An important plan to help put San Antonians back to work, would also teach them skills to earn higher wages.

City leaders are set to vote on the plan which would put $80-million dollars in federal funds toward developing a more skilled workforce and many residents like, Judy Nicastro could use the help.

In fact, Nicastro tells us, she has been out of work now for nearly three months.

"It's frightening for me being senior on a fixed income and not being able to work," Nicastro said. "I've always worked and that's the scary part of it."

The 73-year old retired a few years back, but had been working in the city's tourism industry to help make ends meet.

That was until the COVID-19 outbreak kept tourists from visiting and forced the cancellation of conventions.

"My expenses haven't changed any," Nicastro. "So I'm having to draw from my savings which is something I didn't want to have to do."

Judy is among 40-million Americans unemployed, including thousands here in San Antonio. And one local non-profit,

"The only way the economy is going to come back is if people work," Jane Shafer said.
Jane Shafer is with COPS Metro, a local non-profit, which has been working to help get people back to work with the skills needed to earn better wages.

"We don't need $8 and $9 dollar jobs," Shafer said. "$11 dollars in not a good job. We need $15 dollars or so."

COPS Metro has been meeting with San Antonio city and Bexar County leaders in hopes that a larger portion of the city's multi-million dollar CARES Act package will be used for workforce development, which includes education and job placement.

"You know, it's not one little part of town, it's all of us saying people have to have good jobs," Shafer said. "How many companies have turned us down because we didn't have the workforce they needed."

City council is set to vote on an $80-million dollar plan on Thursday that would help the city well beyond the pandemic.

In a statement Mayor Ron Nirenberg said:

"**We must emerge from this crisis as a community that doesn't accept generational poverty as a fact of life.**"

"I think that is fantastic," Nicastro responded.

Nicastro retired from the healthcare industry and is considering training to build on that skillset.

"I was planning on working until I couldn't anymore," Nicastro said.

Details of the workforce development plan, including training and who qualifies are still being worked out.