



Legislation Text

File #: 23-3020, Version: 1

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: Environmental & Sustainability
AGENDA DATE: December 13, 2023
COUNCIL DISTRICT(S): All
DEPARTMENT: Office of Environmental Quality & Sustainability
EXECUTIVE: M. Elizabeth Cedillo-Pereira

SUBJECT

Authorize a five-year Interlocal Agreement with the University of North Texas to continue the Environmental Education Initiative Program - Not to exceed \$2,803,601.00 - Financing: General Fund (subject to annual appropriations)

BACKGROUND

This Interlocal Agreement will continue the Environmental Education Initiative (EEI) Program for the Water Conservation Division in the Office of Environmental Quality and Sustainability (OEQS).

Dallas Water Utilities (DWU) is a major water provider in North Texas, serving over 2.4 million people within a 699 square mile service area. To ensure that the City of Dallas (City) is a good steward of its resources and remains compliant with regulatory water conservation and planning requirements, DWU initiated a multi-faceted water conservation program in 2001. The water conservation program is currently guided by the Water Conservation Five-Year Work Plan, adopted by Dallas City Council on June 15, 2016 (Resolution No. 16-0997). The plan includes a range of efforts classed as water system improvements, ordinance changes, or continued customer engagement. These water conservation efforts benefit the City and its residents in several ways: (1) reducing overall water consumption, thereby delaying the need to develop expensive new water supplies; (2) extending the life of existing water supplies and infrastructure; (3) reducing peak water demands and base capacity of the water system; and (4) lowering capital and operating costs of the existing water system. In short, being a good steward of water resources saves money and provides a wealth of other co-benefits for Dallas residents.

In FY 2006, DWU expanded its existing school education programs with the creation of the EEI to provide programs for grades kindergarten through twelve in the Dallas Independent School District and in other area schools that serve Dallas residents. In October 2018, the OEQS was given the responsibility of overseeing the City's water conservation program in coordination with DWU. On February 13, 2019, City Council authorized the renewal of a five-year service contract with the UNT for the EEI Program. This program will continue to teach, create, and enhance behavior changes in thousands of school-age children residing in Dallas. The program is designed to appeal not only to the students but also to their parents and the community.

This program’s primary responsibility is to augment water conservation efforts as identified in the 2016 Water Conservation Five-Year Work Plan and the 2019 Water Conservation Plan.

The EEI Program promotes the importance of water conservation to school- aged children through bilingual (English/Spanish) hands-on classroom activities, interactive teacher workshops and community outreach activities. The multi-faceted program incorporates State accredited curricula, hands-on lessons, school presentations, teacher development training and more. The program will continue the Research Summit and Summer Internship for selected high school students. Students will learn from and work under the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math initiative.

To date, the EEI Program has effectively reached a diverse student population in classroom settings and trained and collaborated with teachers and administrators. The goal is to continue to build upon the current curriculum developed for K-12 education by adding new lesson plans and updating current ones, as well as increasing the number of lessons and outreach at various community events.

In the past five years, the EEI Program has served equitably across all council districts in the following manner:

- Provided water conservation lessons to over 37,099 elementary and middle school students;
- Assisted over 718 teachers through interactive workshops; and
- Reached approximately 22,972 residents through environmental community events and activities

This Interlocal Agreement is in accordance with the Interlocal Cooperation Act, Texas Government Code Chapter 791, as amended, cities, counties, special districts and other legally constituted political subdivision of the State of Texas are authorized to enter into local contacts and agreements with each other regarding governmental functions and services.

PRIOR ACTION/REVIEW (COUNCIL, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS)

On February 13, 2019, the City Council authorized the renewal of a five-year service contract with the University of North Texas for the Environmental Education Initiative by Resolution No. 19-0270.

The Environmental Commission was briefed on the “Dallas Environmental Education Initiative (EEI) - Interlocal Agreement” on November 8, 2023.

The Parks, Trails, and the Environment Committee was briefed on the “Dallas Environmental Education Initiative (EEI) - Interlocal Agreement” on December 4, 2023.

FISCAL INFORMATION

Fund	FY 2024	FY 2025	Future Years
General Fund	\$534,350.00	\$545,936.00	\$1,723,315.00

Dallas Water Utilities will fully reimburse OEQS for the services related to this program.

OWNER

University of North Texas

Dr. Neal Smatresk, President
Michael McPherson, Provost