



# Board Agenda Item 37

DATE: February 20, 2024

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Sanja Bugay, Department of Social Services

SUBJECT: Agreement with Aspiranet, Inc.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Under Administrative Policy No. 34 for competitive bids or requests for proposals (AP 34), determine that an exception to the competitive bidding requirement under AP 34 is satisfied and a suspension of competition is warranted due to unusual or extraordinary circumstances, and that the best interests of the County would be served by entering into an Agreement with Aspiranet, Inc. as this vendor is uniquely qualified to guarantee the continuity of existing services necessary to effectively evaluate the successes of the programs and thereby determine the best application of State funds; and,**
- 2. Approve and authorize the Chairman to execute an Agreement with Aspiranet, Inc. for the provision of Transitional Housing Program Plus (THP Plus) and Family Unification Program (FUP) housing and supportive services, effective March 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024, total not to exceed \$1,115,140.**

Approval of the recommended actions will allow the Department to continue to provide former foster youth and families exiting the Department's Child Welfare Services (CWS) system with housing and supportive services to achieve stable permanent housing and self-sufficiency. The recommended agreement will be funded with California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Transitional Housing Program (THP) Round 4 and Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program (HNMP) Round 1 funds, and Title IV-B/2011 Realignment. This item is Countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

There is no viable alternative action. If this item is not approved, access to housing and supportive services targeted to former foster youth and families involved with CWS through the THP Plus and FUP programs would be eliminated, thereby increasing homelessness for youth and prolonged family involvement with CWS.

SUSPENSION OF COMPETITION/SOLE SOURCE CONTRACT:

The Department requests to waive the competitive bidding process consistent with Administrative Policy No. 34 as Aspiranet, Inc. for unusual or extraordinary circumstances following a significant increase in State funding as well as an extension of FUP Youth program participation time, to allow for an assessment of the transitional housing and case management services going forward. Continued utilization of the vendor who has provided these services in previous years will allow the Department to ensure that changes in quality of services and/or outcomes are due to programmatic changes rather than differences in vendor implementation. The Internal Services Department - Purchasing concurs with the Department's assessment that this satisfies the exception to the competitive bidding process required by AP 34.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. The maximum amount for the 10-month agreement is \$1,115,140, and a minimum of \$990,540 will be offset using State HCD THP Round 4/HNMP Round 1 funds. FUP Families will continue to be funded with 2011 Realignment at a maximum amount of \$124,600. The County entered into a Standard Agreement with the California Department of General Services on July 18, 2023 to receive the funds through established HCD processes. Sufficient appropriations and estimated revenues are included in the Department's Org 5610 FY 2023-24 Adopted Budget and will be included in subsequent budget requests.

DISCUSSION:

THP Plus is a transitional housing program for former foster youth, ages 18 to 24, inclusive. Transitional housing is essential for former foster youth due to high rates of homelessness among this population. The goal of the program is to provide transitional housing and supportive case management services to assist former foster youth, ages 18 to 24, inclusive, in developing self-sufficiency and transition to independent living. Services can be provided up to 24 months and include educational guidance, employment counseling, and referrals to community services.

FUP Youth, in partnership with the Fresno Housing Authority, provides housing assistance and case management services to former foster youth exiting the CWS, ages 18 to 24, inclusive. Services are provided for up to 36 months and include Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV), job readiness, assistance in obtaining educational goals, and referrals to other community services. FUP Families provides housing assistance in the form of HCVs and case management services for families exiting the CWS for whom housing insecurity remains a barrier to reunification. Case management services include job readiness, assistance in obtaining educational goals, and referrals to community services. Case management services for FUP Families are offered for up to 6 months, are voluntary, and completion is not a necessary requirement to receive HCV.

In 2022, the State of California passed Assembly Bill 1615, Former Foster Youth Housing, to expand THP and HNP (renamed to HNMP) programs. As a result, the Fresno County's funding allocations were increased from \$116,000 to \$634,313 (THP Round 4), and from \$144,290 to \$537,848 (HNMP Round 1). Additionally, the duration of case management services for FUP Youth has been increased from 24 to 36 months. In July 2023, the Board approved a Standard Agreement with HCD for acceptance of the THP Round 4/HNMP Round 1 funds.

If approved, the recommended Agreement will allow Aspiranet to continue to provide youth and families with these essential housing and supportive services that assist them in achieving permanent housing and self-sufficiency, without interruption, through December 31, 2024, while also enabling the Department to accurately evaluate the existing provision of services and determine the best usage and application of the increased HCD funding. This evaluation is necessary for the Department's ongoing development of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the provision of THP and FUP services to begin January 1, 2025.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #66, July 18, 2023

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Suspension of Competition Acquisition Request  
On file with Clerk - Agreement with Aspiranet, Inc.

CAO ANALYST:

Ronald Alexander