

A G E N D A



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council Addendum

Item ID

41504

Agenda Number

64.

Meeting Date:

2/26/2015

Department:

Human Resources

Subject

Approve an ordinance authorizing acceptance of \$286,188 in grant funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service, amending the Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Human Resources Department Operating Budget Special Revenue Fund to appropriate these funds to provide funding to implement the AmeriCorps VISTA Program, and ratifying execution of related grant documents.

Amount and Source of Funding

Funding in the amount of \$286,188 is available from the Corporation for National and Community Service. The required City match of up to \$35,028 is available in the Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Operating Budget of the Human Resources Department.

Fiscal Note

A fiscal note is attached.

Purchasing Language:

Prior Council Action:

For More Information: Chiquita Eugene, Program Manager /512-530-3335; Mark Washington, Director /512-974-3202

Boards and
Commission Action:

MBE / WBE:

Related Items:

Additional Backup Information

AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is a national service program designed to fight poverty through the utilization of VISTA members who commit to serve full-time for a year at a nonprofit organization or local government agency for capacity and sustainability building initiatives that deal with community issues like literacy, health services, economic development, and neighborhood building. AmeriCorps VISTA members are nationally recruited college graduates who receive a monthly living stipend, health benefits and an educational award at the end of their term of service paid by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). CNCS assigns the AmeriCorps VISTA members to various community agencies.

The primary purpose of this grant is for CNCS to provide the City with AmeriCorps VISTA members to perform volunteer service to strengthen and supplement efforts to eliminate poverty and poverty-related human, social, and environmental problems. Assignments have been identified in the following City departments: Health and Human Services, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development, Parks and Recreation, Public Works (Neighborhood Partnering), Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs, Mayor's Office, and Human Resources Department

(Employment Office, Equal Employment Opportunity and Fair Housing Office, and the Youth and Family Services Initiatives Office).

The funding of \$286,188 represents the cost for CNCS to provide AmeriCorps VISTA members with any benefits to which each is eligible, which may include living allowance, relocation assistance, end of service awards, health coverage, life insurance coverage, and/or child care coverage. Acceptance of these grant funds will have no impact to the General Fund this fiscal year or in future years. The required City match of \$35,028 is available in the Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Operating Budget of the Human Resources Department.

The AmeriCorps VISTA Program provides the City with the service of highly committed and qualified individuals at a significant cost reduction. Members serve full-time for a period of twelve (12) months. The City match of \$35,028 is approximately 3.2% of the value of the services (totaling approximately \$1.1 million based upon the City's average pay rate of \$28.62 per hour for municipal civil employees) provided by the members to be assigned to the City for the 12-month period.

The City's association with the AmeriCorps VISTA Program began in July 2012 with an Inter-local Agreement approved by City Council between the City of Austin and University of Texas, Division of Diversity and Community Engagement. There was a continuation in August 2013 which was also approved by City Council. Throughout the duration of the agreements, the City was assigned a total of nine (9) AmeriCorps VISTA members. The City's cost-share for each member was less than \$12,000.

In Fiscal Year 2013-2014, the Chief Service Officer, working with the Mayor Leffingwell, recognized that the City could achieve greater benefits by entering into an agreement directly with CNCS. The City submitted a successful application on June 9, 2014 for the assignment of sixteen (16) AmeriCorps VISTA members for which the City would pay the cost-share for only three (3). The Chief Service Officer signed the agreement with CNCS on behalf of the City on June 25, 2014. The agreement became effective on July 13, 2014 and ends on July 11, 2015. The agreement was amended on January 9, 2015 to increase the number of AmeriCorps VISTA members to seventeen (17).

The agreement is subject to annual review and renewal every 12 months. Prior to the expiration, the City and CNCS will evaluate the progress and results of current assignments. The Human Resources Department will work with City departments and offices to identify additional needs and coordinate the application and negotiation with CNCS for possible incorporation into the agreement renewal.

Upon further review, the Human Resources Department in collaboration with the Law Department and Financial Services and Administrative Department ascertained that City Administrative Bulletin No. 08-04: Grants Application and Acceptance Process applies to the agreement with CNCS. Although the City does not directly receive the funding of \$286,188 in cash, the City receives value in the form of services supported by CNCS using these funds. This Request for Council Action requests the Council to approve an ordinance authorizing acceptance of the grant, ratifying execution of the agreement, and appropriating the funding in order to fulfill the requirements of the Administrative Bulletin.