



## Recommendation for Action

**File #:** 19-1735, **Agenda Item #:** 8.

6/6/2019

### **Posting Language**

Approve an ordinance amending the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Management Services Operating Budget Special Revenue Fund (Ordinance No. 20180911-001) to accept and appropriate grant funds in an amount not to exceed \$400,900 from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for Pioneering Ideas in Technology, Infrastructure, and Health.

### **Lead Department**

Management Services - Innovation Office.

### **Fiscal Note**

Funding in the amount of \$400,900 is available from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant. A City match is not required. A fiscal note is attached.

### **For More Information:**

Sabine Romero, Chief Administrative Officer / 512-974-1655

### **Additional Backup Information:**

In May 2019, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) chose the City of Austin to receive one of 11 Pioneering Ideas in Technology, Infrastructure, and Health Grants out of 297 applicants. The grant will fund the prototyping and testing of a digital identity platform that will enable people experiencing homelessness to secure vital documents and more efficiently navigate eligibility for social services, with the intention of improving their health and housing outcomes. This project is based on the foundational work completed under the Bloomberg Mayors Challenge Grant in 2018. The City's Office of Innovation within Management Services will manage the project.

### **FUNDING:**

The grant provides up to \$400,900 over the period of June 15, 2019 through June 14, 2020. This grant does not require a funding match. The General Fund will not be required to contribute additional funds beyond those currently budgeted to this grant. When the grant funds expire, the Innovation Office's need for continuing funding will be evaluated and may be denied.

### **PROGRAMMING:**

The City of Austin will use this grant to leverage pioneering technologies that increase access to and efficiency of vital social services for residents experiencing homelessness, which will expand our capacity for addressing the Mayor and Council's priority focus on ending homelessness.

The project will build on the proof-of-concept work completed in 2018 as part of the Bloomberg Mayors Challenge Grant. This previous work, undertaken in partnership with the University of Texas Dell Medical School, City of Austin EMS and other departments, Central Health and other social service providers, the Austin Homelessness Advisory Committee, and the Austin Blockchain Collective, proved that this concept is desirable for both residents and service providers, and feasible from a development standpoint. The current

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RWJF grant will allow the city to continue working with the above partners (and others) to design and develop a prototype that will include secure document storage and efficient digital enrollment to vital services.

In addition to significantly easing residents' burden of collecting and storing documents, navigating program eligibility requirements, and completing enrollment steps, this solution will allow the City to meet residents experiencing homelessness where they are, bridge service gaps, enable interoperability across sectors, and build the foundation to expand the platform to other services and populations. The proof-of-concept work showed that user experience and service design are vital for making the solution viable for both residents and service providers, so the development team will include a service designer to ensure positive service delivery and efficiencies across the system.

This project will involve several partnerships. These will include municipal, local, and regional partners such as Central Health, Integral Care, HOST, ECHO, AHAC, DACC, Texas Homelessness Network, members of the Austin Blockchain Collective, and service providers such as Sunrise Church. It will also involve partners such as ID2020 and the National Innovation Service who will collaborate and share information on social service access and governance aspects in general.

Data gathered through the platform will help identify which interventions are creating successful outcomes, and where opportunities for improvement lie. If successful, this program has the potential to improve access to a variety of social services in addition to those aimed at homelessness.