

A G E N D A



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council		Item ID	71878	Agenda Number	24.
Meeting Date:	6/8/2017		Department:	Public Health	
Subject					
Approve submission of a proposal in response to the VERA INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE Request for Proposals to receive grant funds for the delivery of immigrant legal services.					
Amount and Source of Funding					
Funding in the amount of \$302,300 in the Fiscal Year Operating Budget of the Austin Public Health Department has been encumbered for the City's grant agreement with Catholic Charities of Central Texas and would serve as the match of public funding required for this grant. No additional City funds are required.					
Fiscal Note					
A fiscal note is not required.					
Purchasing Language:					
Prior Council Action:	On February 16, 2017, Council approved Resolution 20160216-018 amending the contract with Catholic Charities of Central Texas to add emergency funding for immigrant legal services in an amount not to exceed \$200,000 for the period April 1, 2016 – March 31, 2017. On December 15, 2016, Council passed Resolution No. 20161215-066 directing the City Manager to locate additional funds for immigrant legal services. On September 14, 2016, Council approved Ordinance No. 20160914-001 adopting the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Operating Budget. On March 31, 2016, Council approved agenda item 20160331-020 authorizing the award, negotiation, and execution of an agreement with Catholic Charities of Central Texas in response to Austin Public Health’s Request for Applications No. HE2016RK for health equity services. On May 7, 2015, Council passed Resolution No. 20150507-027 directing the City Manager to establish a working group focusing on health and economic equity.				
For More Information:	Stephanie Hayden, Interim Director, 972-5017; Adrienne Sturup, Interim Assistant Director, 972-5167; Vella Karman, Acting Social Services Policy Manager, 972-5064; Estella Kirscht, Agenda Coordinator, 972-5039.				
Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:					
MBE / WBE:					
Related Items:					
Additional Backup Information					

On March 31, 2016, Council authorized Austin Public Health to award funding to Catholic Charities of Central Texas (CCCTX), in the amount of \$100,000 for twelve months with five 12-month renewal options to implement the Immigration Legal Services and Counseling program. This program provides legal services and counseling for immigrants to stabilize their status, enabling hundreds of clients to reduce anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress in their lives. The program's goal is to keep families together and safe.

On December 16, 2016, Council approved Resolution No. 20161215-066 directing the City Manager to "identify emergency funding for immigrant legal services and outreach with a goal of assisting with the cases of 100 additional Austinites per month than are currently being served... [and to] present recommendations for Council action or budget amendments...to expand existing contracts that could best perform these services as soon as possible." On February 16, 2017, Council authorized Austin Public Health to increase funding to CCCTX for the Immigration Legal Services and Counseling Program by \$200,000, effective March 1, 2017 for a period of 12 months. This increased funding provides legal services for an additional 50 clients per month. Half of these clients (25 per month for a total of 300 per year) have deportation cases, receiving legal counsel from American Gateways, a sub grantee of CCCTX through the current grant agreement.

The Vera Institute of Justice ("Vera") is a New York-based non-profit organization 501(c)(3), committed to "securing equal justice, ending mass incarceration, and strengthening families and communities." Specific to their immigration grants, Vera states, "With our partners in government, we're working to ensure that justice, in the form of fundamental legal protections and services, is available to them. That involves building trust between immigrant communities and local law enforcement agencies and overcoming language barriers, so that the motto "protect and serve" genuinely applies to everyone. We're also working to understand and meet the needs of the growing number of vulnerable children who enter the United States alone, and giving people facing deportation—many who have lived here for years—a fair shot in immigration court" (www.vera.org).

In April 2017, Vera announced the opportunity for six to eight jurisdictions to join the SAFE Cities Network, alongside New York City, San Francisco, Chicago and Los Angeles, and become recipients of catalyst grant funding for immigrant legal services. The SAFE (Safety and Fairness for Everyone) Cities Network will bring together jurisdictions across the country who are committed to providing legal representation to immigrants in removal (deportation) proceedings while keeping families together and communities safe. Together, this network of city, state, and local government jurisdictions will:

- Support local communities in protecting the well-being and rights of all residents;
- Advance the narrative that American values are about keeping communities safe by upholding the constitutional guarantee of due process for all people residing here; and
- Make the long-term case for a right to counsel in removal proceedings.

Based on a successful Letter of Interest and follow-up telephone interview with Austin Public Health, Vera has invited the City of Austin to respond to a Request for Proposals to join the SAFE Cities Network and receive a minimum of \$100,000 in grant matching funds to provide legal representation to immigrants in deportation proceedings while keeping families together and communities safe. Proposals are due June 9, 2017.

Network members will be selected by late June, 2017 based on the following evaluation criteria:

- Commitment of public dollars to support legal representation for immigrants in removal proceedings (public-private partnerships will also be considered);
- Commitment to due process and fairness through:
 - representation of immigrants in removal proceedings, with a priority for those who are detained; and
 - a "universal representation" model that does not prohibit services to any categories of immigrants in removal proceedings other than those based on income requirements;
- Intent and pathway to dedicate funds after the first year;
- Ability to launch a program in a timely manner;
- Ability to ensure data collection for Vera to support program reporting and evaluation;
- Assignment of a high-level member of city staff to act as liaison to the network;
- Viability of local program operation plan, including partnerships with qualified legal services providers(s);

- Geographic diversity across the network.

Proposal requirements:

- Completed answers to proposal questions;
- Information, including letters of support or commitment from partners (local funders and/or immigration legal services organizations), news coverage of local efforts to fund immigration legal services, etc.

Successful jurisdictions will receive matching, one-time grants to augment local funding for representation consistent with the Vera Institute's stated values – universal representation of immigrants in removal proceedings, with a priority for serving those who are detained. As members of the network, successful jurisdictions will receive in-kind central infrastructure and administrative support from the Vera Institute. Cities must assign a high-level member of city staff to act as liaison to the network, including attending bi-annual network leadership meetings.

If awarded, the City of Austin will use Vera grant funds to match the existing grant agreement with Catholic Charities of Central Texas and expand legal representation for immigrants. The City of Austin will also participate in the SAFE Cities Network and will be listed along with other member jurisdictions on all publications and press regarding the SAFE Cities Network.

Potential Advantages:

- Increased funding for an area of high need – legal representation for immigrants, promoting individual rights to due process
- An opportunity to leverage previously committed public funding for greater capacity of services in our community
- Support from a network of cities across the nation providing shared knowledge, best practices, and coordinated efforts toward common goals
- Informed decision-making for future funding and policies, based on data analysis and reports generated through this grant
- The Vera Institute will provide in kind resources, training and technical support for service providers

Potential Disadvantages:

- Joining the SAFE Cities Network may trigger public misconceptions and confusion with issues related to the enforcement of federal immigration laws in light of recently passed state and federal policies and legislation.
- Funding (limit of 150K) is available for one year only
- The Vera Institute will collect client demographic data including information on employment status, family size/composition, employment and income
- Austin will be listed as a member of the SAFE Cities network and participate in launch campaign and major public events

PERFORMANCE MEASURES: Vera Institute will evaluate performance in the following categories:

- Family Unity
- Economic Impact
- Court proceedings and outcomes

RELATED DEPARTMENTAL GOAL: Provision: Social Services – Promote and foster increased self-sufficiency, healthy behaviors, and lifestyle among targeted populations.