



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:17-3825

Agenda Item Number: 15.

Agenda Date: 6/15/2017

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Human Services

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Melody Woosley

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Grant submission to the Vera Institute of Justice SAFE Cities Grant to provide legal services for immigrant families.

SUMMARY:

This ordinance authorizes the ratification of a submission of a grant application to the Vera Institute of Justice SAFE (Safety and Fairness for Everyone) Cities Network Grant to provide legal representation to low income San Antonio immigrants including education on and representation in adjustments of immigrant status as well as in removal proceedings in order to keep families together and communities safe. This action also authorizes the City Manager or her designee to execute any and all related documents.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On March 8, 2017 at the “B” Session presentation pertaining to the City’s First Quarter financial report; Councilman Rey Saldaña requested alternatives to provide education and legal representation to San Antonio immigrant families.

At the May 10th “B” Session, the City Council was presented with the 2nd Quarter Financial Report and recommendations for the FY 2017 Mid-Year Budget Adjustment. Included in this presentation was the proposed allocation of \$150,000 from the general fund budget \$1 million contingency to provide legal services to low-income residents. These legal services will include education seminars, counseling and legal representation on a variety of issues including veteran issues, landlord-tenant, identification recovery for homeless, immigration, and simple wills. City Council was also briefed on the option of entering into a

partnership with St. Mary's University to provide these legal services or issue a request for proposal (RFP). Based on direction from the City Council, a request for proposal was released on May 26th to provide entities such as Catholic Charities, RAICES, American Gateway, St. Mary's University, Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, and others the opportunity to submit proposals to provide the legal services approved by City Council. The RFP will close on June 30 and a recommendation for legal services provider(s) will be brought to City Council for approval in early August.

Additionally, at the May 10th "B" Session, the City Council provided direction for the submission of a letter of interest to the Vera Institute of Justice for a one-time grant match opportunity to provide legal services to immigrants. Subsequent to the submittal of the letter of interest, the City of San Antonio was invited to apply for a SAFE (Safety and Fairness for Everyone) Cities Network grant by the Vera Institute of Justice. The grant application was submitted on Friday, June 9th.

The Vera Institute of Justice allocated \$1.5 million for a one-time catalytic grant that would be divided among 10 to 12 winning local governments across the country. The grant requires a 1:1 financial match. If the City of San Antonio is awarded a grant (estimated to be up to \$150,000) the funds will be used to augment the \$150,000 allocation for legal services approved by the City Council on March 11th. Additionally, the City will become a member of the SAFE (Safety and Fairness for Everyone) Cities Network that is intended to provide jurisdictions with support involving best practices in addressing legal representation to immigrants in affirmative immigration proceedings as well as removal proceedings. The Network support also includes best practices in communication strategies involving immigrant legal issues.

The scope of legal services that the City will provide to low income immigrant families includes educating the community on immigrant rights, assisting immigrants who are crime victims in representation, providing guidance to parents of U.S. Citizen children, providing support to immigrant victims of domestic violence, providing advice to trafficking victims, providing support for special immigrant juvenile status, and supporting family-based petitions.

ISSUE:

This ordinance authorizes the ratification of a submission of a grant application to the Vera Institute of Justice SAFE (Safety and Fairness for Everyone) Cities Network Grant to provide legal representation to low income San Antonio immigrants including education on and representation adjustments of immigrant status as well as in removal proceedings in order to keep families together and communities safe. This action also authorizes the City Manager or her designee to execute any and all related documents. If the City of San Antonio is awarded the grant, a portion of the \$150,000 approved by City Council on May 11 to provide legal services to low income residents will be used as a match.

ALTERNATIVES:

Should City Council choose not to accept the grant, the City will lose the opportunity to leverage local funds to provide legal services to low income San Antonio immigrants facing removal, detention and deportation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

If the City of San Antonio is awarded the grant from the Vera Institute of Justice, a portion of the \$150,000 approved by City Council on May 11th to provide legal services to low income residents will be used as a grant

match.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends ratification of the submission of a grant application to the Vera Institute of Justice Safety and Fairness for Everyone (SAFE) Cities Grant and the acceptance upon award to provide legal services for San Antonio immigrant families.