



Recommendation for Action

File #: 19-1099, **Agenda Item #:** 14.

2/21/2019

Posting Language

Authorize negotiation and execution of amendment no. 1 to an agreement with American Gateways for immigration legal services and deportation defense to increase funding in an amount not to exceed \$150,000 for each remaining 12-month extension option, for a total amount not to exceed \$975,000.

Lead Department

Austin Public Health

Fiscal Note

Funding in the amount of \$150,000 is included in the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Austin Public Health Operating Budget. Funding for the remaining extension options is contingent upon available funding in future budgets.

Prior Council Action:

On September 11, 2018, Council approved Ordinance No. 20180911-001 adopting the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Operating Budget that included \$150,000 in new ongoing funding for immigration legal services on a 10-1 vote with Council Member Troxclair voting no. On March 22, 2018, Council approved the initial agreement with American Gateways, on a vote of 9-1, with Council Member Troxclair voting no and Council Member Pool absent.

For More Information:

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Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

On August 21, 2018, the Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission passed a recommendation for an additional \$150,000 of ongoing funding for immigration legal services to be included in the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 City of Austin Operating Budget.

Additional Backup Information:

Approval of this item will authorize Austin Public Health to negotiate and execute Amendment No. 1 of the Immigration Legal Services agreement with American Gateways, exercising the first 12-month extension option and increasing funding to expand deportation defense and legal services through a universal representation model. Through this expansion, American Gateways will also provide outreach and legal education services to the Asian immigrant population in Austin/Travis County.

On March 22, 2018, Council approved the initial contract with American Gateways to provide immigration legal services and deportation defense, for a 12-month term beginning April 1, 2018 with four 12-month extension options. Funding for this agreement included \$60,000 in annual funding as well as \$75,000 in one-time funding for the first year.

Council declared Austin a Welcoming City through Resolution 20140320-049 to “celebrate contributions of the immigrant community and demonstrate that the City strives to include immigrants in all aspects of our City.”

Through multiple Council actions, the City has invested in immigration legal services and other inclusive services specifically for the immigrant community. During the Fiscal Year 2017-2018 budget adoption process, Council increased the City's investment for immigration legal services.

On January 5, 2018, Austin Public Health issued a competitive solicitation for the purpose of establishing an agreement with a qualified nonprofit or governmental entity for immigration legal services to include, but not be limited to services for removal defense clients, Deferred Action Against Childhood Arrivals (DACA) clients, asylum seekers, Violence Against Women Act petitions, U-Visa seekers, T-Visa seekers, and/or clients pursuing permanent residency. A "universal representation" model was prioritized, serving any immigrant in need of legal representation that meets income and geographic eligibility requirements. Of the two applications received, American Gateways had the highest score and was awarded a 12-month agreement with four extension options for \$60,000 in on-going funding, and \$75,000 in one-time funding.

American Gateways was founded in 1987 as the Political Asylum Project of Austin to help refugees fleeing war in Central America. They have offices in Austin, San Antonio, and Waco, serving 20 Texas counties and four detention centers located in Hutto, Pearsall, Karnes, and Dilley. They provide culturally sensitive, trauma-informed legal representation and education to low-income immigrants. During 2017 and 2018, American Gateways served 548 detained clients in removal proceedings from 29 different countries and 585 non-detained clients in removal proceedings from 51 different countries. Agency-staff are supplemented by a bank of pro bono attorneys, broadening their impact. Attorneys serve detained and non-detained immigrants working in Texas detention centers since 2000, and serving women detained at Hutto since 2006.

Performance Measures:

Performance measures and contract exhibits will be negotiated with American Gateways staff.

Related Departmental Goal:

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