

CITY COUNCIL RESEARCH DIVISION LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY



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Bill Type and Number: Ordinance 2025-265

Introducer/Sponsor(s): Council Member Lahnen

Date of Introduction: April 8, 2025

Committee(s) of Reference: NCSPHS, F

Date of Analysis: April 9, 2025

Type of Action: Appropriation, waiver, agreement authorization, designation of oversight agency and emergency passage upon introduction

Bill Summary: This bill is an appropriation of \$3,000,000 from General Fund Operating Reserves to the General Fund Operating Subsidies and Contributions to Other Govt account. The provisions of Section 118.107 (Nonprofits to receive funding through a competitive evaluated award process), Part 1 (General Provisions), Chapter 118 (City Grants), Ordinance Code, are waived to allow for a direct contract with UNF. The grant agreement between the City and UNF is authorized. Finding that the Program Constitutes Workforce Development for Purposes of Meeting a Portion of the Supplemental City Financial Commitment as Described in the Supplemental Community Benefits Agreement Approved by Ordinance 2024-905-E. The Grants and Contract Compliance Division of the Finance Department will provide oversight.

Background Information: The purpose of this legislation is to provide grant funds to the University of North Florida for the UNF Esports Program. The Esports program will enhance student engagement and provide workforce development and skills training opportunities for students interested in a career in the Esports and gaming industry. Program activities will include: hosting local and regional Esports events; partnerships with local high schools for annual Esports tournaments, mentorship and skills training; workshops on career pathways in gaming, game development, broadcasting and Esports management, and integration of Esports-related curricula in high school STEM and business programs. The funds will be allocated to pay the salaries and benefits for several positions to manage and administer the Program, and to purchase, install and configure audio visual equipment for the Esports arena, to purchase high-performance computers, software and other equipment to support the Program, to pay for printing and advertising costs, and to purchase team uniforms for Esports tournaments.

The City's investment in this Program will provide a unique opportunity for workforce development within Duval County. Therefore, this \$3,000,000 will be counted toward the Supplemental City Financial Commitment for the Countywide Strategic Focus as outlined in the Supplemental Jacksonville Stadium Community Benefits Agreement between the City of Jacksonville and Jacksonville Jaguars, LLC, as described in and approved by Ordinance 2024-905-E.

Policy Impact Area: UNF Esports Program

Fiscal Impact: Appropriation of \$3,000,000

Analyst: Hampsey