



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:21-3173**

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**Agenda Item Number:** 10.

**Agenda Date:** 5/6/2021

**In Control:** City Council A Session

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**DEPARTMENT:** Human Services

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** Melody Woosley

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** Citywide

### **SUBJECT:**

Acceptance of the Building Ecosystems for Youth Opportunity Grant from the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions.

### **SUMMARY:**

This ordinance authorizes the acceptance of a grant acceptance of the Building Ecosystems for Youth Opportunity Grant from the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions in the amount of \$100,000, including budget and personnel complement for one senior management analyst for an 18-month period of May 1, 2021 to October 31, 2022.

Furthermore, this ordinance authorizes the Director of Human Services to initiate, negotiate, and execute any and all necessary documents including a grant contract, and contract amendments; a) carryover funds; b) line item budget revisions; c) modifications to the performance measures so long as the terms of the amendment stay within the general parameters of the intent of the grant.; d) the acceptance of additional funding, if awarded, in an amount up to 20% of the total amount awarded to the grant.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Opportunity youth in the San Antonio community are disengaged from work and school and face a myriad of challenges. In the fall of 2017, The Department of Human Services (DHS) facilitated a working group of seven City of San Antonio (COSA) departments providing youth services to develop an action plan to address those challenges. The working group proposed the creation of a comprehensive re-engagement center for opportunity youth. In September of 2018, the mayor and city council approved almost \$1 million in the FY 2019 Adopted Budget to assist the estimated 34,000 opportunity youth living in San Antonio at that time.

In partnership with Communities in Schools-San Antonio and Goodwill San Antonio, in February 2019, the NXT Level Youth Opportunity Center opened at the Frank Garrett Multi-Service Center in Council District 1. This area in zip code 78207 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.

Last year, the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions awarded DHS the Scaling Pathways for Opportunity Youth Planning Grant. This planning grant has been the catalyst for more strategic conversations on how to better serve opportunity youth. Working with over 20 community organizations that support opportunity youth, NXT Level 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.

#### **ISSUE:**

Based on participation in the Planning Grant, DHS was invited to apply for a grant issued by the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions in January 2021. On April 8, 2021, DHS was awarded an 18-month Building Ecosystems for Youth Opportunity Grant from the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions totaling \$100,000.

The funding will support the implementation of the grant including developing a strategic collaborative of organizations supporting opportunity youth focusing on the following outcomes:

- **Agency Coordination and 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."
- **Bridging and Education Pathways:** Develop pathway models to support opportunity youth through post-secondary education, including prevention programs in middle and high schools.
- **Employment and 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.
- **Goal Setting and 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.
- **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 also focus on building the capacity of organizations to support a pathway for opportunity youth who do not have a high school credential to obtain post-secondary education and work experience. Specifically, opportunity youth attending one of nine high school equivalency programs will be part of a pathway to post-secondary education options, including SA: Ready to Work.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

If this ordinance is not approved, DHS Youth Success Division will not be able to fully implement the strategic plan developed through the Aspen Planning Grant in 2019 to improve outcomes for opportunity youth or build out the pathway for opportunity youth without a high school credential to obtain a post-secondary education.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

This ordinance approves the acceptance of the Building Ecosystems for Youth Opportunity Grant from the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions in the amount of \$100,000 for 18-month period of May 1, 2021 to October 31, 2022; and authorizing personnel complement for one senior management analyst position.

#### **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 and a revised budget and personnel complement.