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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Chantia Lewis
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Committee moves forward ARPA funding for Universal Basic Income program, Office of Veterans Affairs

The **Community and Economic Development Committee** today recommended for approval legislation to utilize American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to launch a pilot **Universal Basic Income (UBI)** program in Milwaukee, and to establish a city-operated **Office of Veterans' Affairs**.

Both files were authored by **Alderwoman Chantia Lewis**, and the UBI pilot program legislation (File #**210487**) will now go to the full Common Council on Tuesday, July 27.

File #**210487** establishes the creation of a pilot UBI program, and appropriating \$400,000 in ARPA funds for this purpose. The file stipulates that the funding is to be used for staffing, start-up costs, and initial program costs associated with the creation of the program.

Alderwoman Lewis said United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County (United Way) will serve as the fiduciary agent for the UBI program, and the Office of the Common Council - City Clerk would work with the Department of Administration - Purchasing Division to prepare and issue a request for proposals for a UBI Program Coordinator. Once a program coordinator is hired, he or she would work closely with United Way to finalize the UBI program.

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UBI and Office of Veterans' Affairs/ADD ONE

“A tremendous amount of work and research has gone into the Universal Basic Income program legislation during the past few years, and I am very proud to be the primary sponsor of the file,” Alderwoman Lewis said.

“After the initial benefit of the American Rescue Plan Act has begun to fade, people will still be in need of further assistance. Unemployment fueled by the pandemic is still a reality. This is when we will truly see the benefit of a Universal Basic Income payment for low-income and working class families and individuals,” Alderwoman Lewis said.

“I envision the program being able to significantly raise the living conditions and quality of life for those receiving the payment through the (UBI) program,” she said.

The committee also recommended for approval – and then referred to the Finance and personnel Committee -- file #**210536**, a resolution allocating ARPA funding to be used to create the **Office of Veterans' Affairs**. The resolution states that \$200,000 in ARPA funds would be allocated to the City Clerk's Office to provide staffing, office space and start-up funding for the Office of Veterans' Affairs.

Alderwoman Lewis, a 9/11 era U.S. Air Force veteran, said she believes ARPA funds must be used to help veterans who desperately need resources and assistance. “Helping those who served must be a priority for this once-in-a-generation funding. As a nation we've sadly neglected our veterans too often, and I believe the Office of Veterans' Affairs can help connect services and assistance to those vets who need them,” she said.

“The UBI and Office of Veterans' Affairs files are a step forward for the City of Milwaukee to provide a foundation for a strong and equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. “It has been said before, but the ARPA represents an immense opportunity for our community, and the items recommended for approval today help ensure that funding allocations are equitable, and make a significant impact in the lives of our residents,” Alderwoman Lewis said, adding: “I would also like to thank my colleagues for supporting these items as we all work to make sure the Council leads the way on these issues.”