



Legislation Text

File #: 20-1898, **Version:** 1

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: Human and Social Needs
AGENDA DATE: October 28, 2020
COUNCIL DISTRICT(S): N/A
DEPARTMENT: Office of Equity and Inclusion
EXECUTIVE: M. Elizabeth Cedillo-Pereira

SUBJECT

Authorize a subrecipient agreement for digital navigators pilot program with **(1)** LULAC National Educational Service Centers, Inc. in the amount of \$110,956.00; and **(2)** Southern Dallas Progress Community Development Center in the amount of \$25,000.00 for the period October 28, 2020 (or upon contract execution) through December 30, 2020 - Total not to exceed \$135,956.00 - Financing: U.S. Department of Treasury - Coronavirus Relief Funds

BACKGROUND

The City of Dallas recognizes that having access to the internet is critical for families and individuals during this time of crisis. While practicing social distancing and dealing with the closures of many businesses and social services, internet access will help families and individuals do a wide range of activities, from schoolwork to job searching to paying bills.

The City is working to ensure everyone can remain connected and that those without internet access get access with the assistance of a digital helpline and community digital navigators. While smartphone apps and other digital tools have the clear potential to increase access to the internet, actual successful implementation remains limited. Challenges often encountered in seeking to connect to and use the internet include selecting affordable plans, safe/effective applications and tools, and increased time spent on troubleshooting technology. The digital navigators can help overcome these barriers through community engagement and assistance through pre-established community trust and relationships.

Digital navigators provide individualized or small group assistance to the community who need affordable home internet service, affordable internet-capable devices, and/or coaching in introductory digital skills in order to become effective home internet users. This assistance is often provided by voice telephone but may also include safe and physically distanced in-person visits, email, text, video chat, and other communication methods that work for the learner. In situations where in-person visits may occur, the navigators will maintain social distancing and distribute face coverings. Applicants will engage in the following activities:

- Digital Navigators discuss with each client their home internet access or need for home internet access, technology experiences and their devices.
- They assess their clients' access to technology, current digital skill level pertaining to what they need to accomplish the plan, connectivity needs, and internet use priorities.
- They advise clients about free or affordable home internet service options for which they may qualify, assist clients to apply for services they choose, and support their efforts to secure service.
- They advise clients about sources of affordable computers or other internet connected devices for which they may qualify and support their efforts to acquire appropriate devices and where they can get help for repair.

The purpose of the subrecipient grants is to connect with targeted communities to better understand and alleviate the impact of the public health emergency on students, job seekers, and those in need of health access, evictions help, food access, COVID-19 testing and other related COVID resources by improving the targeted communities' internet access to those resources.

SUBRECIPIENT SELECTION PROCESS

A three-member panel reviewed and scored the applications representing the below departments:

- Dallas Public Library (1)
- Park & Recreation Department (1)
- Office of Community Care (1)

Applications were evaluated according to the below points allocations. Within the below allocations, specific points in the scoring were allocated to the organization's demonstrated capacity to expend funding and deliver services in a timely manner and organization's demonstrated ability to reach and serve identified target populations.

| Organizational Capacity | Program and Budget |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 40 pts | 60 pts. |

Due to the limited timeline for expenditure of CARES Act Funding, the RFA was posted for approximately two weeks. After an initial review of the submissions it was determined that the submissions were incomplete or non-responsive submission, and the RFA was posted for another week. A total of 8 submissions were received, including resubmissions.

The City received the following proposals from the solicitation:

Round 1

1. Southern Progress Community Development Corporation
2. Services of Hope & Financial Hope CCS
3. Puede Network

Round 2

1. LULAC National Educational Service Centers, Inc.
2. Southern Progress Community Development Corporation
3. Services of Hope & Financial Hope CCS
4. 4 Body N Soul
5. Village Bridge Inc.

The following organization was selected to receive funding:

| Organization | Rank (Scoring Average) | Services | Request Amount | Award Amount | % of Request |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| LULAC National Educational Service Centers, Inc. | 84.75 | Digital literacy skills, access to internet | \$110,956.00 | \$110,956.00 | 100.00% |
| Southern Dallas Progress Community Development Center | 75.5 | Digital literacy skills, access to internet | \$146,350.00 | \$ 25,000.00 | 17.00% |

PRIOR ACTION/REVIEW (COUNCIL, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS)

On April 22, 2020, City Council authorized the acceptance of the CARES Act to aid the COVID-19 response throughout the City by Resolution No. 20-0644.

City Council was briefed on the CARES Act funds to facilitate assistance to eligible communities and households economically impacted by COVID-19 on June 17, 2020.

The Workforce, Education, and Equity Council Committee was briefed on Equity and Inclusion Efforts Update to include Bridging the Digital Divide on August 10, 2020.

FISCAL INFORMATION

| Fund | FY 2020 | FY 2021 | Future Years |
|--|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| U.S. Department of Treasury - Coronavirus Relief Funds | \$0.00 | \$135,956.00 | \$0.00 |