



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:

Agenda Item Number: 11

Agenda Date: January 12, 2023

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Department of Human Services

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Melody Woosley

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Ordinance accepting the Building Ecosystems for Youth Opportunity Grant from the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions

SUMMARY:

This ordinance authorizes the Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS) to accept the Building Ecosystems for Youth Opportunity grant from the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions in the amount of \$96,000; and authorizes the personnel complement of one Senior Management Analyst under the Youth Success Division.

Furthermore, this ordinance authorizes the Director of DHS to initiate, negotiate, and execute any and all necessary documents including a grant contract, and contract amendments to effectuate the acceptance of the grant referenced to include; a) carry-over funds, when ascertained and approved by the funding agency through a revised notice of award; b) line item budget revisions authorized by the funding agency; c) modifications to the performance measures authorized by the funding agency and listed in the grant contract so long as the terms of the amendment stay within the general parameters of the intent of the grant; d) no cost extensions; e) amendments which will provide supplemental grant funds to the grant by the funding agency in an amount up to 20% of the total amount awarded to the grant; f) reimbursement increases of administrative funds for each

participant served; g) one time equipment purchases or defined program services; and h) changes in regulations mandated by the funding agency.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Disengaged youth in the San Antonio community face a myriad of challenges. In the fall of 2017, a working group of seven City of San Antonio (COSA) departments providing youth services convened to discuss an action plan to address those challenges.[i] The working group proposed the creation of the state's first comprehensive re-engagement center for opportunity youth. In September of 2018, the mayor and city council approved almost \$1 million in its base budget to begin assisting the estimated 34,000 opportunity youth living in San Antonio at that time.

Five months after receiving funding, the NXT Level Youth Opportunity Center, through collaborative contracts with Communities in Schools-San Antonio and Goodwill San Antonio, opened in the 78207 zip code, which has some of the highest dropout and unemployment rates in the city. Using a trauma-informed approach, the program reconnects youth to school and/or the workplace by addressing the youth's personal barriers and providing a caring support system throughout their time in the program.

The following year, the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions awarded DHS the Scaling Pathways for Opportunity Youth planning grant. This grant in conjunction with the creation of the NXT Level Youth Opportunity Center has been the catalyst for more strategic conversations occurring in San Antonio on how to better serve opportunity youth. Working with over 20 community organizations that support opportunity youth, the Youth Success Division developed a comprehensive three-year strategic plan. Part of this work also included the formation of a deliberate pathway for opportunity youth without a high school credential to attain post-secondary and work experience options.

This pathway was proposed to the Aspen Institute for funding in January 2021 and San Antonio was one of four communities in the nation to be awarded the accelerator grant on April 8, 2021.

DHS was again invited to apply for a grant issued by the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions. On December 9, 2022, DHS was awarded an 18-month Building Ecosystems for Youth Opportunity Grant from the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions totaling \$96,000.

[i] The seven City of San Antonio departments serving and/or funding youth programs are: Department of Human Services, Economic Development, Metro Health, Municipal Court, Parks and Recreation, San Antonio Police Department and San Antonio Public Library.

ISSUE:

DHS was again invited to apply for a continuation grant by the Aspen Institute for Community Solutions.

The funding will support one Senior Management Analyst under the Youth Success Division to oversee the implementation of the grant. The scope of work in the grant proposal includes

continuing to build out a collaborative of organizations that work with opportunity youth focusing on the following outcomes:

- 1) Agency Coordination & Marketing: Create a seamless referral system for "warm" handoffs; develop strategies to market and inform youth on programs, including how to better communicate and reach opportunity youth and those truly "disengaged."
- 2) Bridging and Education Pathways: Develop pathways to support opportunity youth through post-secondary education, including prevention programs in middle and high schools.
- 3) Employment & Work Experience: Develop internships, apprenticeships, "earn-while-you-learn" opportunities; identify support employers need to consider hiring opportunity youth and support opportunity youth need to be more marketable.
- 4) Goal Setting & Data Sharing: Define specific community goals to decrease the number of opportunity youth in community. Work on data sharing between agencies and how to better track opportunity youth.
- 5) Youth Leadership: Develop strategies for youth to be active participants in developing programs aimed to serve them; identify leadership roles youth can play and ways to receive youth input for continuous improvement.

In addition to building out the collaborative, work will be done to increase capacity of organizations to support pathways for opportunity youth who do not have a high school credential to obtain post-secondary education and work experience.

A final report is due to the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions on May 31, 2024.

ALTERNATIVES:

If this ordinance is not approved, DHS Youth Success Division will not have the staff capacity to fully implement the three-year strategic plan developed to better support opportunity youth or building out the pathway for opportunity youth without a high school credential.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This ordinance authorizes the Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS) to accept the Building Ecosystems for Youth Opportunity grant from the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions in the amount of \$96,000; and authorizes the personnel complement for one Senior Management Analyst under the Youth Success Division. There is no fiscal impact to the General Fund.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of this ordinance authorizing acceptance of the Building Ecosystems for Youth Opportunity Grant from the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions. Staff also recommends the approval of the personnel complement for Youth Success Division.

