



COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: April 25, 2023

CATEGORY: Consent

DEPT.: City Manager's Office,
Community Development

TITLE: **Authorization of a Second Year for the
Guaranteed Basic Income Pilot Program
"Elevate MV"**

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Mountain View:

1. Extending the Elevate MV Guaranteed Basic Income Pilot Program for a Second Year;
2. Authorizing Amendment of the Agreement with University of Pennsylvania Center for Guaranteed Income Research for the Provision of the Randomized Controlled Trial Evaluation of the Program to Extend the Term for One Year and Increase the Amount by \$137,548 for a Total Two-Year Contract Amount Not to Exceed \$349,951;
3. Authorizing Amendment of the Agreement with Community Services Agency of Mountain View, Los Altos, and Los Altos Hills for operation of the Elevate MV Guaranteed Basic Income Pilot Program to Extend the Term for One Year and Increase the Amount by \$1,169,165 for a Total Two-Year Contract Amount Not to Exceed \$2,523,531; and
4. Authorizing Execution of Other Related Agreements as Necessary for Implementation of the Elevate MV Guaranteed Basic Income Pilot Program for a Second Year, to be read in title only, further reading waived (Attachment 1 to the Council report).

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is for the City Council to approve an extension of the Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) Pilot Program, named Elevate MV, for a second year. This report includes a brief program update and serves to authorize the administrative actions necessary to encumber the Fiscal Year 2023 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding budgeted in the City's Fiscal Year 2022-23 Adopted Budget.

During the Fiscal Years 2021-22 and 2022-23 budget adoption process, the City Council provided roughly \$5.6 million in ARPA funding for direct cash assistance through three associated but distinct programs, including direct assistance to residents in need through the City-created

Guaranteed Basic Income pilot and the associated community-led Mountain View Solidarity Fund and Community Services Agency (CSA, the local nonprofit Emergency Assistance Network). These and other COVID-19 crisis response programs comprised nearly 50% of the City’s ARPA funding, going to support vulnerable/low-income populations in Mountain View and aligned with the City Council’s adopted Strategic Priority related to Community for All.

Timeline of Council Actions for the Elevate MV Pilot

As discussed at the Council Study Session, according to research by the Jain Family Institute (JFI) and Mayors for a Guaranteed Income (MGI), successful guaranteed basic income pilots are often multi-year projects that require careful planning and coordination. The cross-departmental team led by the City Manager’s Office and the Economic Development Division developed a detailed action plan and were pleased to launch the program in less than a year from program adoption (actions are further discussed in Attachment 2), with high points of the timeline summarized below.

- **May 25, 2021**—The City Council adopted a resolution committing support for the principles of a basic income program.
- **September 28, 2021**—Council reviewed and provided direction on pilot recommendations at a Study Session.
- **February 22, 2022**—Council adopted the program Elevate MV and associated contracts/agreements with partners.
- **June 14, 2022**—Council accepted a grant from Silicon Valley Community Foundation in the amount of \$100,000 for the pilot program.
- **September 15, 2022**—Council held a press conference to officially launch the Guaranteed Basic Income Pilot Program.

Pilot Program Description

This pilot program is an opportunity for extremely low-income Mountain View families to elevate their basic income by providing more financial security. Through the two-year-long pilot, the City aims to empower participating families by improving their financial security through monthly direct cash payments of \$500. The core program criteria, operational mechanics, and anticipated outcomes are summarized below in Figure 1.

	Program Mechanics
Program Design	<p>3 eligibility criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident of Mountain View regardless of immigration status; unboxed eligible • Income at or below 30% AMI (Extremely low-income, or ELI) • Parental/Custodial caregiver for at least one child under the age of 18 at the time of the application
Disbursement	\$500/month distributed to 166 people via debit card or bank account (assistance for the un-banked will be provided)
Program Length	12 months followed by a 12-month extension (and longer with donations/philanthropy), subject to Council approval
Supportive Safety-Net Services	Ongoing optional service during Program for participants and includes benefits counseling, linkages to applicable social safety-net programs, and financial coaching
Benefit Conservation Fund	Flexibly scaled based on assessment of impacts to participants’ benefits and potential waivers obtained
Research Design	Optional core survey followed by surveys during and after the program, survey data analysis, research and evaluation for contributing qualitative data to the important policy debate and pursuing benefit waivers
Anticipated Project Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate the Mountain View quality of life for the most vulnerable • Provide basic income for participating Mountain View residents to meet essential needs, financial security and empowering individual decision-making • Learn from our participants as a representative sample of the ELI community • Create financial stability to support and enable greater full time employment participation • Access to supportive services to program participants that willingly accept the offering • Innovate with new and existing social service partners/agencies • Potential identification of new City or Community programs based upon GBI research findings that align with Mountain View for All goals • Contribute research findings to the national knowledge base and policy debate/advocacy on Basic Income programs to help inform the policy debate

Figure 1: Summary of Core Program Criteria, Operational Mechanics, and Anticipated Outcomes

Program Partners

Figure 2 below provides a recap of the many partners that make the pilot possible, with high-level summaries below:

- Elevate MV is operated through the City’s partner, Community Services Agency of Mountain View, Los Altos, and Los Altos Hills, supported by the YMCA, and working with the payment processor, Community Financial Resources (CFR).

- Mountain View’s pilot program is part of a national study conducted by the University of Pennsylvania Center for Guaranteed Income Research about GBI programs.
- Mayors for a Guaranteed Income is also providing the City with no-cost, one-on-one technical assistance for the pilot program.

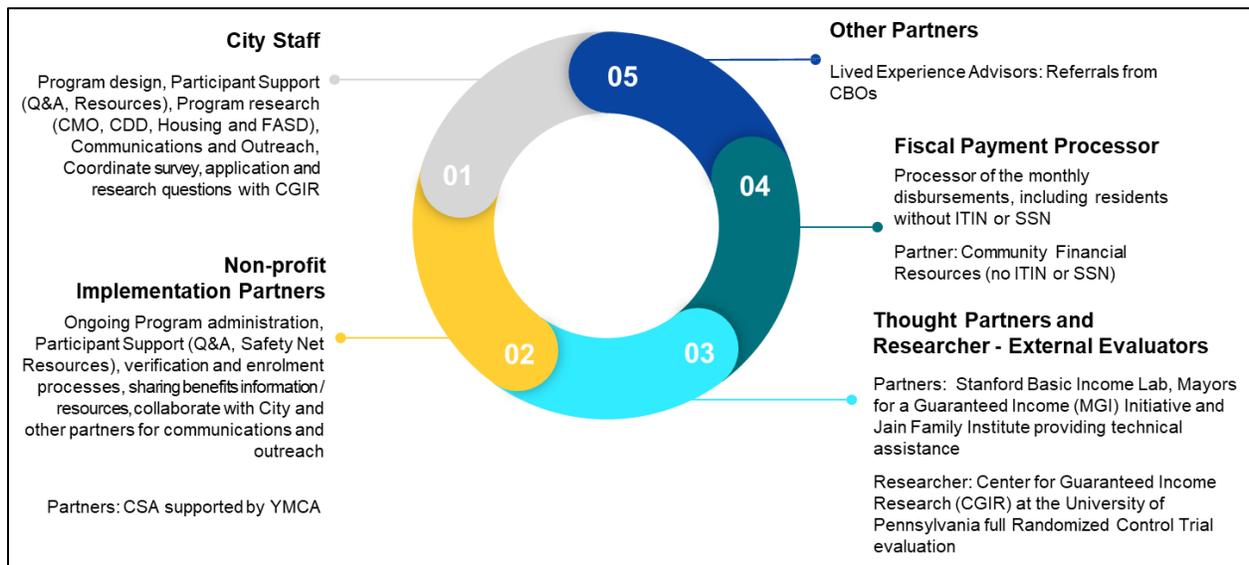


Figure 2: City Staff and Partners

ANALYSIS

Elevate MV Pilot Program Accomplished Milestones

Since its launch in September, Elevate MV has accomplished the following milestones.

- The City and its partners successfully reached out to Mountain View’s most vulnerable residents through a widespread campaign in four languages with QR codes for ease of use. A particularly successful strategy was conducting “application support hubs” in the community with language assistance. As a result of this outreach, 658 eligible applications were received.
- From October through November 2022, CSA verified the participant group’s eligibility criteria. Through a random process, 166 participants were selected.

The first round of checks was distributed December 15, 2022, and Elevate MV is nearing the six-month mark of payments.

- Elevate MV received State of California Department of Social Services benefit waivers for CalFresh and CalWorks, thereby protecting program participants from loss of vital benefits.
- In addition, Elevate MV received Santa Clara County Housing Authority and Office of Supportive Housing benefit waivers to protect the costliest expense of benefits for housing.
- Elevate MV received a \$10,000 grant from “Results for America” to advance guaranteed income through local storytelling narrative.

Early Participant Reflections

City staff and the team at CSA are seeing preliminary successes of the pilot program as a powerful tool for reducing poverty and improving the lives of vulnerable families and individuals in the community. Stories from some Elevate MV participants are summarized below.

Elevate MV Personal Stories

- A young mom sees guaranteed basic income as a blessing. Although she has been under the care of physicians for some years, she has been unable to work for quite some time. The \$500 per month covers the much-needed medication; otherwise, her husband has to take side jobs to pay for these prescriptions. He also now has the flexibility to be her part-time caretaker.
- A single, widowed mother and her two teenage children moved to Mountain View in 2021 to stay with her sister after losing her husband to COVID-19 complications. She can now contribute to her share of living costs and her savings fund. She hopes to get a place of their own soon.
- A longtime resident of Mountain View expressed thanks for this incredible support and program. They believe they may be able to move into a larger apartment with their family and not worry about putting food on the table for their children.
- A participant who is part of a family of six and was deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic to the point of needing three months of emergency rent to maintain housing has been increasingly stable since December 2022, when the first payments went out. Even the need for food from CSA’s food pantry has decreased.

Other reflections captured include:

- “This additional money will allow me to finally start saving for my family and future.”
- “I can’t believe that this program is actually available and that I am a part of it.”

- “Having this additional income has allowed me to decrease the hours that I work. I have more time to spend with my 7-year-old son. I am so grateful!”

Elevate MV Pilot Program Upcoming Milestones

In addition, to the completed milestones noted earlier in this section, the pilot program will soon accomplish the following important milestones:

- A second wave of survey data collection is anticipated to occur in May, after the sixth-month payment.
- A “Data Dashboard” will be available in June 2023 with aggregated participant spending data to promote transparency. This is coordinated by Stanford Basic Income Lab for the MGI. Both organizations are City thought partners.

Extension of Elevate MV to a Second Year

Staff recommends Council adopt the resolution extending the Elevate MV pilot program and authorizing amendment of the related agreements with the City’s research and evaluation partner, UPenn, and operations partner, CSA.

Staff recommended a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) evaluation to be implemented by the UPenn Center for Guaranteed Income Research as the research and external evaluation partner and this work is under way. This action continues the pilot for another year along with survey research.

Staff’s research on best practices indicated that having a trusted, connected partner within the community was the best pathway to a successful GBI program, and this has proved true with the launch of Elevate MV. Staff recommends CSA continue to support this pilot as the nonprofit implementation partner and administer the participant payments as well as be the nonprofit that enables the grant of funds to participants.

FISCAL IMPACT

The City Council approved \$1.3 million from the ARPA funds in the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Adopted Budget for the Guaranteed Basic Income Pilot Program. No additional budget is needed to amend the agreement with Community Services Agency and the University of Pennsylvania.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Do not recommend contract amendments supporting the second year of the Guaranteed Basic Income Pilot Program, Elevate MV.
2. Provide other direction.

PUBLIC NOTICING

Agenda posting and meeting date shared on the Elevate MV webpage. A copy of the report was sent to interested GBI project parties, including the YMCA of Silicon Valley, CSA, Community Financial Resources, Mayors for a Guaranteed Income, Jain Family Institute, Stanford Basic Income Lab, Mountain View Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown District, and the community-based organization team that the City's Human Services Division meets with monthly.

Prepared by:

Kimberly S. Thomas
Assistant to the City Manager

John Lang
Economic Vitality Manager

Approved by:

Aarti Shrivastava
Assistant City Manager/
Community Development Director

Audrey Seymour Ramberg
Assistant City Manager

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- Attachments:
1. Resolution
 2. Council Report—February 22, 2022