

31. Consider recommendations relating to Refugee Employment and Elderly Services Program contracts. (LA-1)Possible action:
- a. Approve delegation of authority to the County Executive, or designee, to negotiate, execute, amend or terminate Contracts with Jewish Family Services relating to providing refugee employment, elderly services, housing assistance, and emergency assistance in an amount not to exceed \$216,000 and a contract term that starts no earlier than April 16, 2024 and ends no later than September 30, 2024, following approval by County Counsel as to form and legality, and approval by the Office of the County Executive. Delegation of authority shall expire on September 30, 2024.
 - b. Approve delegation of authority to the County Executive, or designee, to negotiate, execute, amend or terminate Contracts with International Rescue Committee, Inc., relating to providing refugee employment, elderly services, housing assistance, and emergency assistance in an amount not to exceed \$109,000 and a contract term that starts no earlier than April 16, 2024 and ends no later than September 30, 2024, following approval by County Counsel as to form and legality, and approval by the Office of the County Executive. Delegation of authority shall expire on September 30, 2024.

(ID# 24-5308)



24-5308

DATE: April 16, 2024

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Daniel Little, Director, Social Services Agency

SUBJECT: Refugee Employment and Elderly Services Program DOA

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Consider recommendations relating to Refugee Employment and Elderly Services Program contracts. (LA-1)

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FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no negative impact to the County General Fund as a result of the Recommended Action.

Additional funding request for \$109,000 for the International Rescue Committee, Inc. (IRC) and \$216,000 for Jewish Family Services (JFS), for transitioning refugees to permanent housing, is included in the Social Services Agency's (SSA) Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2024 Approved Budget.

CONTRACT HISTORY

On February 11, 2022, SSA and the Department of Employment and Benefits Services (DEBS) released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Refugee Employment and Elderly Services Program (eRFP-SSA-FY22-0189) through Periscope Holdings, the County of Santa Clara's bid management website. On the response deadline of April 15, 2022, SSA and DEBS received two proposals from the following organizations:

1. International Rescue Committee, Inc.
2. Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley

All proposals were determined to have met the minimum qualifications as outlined in the RFP. An Evaluation Committee was convened to evaluate the proposals and after consideration of the proposals received, the Evaluation Committee's scoring of each proposal, and the County's current needs and priorities with respect to the successful operation of the Refugee Employment and Elderly Services Program, IRC, and JFS of Silicon Valley were selected for contract awards.

On October 4, 2022, the Board of Supervisors (Board) approved the contracts with IRC in the amount of \$750,000 and JFS of Silicon Valley in the amount of \$750,000 for the period October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023.

On August 15, 2023, the Board approved a delegation of authority (DOA) to the County Executive, or designee, to negotiate, execute, amend, or terminate contracts with IRC not to exceed \$2,024,000 and JFS of Silicon Valley not to exceed \$1,903,000 for a contract term that starts no earlier than October 1, 2023 and ends no later than September 30, 2024.

The First Amendment with JFS was approved by the Board on August 15, 2023 increasing the maximum contract amount by \$85,000 from \$750,000 to \$835,000, with no change to the contract term.

The First Amendment with IRC was approved by the Board on August 15, 2023 increasing the maximum contract amount by \$150,000 from \$750,000 to \$900,000, with no change to the contract term.

The Second Amendment with JFS was approved through DOA on November 15, 2023 for an amount of \$1,730,000, for period October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024.

The Second Amendment with IRC was approved through DOA on November 19, 2023 for an amount of \$1,840,000, for period October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024.

On March 26, 2024, the Board approved a DOA to the County Executive, or designee, to negotiate, execute, amend, or terminate contracts with IRC not to exceed \$870,000 and JFS of Silicon Valley not to exceed \$990,770 for a contract term that starts no earlier than March 26, 2024 and ends no later than September 30, 2024.

The Third Amendment with JFS is in the process of being approved through DOA increasing the maximum contract amount by \$990,700 from \$1,730,000 to \$2,720,700 with no change to the contract term.

The Third Amendment with IRC is in the process of being approved through DOA increasing the maximum contract amount by \$870,000 from \$1,840,000 to \$2,710,000, with no change to the contract term.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION AND BACKGROUND

The mission of SSA is to provide resources and opportunities in a culturally responsive manner to enhance the quality of life for residents in the community by protecting, educating, and empowering individuals and families. IRC and JFS will continue to provide employment, housing, and elderly services to refugees. These services play a vital role in helping refugees secure employment, become self-sufficient, and link elderly refugees to mainstream services.

In addition, the resettlement agencies, IRC and JFS, receive funding from the State Department's Reception and Placement (R&P) program to provide for critical needs, such as housing, food and clothing during the refugee's first 90 days in the U.S. The R&P combines public and private resources and resettlement agencies work closely with local communities to supplement federal funding through volunteers and donations.

Given the influx of new arrivals during the first four months of the current federal FY (FFY) (10/01/23 – 01/31/24), the community is experiencing an increased need for housing. To help mitigate this need, on March 26, 2024, the Board approved a one-time funding of \$204,000 to cover the March 2024 temporary shelter expenses for refugee families. While this funding helped with housing cost for the month of March, the resettlement agencies have identified an additional need of \$325,000 to support families with temporary housing and transition to permanent housing.

SSA is working closely with the State Refugee Bureau to explore potential solutions to address the refugee needs. Also, SSA will continue to collaborate with the resettlement agencies as they leverage and facilitate available housing resources for new arrivals and will jointly monitor the service needs and will seek additional support from the Board of Supervisors, as needed.

Reason for request of Delegation of Authority

Although DOA are discouraged except under certain circumstances, this DOA is necessary to allow SSA to promptly execute amendments for FFY 2024 involving modifications of the program goals and budgets necessitated by allocation adjustments.

CHILD IMPACT

The recommended action impacts the **Safe and Stable Families** indicator as employment services will assist refugees in obtaining and maintaining employment which leads to self-sufficiency for the family providing a stable environment for children.

SENIOR IMPACT

The recommended action will have a positive impact on refugees who are aged 60 or older by providing aging related services to improve their overall wellness and quality of life thereby ensuring that they are valuable members of the community.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The recommended action balances the shared interests in public policy and programs and enhances social equity and safety by connecting refugees with mainstream services and employment opportunities to achieve self-sufficiency.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

Contracts for refugee services with IRC and JFS of Silicon Valley, which provide critical support and meet the immediate needs of refugee families and individuals, may be delayed if access to available funds is limited and cannot be quickly executed through a DOA.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

The Clerk of the Board will notify Jorge Montes, Alana Rainville, Crystal Chavez, and Daniel Freer for the SSA following the processing of the legislative file.