



Department Source: Community Development - CDBG/Home

To: City Council

From: Community Development Department

Council Meeting Date: March 1, 2021

Re: City Council Ratification of City Manager Authorization of Amendment to Benovate Software Provider Agreement for Rent Assistance Module

## Executive Summary

This memo summarizes the Community Development Department's request for authorization of the City Manager's authorization to execute emergency amendment to the City's agreement for the Housing Programs Division's software provider, on behalf of the City of Columbia. The amendment to the agreement authorizes the implementation of a rent assistance program module with Housing Programs Division's programmatic software provider.

## Discussion

The City Manager has authorized an amendment to the City's agreement with Benovate to cover costs associated with modifying the City's existing Neighborly Software System to implement a rent assistance module. City Council recently approved funding allocations for rent assistance within an Amendment to the City's FY 2019 Annual Action Plan for allocation of CDBG-CV Round 3 funding. Allocations included funds for three organizations to provide rent assistance to low to moderate-income households experiencing financial hardship resulting from the COVID-19 Pandemic.

HPD staff utilizes the Neighborly Software system for the operation of its internal housing programs, as well as for allocating funds to its non-profit partners. The Neighborly Software System was developed specifically for cities implementing affordable housing and community development programs through CDBG and HOME. This system assists staff in ensuring program regulations are met, and that CDBG procedures and documentation requirements are adhered to. The system will also minimize the risk of a duplication of services to participant households by maintaining one centralized database.

HPD staff successfully utilized this system for the implementation of its business assistance programs and recommended the City Manager approve procuring the build out of the rent assistance module through the Neighborly system. Staff reviewed the Neighborly rent assistance module already being implemented by several other communities across the country and found the additional module will increase efficiency and reduce risks of noncompliance. Benovate has agreed to make modifications specific to the City of Columbia's needs, including allowing household applicants to select their preferred nonprofit provider. The City received an additional \$182,473 in administration funds through CDBG-CV round 1 and 3 to assist in paying for the implementation of the rent assistance module.



# City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Approval of the attached ordinance would ratify the amendment to the City's agreement with its software provider, Benovate, to allow for implementation and execution of the rent assistance module.

## Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: \$7,480 in grant funds.

Long-Term Impact: None.

## Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impacts

### Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Social Equity, Secondary Impact: Economy

### Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Economic Development, Secondary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities

## Legislative History

Date	Action
November 20, 2017	Council approved the initial agreement with Benovate for implementation of the Neighborly Software System
December 7, 2020	Council approved an amendment to the Benovate agreement to implement a small business assistance program

## Suggested Council Action

Approve the ordinance ratifying amendment to the agreement with Benovate previously authorized by the City Manager.