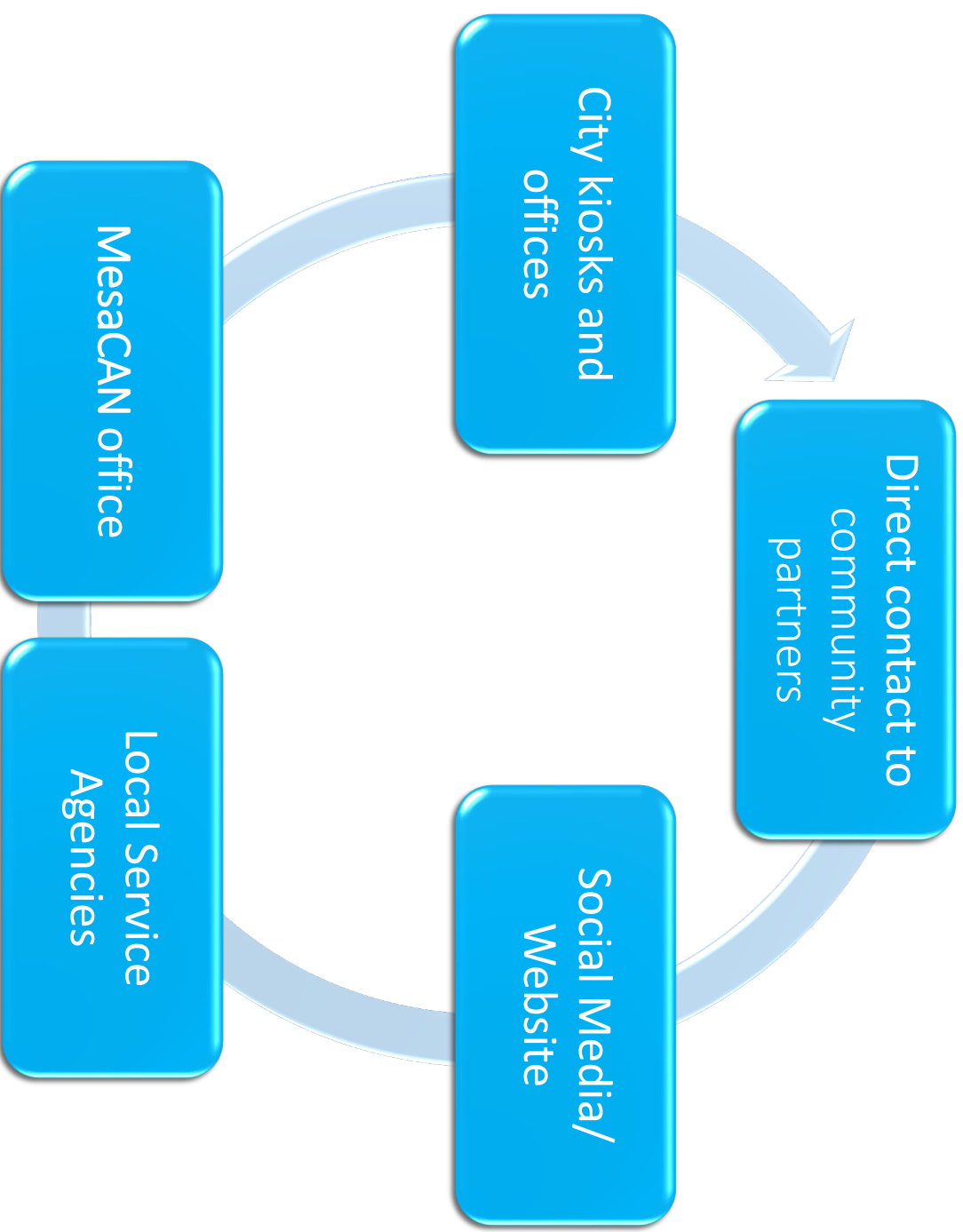
Need Assistance



- Visit MesaCAN for assistance to apply online or pick up a paper application

Marketing

How we are
informing
Mesa Residents

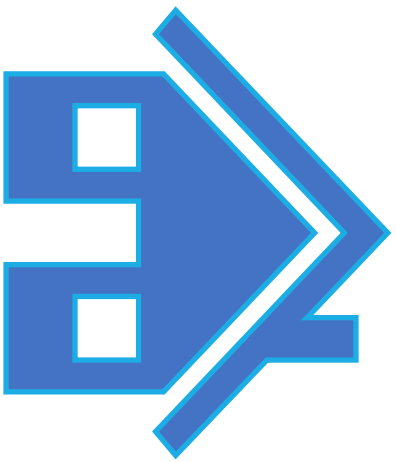


Rent and Utility Assistance Process



Apply at www.MesaAz.gov/MesaCares

For questions call (480) 644-5440 or email ERAPinfo@MesaAz.gov



QUESTIONS

2021 Emergency Rental and Utility Assistance Program