



## Legislation Text

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File #: 22-156, Version: 1

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**STRATEGIC PRIORITY:** Human and Social Needs  
**AGENDA DATE:** January 12, 2022  
**COUNCIL DISTRICT(S):** N/A  
**DEPARTMENT:** Office of Community Care  
**EXECUTIVE:** Kimberly Bizer Tolbert

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### **SUBJECT**

Authorize **(1)** the acceptance of a cost-share grant from the Corporation for National Community Service (CNCS) to provide four AmeriCorps VISTA members to perform volunteer services to strengthen and supplement efforts to eliminate poverty and poverty-related human, social and environmental problems in support of the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) for the period January 16, 2022 through January 14, 2023, with a one-year renewal option; **(2)** the execution of the cost-share agreement with CNCS and all terms, conditions, and documents required by the agreement; **(3)** an amount up to \$15,312.00 in WIC Program Funds to serve as cost-share for the VISTAs; and **(4)** execution of a cost-share agreement with the Child Poverty Action Lab (“CPAL”) and an agreement with University of North Texas at Dallas to implement the program and acceptance of up to \$15,312.00 from CPAL to reimburse the City - Not to exceed \$15,312.00 - Financing: Health and Human Services Grant Funds

### **BACKGROUND**

The CNCS’s AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) is a program focused on bringing low-income individuals and communities out of poverty. Since 2014, multiple City of Dallas departments have participated in the AmeriCorps VISTA Program, with the first being the Mayor’s 2016 GrowSouth Initiative. Dallas County has one of the highest child poverty rates with 73% of students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch, which is an indicator of children living in households 130% below the Federal poverty level. This is an area of unmet poverty-related community need in Dallas County because only 39% of the eligible population participates in the WIC Program.

The Office of Community Care administers the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), which provides nutritious food, nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health and social services. In Texas, populations that are eligible for WIC are pregnant or breastfeeding women, infants, families with children younger than five years old, all foster care children under the age of five years old, and single fathers of eligible infants and children, all of which must meet the income guidelines of 185 percent below the federal poverty level.

Overall participation rates in the WIC program had been declining for the past decade until 2019. During 2020 and the first half of 2021, rates again started declining, though have increased over the last several months. OCC and WIC formed a partnership with Child Poverty Action Lab (CPAL) to identify the causes of decreasing participation levels in the WIC program and opportunities to improve participation rates and client service. In doing so, OCC and CPAL identified that only 37% of the target population live within two miles of a clinic, and many lack vehicles and alternative forms of transit. Together, WIC and CPAL conducted research with WIC staff, families and leadership to better understand how potential clients access information about WIC, what factors lead to them participating in the program, what factors may serve as deterrents to participation, and what barriers to participation may exist. OCC and CPAL then developed a WIC Playbook with a number of specific ideas to address the identified issues.

WIC will utilize Americorps VISTA resources to continue the work begun in the initial program term to reach and serve these populations, utilizing the WIC Playbook recommendations. VISTA members have worked to identify neighborhoods that need improved clinic access, identify organizations in highly populated areas where clinics could be established, develop rotational mobile clinic models for implementation in community centers and high-density residential housing complexes, identify community leaders that can spread WIC information, evaluate processes in person, and gather feedback from the community about where and how the clinics should be implemented and improved. WIC VISTAs have helped to launch projects in several WIC clinics that have shown positive returns. The continuation of this project will enable WIC and the VISTAs to build off of these learnings and begin applying them more broadly across the WIC agency. This cost-share agreement between CNCS and the City of Dallas.

On July 30, 2021, the City Manager authorized an amendment to change the program term to end on January 14, 2022.

This item will authorize a cost-share agreement between CNCS. CNCS pays the VISTAs their stipends directly and will then bill the cost-share to CPAL, who has agreed to pay the required portion.

### **PRIOR ACTION/REVIEW (COUNCIL, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS)**

On October 11, 2016, City Council authorized the acceptance of the 2016 Corporation for National and Community Service AmeriCorps Grant by Resolution No. 16-1672.

On April 26, 2017, City Council authorized the acceptance of a continuation grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service AmeriCorps, Grant No. 14VSWTX018, CFDA No. 94.013, for the period April 30, 2017 through April 28, 2018, by Resolution No. 17-0730.

On September 26, 2018, City Council authorized the acceptance of a cost-share grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service to continue the AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) Program at the City of Dallas for capacity building in low-income communities for the period September 30, 2018 through September 28, 2019, by Resolution No. 18-1355.

On February 26, 2020, City Council authorized the acceptance of a cost-share grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service to continue the AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) Program at the City of Dallas for capacity building in low-income communities for the period March 29, 2020 through April 24, 2021, by Resolution No. 20-0330.

**FISCAL INFORMATION**

Fund	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	Future Years
Health and Human Services Commission Grant Funds	\$15,312.00	\$0,000.00	\$0.00