



Legislation Text

File #: 23-0749, **Version:** 1

DATE: August 22, 2023
TO: Board of Supervisors
SUBMITTED BY: David Luchini, RN, PHN, Director, Department of Public Health
SUBJECT: Agreement with Black Wellness and Prosperity Center to Implement Fresno County's Initiative to Address COVID-19 Related Health Disparities Program

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Make a finding that it is in the best interest of the County to suspend the competitive bidding process consistent with Administrative Policy No. 34 for unusual or extraordinary circumstances as Black Wellness and Prosperity Center is uniquely qualified and the only suitable vendor to continue to carry out the required programmatic activities; and**
- 2. Approve and authorize the Chairman to execute Agreement with Black Wellness and Prosperity Center to provide health intervention activities for implementation of Fresno County's Initiative to Address COVID-19 Related Health Disparities, effective August 22, 2023 through December 31, 2026, which includes two optional one-year extensions, total not to exceed \$1,156,109.**

There is no additional Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions, which will allow the Black Wellness and Prosperity Center (BWPC) to provide care coordination services to underserved residents of Fresno County through a variety of outreach, education, and referral intervention strategies. This agreement will be a continuation of services provided by the African American Coalition (AAC) through a previous agreement with Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission (Fresno EOC). Fresno EOC previously served as the fiscal agent for AAC, however AAC is now transitioning to the BWPC. These health intervention activities are funded through braided funding from:

- The United States Department of Health and Human Services Centers (DHHS) for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for Prevention and Control of Emerging Infectious Diseases (ELC);
- The CDC's Activities to Support State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Health Department Response to Public Health or Healthcare Crises; and
- The United States Department of the Treasury Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (ARPA).

This item is Countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Should your board not approve the recommended action, the County will not be able to contract with BWPC to provide health intervention services to at-risk populations in Fresno County. Current AAC interventions are centered towards individuals located in the targeted zip codes of 93706, 93704, 93710, 93711, 93720, 93721, 93725, and 93741 with an emphasis on zip codes of Southwest Fresno. If not approved, all activities and interventions will cease immediately, cutting lines of critical services to community members. Should this

happen, a significant amount of grant funds will remain unutilized and ineligible for use once the grant term expires.

SUSPENSION OF COMPETITION:

The Department's request to suspend the competitive bidding process is consistent with Administrative Policy No. 34 for unusual and extraordinary circumstances as BWPC has demonstrated they are uniquely qualified and the only suitable vendor to continue to carry out the required programmatic activities due to their planned absorption of AAC, including programs and staff, whose previous and ongoing work with Agreement No. 23-135 will continue under this recommended action. In addition to their partnership with AAC, BWPC is uniquely qualified as an organization to serve Fresno County's Black community through their extensive experience in designing and implementing comprehensive interventions with a focus on decreasing health disparities. BWPC specifically addresses and leverages the partnerships within Fresno's Black community and builds a foundational vision of Black-centered public health. The Internal Services Department - Purchasing concurs with the Department's request to suspend the competitive bidding process.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. The recommended agreement is fully funded with federal and state grants. The total cost for the recommended agreement is \$1,156,109. Sufficient appropriations and estimated revenues are included in the Department's Org 5620 FY 2023-24 Recommended Budget and will be included in future budget requests.

DISCUSSION:

On July 13, 2021, your Board approved the National Initiative to Address COVID-19 Health Disparities grant from the CDC through DHHS. The goal of the grant is to address COVID-19 related health disparities by identifying and integrating a community information exchange system (CIE) to increase community-based organization (CBO) capacity for resource coordination, referrals to services, health screenings, as well as outreach and education for community members throughout the County. Since the grant was accepted, the Department has been fulfilling the scope of work deliverables through community health worker (CHW) intervention efforts, including the Fresno HOPE Pathways Community HUB, which provides wrap around services to community members through evidence-based interventions. Respectively, the Department's Health Disparities subawards, compliment other CHW interventions by targeting unique populations in high need areas of Fresno County that are currently not served by other CHW intervention services. The Department is strategically working towards standardizing CHW led efforts by aligning trainings, enhancing referral coordination, and aligning targeted reach to maximize interventions within Fresno County.

On July 13, 2022, the Department released RFP #22-060 for up to seven qualified vendors to provide health intervention activities for implementation of Fresno County's Initiative to Address COVID-19 Related Health Disparities, which includes recruiting, training, and deploying CHWs to improve and address COVID-19 related health disparities and advance equity in underserved and disproportionately affected populations within Fresno County. The RFP closed on August 22, 2022 with proposals submitted by thirteen vendors. An RFP evaluation team convened on October 4, 2022 and reached consensus to recommend awards to seven organizations, based on each proposal's implementation plan, fiscally sound budget, target population, and overall strength of proposal. One of the seven awarded vendors included Fresno EOC-AAC's joint proposal.

On March 28, 2023 your board approved agreement No. 23-135 which allowed the County to partner with Fresno EOC to allow them to act as the fiscal agent for AAC to implement scope of work activities described in RFP #22-060. Since the agreement's execution, AAC now plans to move from Fresno EOC as a fiscal agent and work under BWPC. Because agreement No. 23-135 is between the County and Fresno EOC, the Department will terminate agreement No. 23-135 with Fresno EOC and carryover any unspent funds to the

recommended agreement with BWPC with no changes to the term or scope of work activities in the original agreement.

The leadership team of BWPC were key partners in Fresno's COVID-19 equity response and were instrumental, along with AAC partners, to assure that mitigation measures were in place to appropriately address health disparities within Fresno's Black community. BWPC's organizational experience includes negotiating contracts to secure Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding, demonstrating their ability to manage flow through funds from Federal grants. In addition to fiscal and administrative experience, BWPC is a local non-profit and is familiar with the local landscape and specific needs of residents. BWPC's experience with Fresno's Black community, experience in designing and implementing comprehensive interventions focused on decreasing health disparities, and Black-centered foundational approaches make BWPC uniquely qualified to provide these services.

Approval of the recommended actions will allow the Department to partner with BWPC to continue implementation of CHW interventions started by Fresno EOC in agreement No. 23-135, which will avoid interruption and allow for continuation of critical services to a currently underserved population of Fresno County.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #48 - March 28, 2023

BAI #43 - July 13, 2021

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Suspension of Competition

On file with Clerk - Agreement with Black Wellness and Prosperity Center

CAO ANALYST:

Ron Alexander