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Title: Actions pertaining to the City’s Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Program:
 1. Approve Agreement with WestCare California for HOPWA Program funding in the amount of \$371,645; and
 2. Approve Agreement with Fresno Housing Authority for HOPWA Program funding in the amount of \$11,494

Sponsors: Planning and Development Department

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Attachments: 1. Exhibit A - WestCare Agreement, 2. Exhibit B - Housing Authority Agreement

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
3/17/2016	2	City Council	approved	Pass

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

March 17, 2016

FROM: JENNIFER K. CLARK, Director
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SUBJECT

Actions pertaining to the City’s Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Program:

- Approve Agreement with WestCare California for HOPWA Program funding in the amount of \$371,645; and
- Approve Agreement with Fresno Housing Authority for HOPWA Program funding in the amount of \$11,494

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff Recommends the City Council:

- Approve the Agreement with WestCare California to award Program/Grant Year 2015 HOPWA

funding in the amount of \$371,645;

2. Approve the Agreement with Fresno Housing Authority to award Program/Grant Year 2015 funding in the amount of \$11,494 for administrative costs involving Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); and
3. Authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to execute the Agreements, subject to City Attorney approval as to form.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 9, 2015, the City of Fresno published a Letter of Interest to local service agencies who may have an interest in administering the City's Housing Opportunity for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Program and funding available to provide services for housing resources, supportive services, case management, and various housing needs for persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless; and related City administration of which up to three percent of the award is permitted. The total funding available is \$383,139.

On November 30, 2015, the City received only one proposal, from WestCare California (WC-CA), due to other agencies not having the resources and experience to manage individuals with HIV/AIDS. Staff recommends awarding Program/Grant Year 2015 Housing Opportunity for Persons with AIDS Program funding to WestCare California in the amount of \$371,645, and retaining the balance of \$11,494 for Fresno Housing Authority for Administration.

BACKGROUND

The Letter Requesting Interest in the HOPWA proposal process began on November 9, 2015, and ended on November 30, 2015. Eligible applicants who are members of the Fresno Madera Continuum of Care and participants of the Coordinated Access were invited to submit proposals for the period February 1, 2016, through January 31, 2017. On November 30, 2015, the City received only one proposal, from WestCare California (WC-CA), due to other agencies not having the resources and experience to manage individuals with HIV/AIDS.

The proposed WC-CA award amount is \$371,645. WC-CA is a nonprofit organization that has provided housing services for the City's homeless population for over 40 years. Founded in 1974, WC-CA accomplishes its distinctive mission - *Uplifting the Human Spirit* - by linking PLWHA with appropriate, safe, high-quality housing with supportive services. Stable housing is an important factor in maintaining the mental, physical, and emotional health, particularly with PLWHA.

Oasis II, a collaborative project between WC-CA and the Fresno Housing Authority (HA) will provide: Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, or Utility Assistance (STRMU); Housing Information and Referral Services; Supportive Services-Case Management (all to be administered by WC-CA); and Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) to be administered by HA.

Outreach: WC-CA will ensure that procedures for outreach and enrollment will make the program available to all persons who qualify for assistance without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, familial status, or handicap, including facilities and services accessible to persons with a disability, and will maintain in evidence of these procedures. WC-CA has a number of partnerships in the areas of housing and supportive services throughout the community, through its membership in the Fresno Madera Continuum of Care (FMCoC), and relationships with local hospitals and clinics, including Community Regional Medical Center, and Kaiser, which operates a specialty clinic for the

PLWHA population. As a former HOPWA funding recipient and a current subcontractor through HA, WC-CA maintains excellent relationships with the PLWHA community itself, including those at risk for HIV/AIDS, through outreach activities and a drop-in center. Self-referral for housing and services will also be welcomed.

Eligibility Determination: Referrals are assessed for eligibility into Oasis II using the following documented criteria: 1) medical diagnosis of HIV/AIDS of at least one member of the household; 2) living situation - homeless or at risk of homelessness; 3) income status of low income - incomes at or below 80 percent of the area median income (AMI). Preference will be given to households documenting residency in the City of Fresno, Fresno County, and living at or below the poverty level.

Individual Assessment and Service Plan Development: Participants will be assigned to a WC-CA Case Manager experienced in working with this population. An Individual Service Plan (ISP) will be created with participant input, using client-centered guidelines, including Strengths, Needs, Abilities, and Preferences (SNAP) in the words of the client. The plan will also address adherence to medical regime, housing retention, life skills, and managing money. The ISP will be completed within 14 days of enrollment and reviewed monthly.

Housing Assistance

Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA): The goal of Oasis II is housing and health stability. WC-CA will assist participants in negotiating lease and rental agreements with landlords. TBRA will continue to be provided by HA and comply with the following requirements: percentage of rent, including utilities, not to exceed 30 percent of the household's adjusted monthly income, depending on age, medical expenses, household size, and childcare expenses; ten percent of the family's gross monthly income, or the portion of the payment designated to meet the household's housing costs, if the household is receiving assistance payments from a public agency.

In the event of a Wait List, individuals with the highest Vulnerability Index & Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI SPDAT) score will be served first. HA's role in Oasis II will be as follows: review housing applications; fingerprint applicants; conduct program orientation for participants; and issue TBRA vouchers. HA will inspect housing for compliance with federal and state requirements. Housing units will be scattered-site, where participants can be integrated into the community and become an integral part of neighborhood vitality. The disease of HIV/AIDS can be stigmatizing, causing isolation from community life. While housing specific to PLWHA is a viable option, the scattered-site model affords participants a variety of experiences with others. This allows participants to be near those people and/or other social supports most important to their wellbeing. At no time and under no circumstance will the health status of a participant be shared with any tenant or landlord/property owner.

Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, and Utility Assistance (STRMU): Under the Short-Term Rent, Mortgage and Utility Assistance (STRMU) portion of the grant, participants will receive short-term rental, mortgage, and utility payment assistance for a maximum of 21 weeks (147 calendar days) out of any 52-week period. WC-CA's Client Services Specialist (CSS) will coordinate these benefits. WC-CA will also verify the participant's residence meets habitation and affordability standards, and will assist the participant in certifying the unit has a working smoke detector and meets lead-based paint regulations. The CSS will conduct educational classes to address housing retention, screening and assessing for linkages to substance abuse treatment, mental health care, and other eligible benefits. STRMU clients will work with the CSS to ensure they will not be at risk of becoming homeless after short-term assistance is provided.

Housing Information and Referral Services: WC-CA's CSS will assist participants in identifying the appropriate housing program for their needs and in completing applications, obtaining supporting documentation, and linking to supportive services within Oasis II and through other agencies and programs. They will also conduct educational classes (home ownership, fiscal management and life skills, and vocational services).

Supportive Services / Case Management: Health is paramount to quality of life for all. Particular attention to health is especially important for PLWHA. For a variety of reasons, there is a possibility that a participant's health may deteriorate. WC-CA's excellent relationships with area hospitals, clinics, and hospice providers will ensure superior health outcomes. Should a participant's health deteriorate, housing options will be adjusted to accommodate any changes in health status. WC-CA will also mandate compliance with all medical requirements.

Supportive services will include the following: outreach to the PLWJ-IA population; confidential case management blending assessment and coordination; life skills instruction using evidence-based strategies and curriculum; coordination of job training to increase income and self-sufficiency; substance abuse services, if needed; coordination of mental health services through Fresno County programs; HIV/AIDS primary care through relationship with local physicians, hospitals, and Federal Qualified Health Center; education assistance; employment services; and transportation. All supportive services provided directly by WC-CA are performed on site at *The Living Room* (TLR) and in a participant's home. Case management is available six days per week at TLR or via telephone. Support services will be provided weekly as intensive coordination of service activities, documentation procurement, and housing search ensues; however, dependent on participant need, services will taper to monthly face-to-face visits.

Participant confidentiality is covered by HIPPA and shall not be disclosed, except as provided by law for public health purposes or in accordance with a written authorization by the person who is the subject of the record or by his or her guardian or conservator. It will be explained in detail to participants that health status is knowledge for restricted staff at WC-CA, and release of confidentiality is only for services and/or medical care procurement, and records will be kept secure in a locked cabinet, with access provided to the case manager and supervising staff only. Client files will be labeled with the participant's HMIS identifier, not name.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15378, these items do not qualify as a project, and are therefore exempt from CEQA requirements. In addition, the proposed services are not subject to an environmental review under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, as they are specifically for supportive services that include, but are not limited to, housing, permanent housing placement, short-term payments for rent, utility costs, and assistance in gaining access to local, state, and federal government housing benefits and services.

LOCAL PREFERENCE

Local preference is not applicable based on conditions of federal funding.

FISCAL IMPACT

Additional budget action is not required since the funds were allocated in the 2015 Annual Action

Plan and FY 2016 Budget.

Attachments:

Exhibit A - WestCare Agreement

Exhibit B - Housing Authority Agreement