Policy Briefing Summary
City Council

Regarding:	**Resolution to Appropriate funds from the Sentara Foundation to the Department of Human Services for the Westhaven CARES Center - $7,000 (2nd reading)**
Staff Contact(s):	Reginald Allen, Human Services Planner, Taylor Harvey-Ryan, Grants Program Manager
Presenter:	**Reginald Allen, Human Services Planner**
Date of Proposed Action:	November 16, 2026

Issue
The City of Charlottesville's Department of Human Services has been awarded a $7,000 Sentara Cares grant to support the Westhaven Food Pantry that needs to be appropriated.

Background / Rule
The City of Charlottesville's Department of Human Services has been awarded a $7,000 Sentara Cares grant to support the Westhaven Food Pantry. Sentara Cares provides competitive grant funding to eligible organizations for programs that advance community health and well-being.

The award aligns with Sentara's food access funding priority, which promotes equitable access to nutritious and culturally relevant food through food pantries, community partnerships, and initiatives that reduce barriers to food access. Grant funds will support the Westhaven Food Pantry in addressing food insecurity and improving food access for residents.

Analysis
Demand for services at the Westhaven CARES Center continues to grow. Based on anticipated operating expenses and community needs, the Center identified a projected funding shortfall of approximately $7,000. This shortfall was the primary basis for seeking Sentara Cares funding. The $7,000 grant will help sustain pantry operations, maintain food inventory, and ensure consistent food assistance for residents.

The Center's monthly food pantry provides nutritious food and household essentials to at least 20 households, reaching an estimated 40 residents, including children. The Center also administers the monthly First Wednesday Gift Card Program with assistance from the Emergency Food Network, distributing approximately 30 gift cards valued at $50 each to households experiencing financial hardship.

Over the past year, the Center has expanded its capacity through the acquisition of a deep freezer and the creation of a walk-in pantry space. These improvements have increased food storage capacity, expanded the variety of available foods, and improved distribution efficiency.

The program supports priorities identified in the regional MAP to Health Community Health Assessment by addressing food access and the social drivers of health. Grant funding will help ensure the continued availability of these services and strengthen the Center's role as a community resource supporting families and improving quality of life in Westhaven and surrounding neighborhoods.

Financial Impact

The $7,000 Sentara Cares grant will address the projected funding shortfall for the Westhaven Food Pantry, support pantry operations, and maintain food inventory.

The funding will support community health by maintaining access to nutritious food for residents experiencing food insecurity. Food and household assistance will also help reduce household expenses, allowing residents to allocate limited financial resources toward housing, utilities, transportation, medication, and other essential needs.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that City Council approve the appropriation of $7,000 in Sentara Cares grant funds to support the Westhaven Food Pantry's operations and continued provision of food assistance to residents.

Recommended Motion (if Applicable)

Motion to approve the resolution to appropriate $7,000 in Sentara Cares grant funds to support the Westhaven Food Pantry.

Attachments

1. West Haven Memo12