



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:14-641

Agenda Item Number: 8.

Agenda Date: 4/3/2014

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Department of Human Services

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Melody Woosley

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City Wide

SUBJECT:

AmeriCorps VISTA Grant Application

SUMMARY:

This ordinance authorizes submission of an AmeriCorps VISTA grant application to the Corporation of National and Community Service for the period of August 16, 2014 through August 15, 2015 and acceptance if awarded. This ordinance also authorizes a budget of a cash match of \$22,704.00 to be funded by the four City departments and SA2020 hosting VISTA volunteers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a federal agency that helps more than 5 million Americans improve the lives of their fellow citizens through service. CNCS invests in thousands of nonprofit, faith-based and government agencies through the AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund, and Volunteer Generation Fund programs. More than 800,000 Americans have given more than 1 billion service hours through AmeriCorps, helping millions of the nation's most-vulnerable citizens.

AmeriCorps VISTA, a CNCS program, was founded in 1965 as a national service program designed specifically to fight poverty in America. AmeriCorps VISTA members serve full-time for a year in anti-poverty organizations and agencies, working on issues such as fighting illiteracy, improving health services, creating businesses, increasing housing opportunities, improving college access, and bridging the digital divide. VISTAs perform indirect service by building organizational, administrative, and financial capacity of organizations that assist low-income communities. Approximately 6,500 VISTAs are placed each year in more than 1,200 projects around the country.

Public, private, or faith-based nonprofit organizations can become an AmeriCorps VISTA project sponsor.

Project sponsors must direct the project, supervise the members, provide necessary administrative support to complete the goals and objectives of the project, and may provide a financial match of 20% of the living allowance per volunteer.

AmeriCorps VISTA is open to all U.S. citizens, nationals, or lawful permanent resident aliens over age 18. Members receive a modest living allowance, and those who serve for a year also receive health coverage, childcare if needed, and other benefits. After successful completion of a term of service, members can choose to receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award or post-service stipend.

The City of San Antonio submitted a concept paper to CNCS on February 14, 2014 indicating the City's interest in sponsoring a total of 10 VISTA members in four City departments and SA2020. The concept paper was approved by CNCS and the City was invited to submit an application. If approved and accepted, the 10 VISTA members would be recruited and managed by the City of San Antonio, with funding for member stipends provided directly by CNCS to the VISTA members.

ISSUE:

The City, through direct services and community partners, offers robust programming to address issues in the AmeriCorps program focus areas of Economic Opportunity, Education and Healthy Futures. The AmeriCorps VISTA grant will allow the City to develop programs in these areas, beyond day-to-day operations, by building organizational capacity and increasing community engagement.

The 10 VISTA members would be utilized in 4 City departments and SA 2020 in the following programs:

- Department of Human Services (4 VISTAs) - Senior Services, Financial Empowerment Centers, and Head Start
- Pre-K 4 SA (1 VISTAs) - Parent Outreach and Engagement Program
- Library (1 VISTA) - Community Digital Literacy Program
- San Antonio Metro Health District (1 VISTA) - Community Diabetes Program
- SA 2020 (2 VISTAs) - Opportunity Partners Program

Adoption of this ordinance will allow the City of San Antonio to enhance existing City services by utilizing the 10 VISTA members to increase outreach to clients, community organizations and/or funders; build new, sustainable program infrastructure; and increase the capacity of existing City programming.

Sponsoring an AmeriCorps VISTA project and supporting 10 VISTA members is consistent with SA2020 goals related to education and family well-being and with City Council direction to accept Federal grant funds to enhance services to improve the quality of life of San Antonio residents.

DHS requests that City Council authorize submission of the application to CNCS and approve acceptance, if awarded, for the AmeriCorps VISTA program to provide 10 VISTA members to enhance City programs related to the AmeriCorps program focus areas of Economic Opportunity, Education and Healthy Futures. DHS also requests approval of the associated grant cash match of \$22,704.00 to be funded by the four City departments and SA2020 hosting VISTA volunteers.

ALTERNATIVES:

If this ordinance is not approved, alternate funds would need to be identified if City Council wishes to enhance programs related to Economic Opportunity, Education and Healthy Futures.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This ordinance authorizes submission of an application for the AmeriCorps VISTA grant, and acceptance if awarded. This ordinance also authorizes a cash match of \$22,704.00 to be funded by the four City departments and SA2020 hosting VISTA volunteers. The \$22,704.00 is for a \$2,200.00 per intern allowance to be used for living expenses.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends authorization to submit a grant application and accept funding, if awarded, for the AmeriCorps VISTA program. Staff further recommends approval of an associated cash match.