City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number: 19-7859

Agenda Item Number: 15.

Agenda Date: 11/7/2019

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Human Services

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Melody Woosley

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Voices for Economic Opportunity Challenge Application

SUMMARY:

The Human Services Department requests approval for the submission of a grant application for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation "Voices for Economic Opportunity Challenge". The grant application will focus on raising awareness and understanding of poverty, tackling misconceptions about the reality of poverty in our communities, and using resident voices and data to develop strategies and policies that build economic security and stability in San Antonio.

The Human Services Department, in collaboration with City departments and community organizations, will develop the grant proposal and serve as the lead agency for the application of the $100,000 USD award.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In September 2019, the U.S. Census Bureau released state and local-level data on poverty, income, and health insurance statistics. Among the top 25 most populous metropolitan areas, San Antonio was ranked as having the highest percentage of people living in poverty. According to data from the American Community Survey, San Antonio's poverty rate increased by 0.9 percent, from 14.5% in 2017 to 15.4% in 2018.

On September 18, 2019, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, in collaboration with Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Raikes Foundation, released a request for proposals for the Voices for Economic Opportunity Challenge. The foundation is seeking creative, compelling ideas from

individuals and organizations from all sectors in the U.S. to elevate diverse voices and broaden the national conversation about poverty and economic mobility.

ISSUE:

Over the past few years, the team at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have been travelling to communities across the U.S. to better understand the nature of poverty in our country and the barriers to economic opportunity faced by many.

The goal of the Voices for Economic Opportunity Challenge is to elevate diverse voices that can help broaden the conversation about the issues inhibiting economic mobility and generate deeper awareness and actionable understanding.

The funder is seeking proposals for:

- Creative, scaleable, strategic new ways to generate awareness of the structural and historic barriers to economic mobility;
- To communicate that poverty is not just something that happens to other people and everyone is deserving of the chance to move out of it; and
- To change the predominant misconceptions about poverty in a way that creates the conditions for effective programs and policies to be adopted by the public and private sectors.

Human Services proposes submitting an application and will coordinate with partners and City departments to develop strategies that will achieve the goal of the increased awareness and conversations around poverty.

ALTERNATIVES:

If this ordinance is not approved, Human Services would seek alternative funding and opportunities for collaboration to develop and implement public awareness strategies around poverty.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This ordinance authorizes the request to apply for the grant opportunity with an award up to $100,000 USD. Allowable costs include personnel, supplies, equipment, subcontracts, travel, and other expenses. This grant does not require an in-kind or cash match.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of this ordinance authorizing submission of a grant application for up to $100,000 USD and associated grant documents.