



## Recommendation for Action

**File #:** 23-2907, **Agenda Item #:** 63.

9/21/2023

### Posting Language

Authorize negotiation and execution of eight agreements with six social service agencies to provide basic needs services for 60-months beginning October 1, 2023, in an amount not to exceed \$1,808,601, divided among the six agencies.

### Lead Department

Austin Public Health.

### Fiscal Note

Funding in the amount of \$1,808,601 is included in the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Austin Public Health Department Operating Budget. Funding for additional years is contingent upon available funding in future budgets.

### For More Information:

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### Additional Backup Information:

This action will authorize the negotiation and execution of eight agreements with six agencies for 60 months, with contract terms beginning October 1, 2023.

The awarded agencies for food access services will increase the number of individuals and families having access to enough healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food by addressing at least one of the most common barriers to food access in the Austin area, which are low proximity to healthy food retailers, low household income, and few mobility options. The agencies below were awarded for food access services and scored as follows:

Agency	Score	Annual Amount
Farmshare Austin	88.72	\$302,605
Foundation Communities Inc.	87.89	\$73,047
Sustainable Food Center	87.33	\$96,884
Central Texas Food Bank	84.28	\$400,061
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$872,597</b>

The awarded agency for household stability will support low-income individuals and families to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency. The agency below was awarded for household stability services and scored as follows:

Agency	Score	Annual Amount
Austin Voices for Education and Youth	95.89	\$225,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$225,000</b>

The awarded agency for legal services and tenants' rights will increase the number of low-income individuals and families who need access to constitutionally guaranteed legal rights through legal services that help maintain housing public benefits and achieve stability and self-sufficiency. These programs also provide outreach, education, and advocacy to tenants about their rights related to substandard building conditions that impact health and safety. The agency below was awarded for both legal services and tenants' rights and scored as follows:

Agency	Score	Annual Amount
Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, Inc. (Legal Services)	89.39	\$163,004
Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, Inc. (Tenants' Rights)	88.50	\$460,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$623,004</b>

The awarded agency for transportation will increase the number of individuals and families with access to reliable transportation that supports them in obtaining or maintaining access to employment, education, food, medical care, and other life-stabilizing opportunities and services. The agency below was awarded for transportation services and scored as follows:

Agency	Score	Annual Amount
Foundation Communities Inc.	87.89	\$88,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$88,000</b>

**Total Allocation: \$1,808,601**

The agreements were awarded through Request for Proposal (RFP) 2023-002, Basic Needs Issue Area programming, by analyzing community needs data from Travis County, the Community Health Assessment, and data from a survey distributed by Austin Public Health that closed on February 3, 2023. There were 580 responses received from the survey in English, Spanish, Korean, Arabic, and Vietnamese. The most urgent needs identified by respondents were financial assistance, housing, and other household costs such as utility payments, rent, furniture, and household supplies. The second area of priority identified by respondents included groceries and access to food.

The RFP for the Basic Needs Issue Area programming was divided into five issue areas:

- 1) Housing Stability includes financial assistance, advising, training and education, tax preparation, public benefits enrollment, health insurance access, community outreach, and case management.
- 2) Fiscal Agent for Neighborhood Centers includes the awarded agency serving as the fiscal agent for clients receiving financial assistance from the APH Neighborhood Centers.
- 3) Food Access includes emergency food and groceries, public benefits enrollment, low or no-cost groceries, urban agricultural support, home food delivery, mobile food access, community outreach, and supplemental financial assistance.
- 4) Legal Services and Tenants' Rights includes legal assistance, reducing barriers to legal services,

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emergency legal counseling or mediation, dispute prevention and resolution, community outreach and education, and tenants' rights in collaboration with Austin Code Department.

5) Transportation includes access to public and private transportation to assist clients in accessing services and appointments.

Solicitations were sent to over 800 vendors and 36 proposals were submitted. Of those submitted, eight proposals are recommended for award, each for a 12-month term and up to four, 12-month extension options. The RFP evaluation process set criteria for uniform review of all applications by a separate and independent panel. An evaluation panel comprised of individuals with education and expertise in the given issue area rated each application. Evaluators agreed on the strengths and weaknesses of each application, and each application received a resultant score based on this process. The criteria for evaluation included the following: fiscal and administrative capacity, experience, and cultural competence/racial equity; program design and performance metrics; data-informed program management; and cost effectiveness.