

**Agenda Item No. 2
July 2, 2014 Meeting**

DATE: June 24, 2014

TO: Children and Families Commission of Orange County

FROM: Christina Altmayer, Executive Director 

SUBJECT: Receive the AmeriCorps/VISTA Program Update and Notification to Transition the Program Administration to Prevent Child Abuse California

SUMMARY:

The Children and Families Commission of Orange County participates in the federal AmeriCorps and the AmeriCorps/VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) programs which have a combined annual net cost of just over \$1 million. The Commission's local program includes: 23 AmeriCorps members at THINK Together and the Boys and Girls Club of Garden Grove that provide direct services to children ages 0-5; and 22 VISTA members that provide capacity building support services at various non-profit agencies throughout Orange County. Both programs are currently administered by Orangewood Children's Foundation.

Orangewood Children's Foundation notified the Commission that it would not seek to renew its administrative services contract when it expires on June 30, 2014. Additionally, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the agency that allocates the VISTA program resources and administers the program at the federal level, has indicated that the VISTA program will be undergoing a significant redesign.

This agenda item includes a status update of the current VISTA program and implementing actions to address potential changes to the VISTA program, and an update on the transition of the programs' administration from Orangewood Children's Foundation to a new administrative services subcontractor.

DISCUSSION:

The Orange County Commission serves as the lead for the statewide First 5 Service Corps collaborative, which includes seven other county commissions and 42 members in service throughout the state. Since the inception of the program, the Commission has subcontracted with Orangewood Children's Foundation to manage both the statewide VISTA program and the Commission's local AmeriCorps and VISTA programs. The scope of services for this administrative services subcontract has included recruiting members, training supervisors and members, and collecting and reporting program performance data.

In November 2013, Orangewood Children's Foundation notified Commission staff that it would not seek to renew its administrative services subcontract when it expires on June 30, 2014. This scope of work included both the administration of the local AmeriCorps program and administration of the statewide and local VISTA programs. As part of a long term strategy to reduce ongoing administrative costs, the Commission has transitioned key administrative tasks for the

AmeriCorps program to the Boys and Girls Club of Garden Grove and THINK Together. Both agencies have agreed to take on more of the member support administration.

The VISTA administration scope of work is more complicated as it includes both the Orange County program that includes 22 members and also the statewide component of the program requiring coordination with seven other county commissions. Commission staff completed a process to identify another administrative partner but did not move forward with a subcontract because of the uncertainty surrounding the potential changes to the VISTA program. Staff has continued to participate in monthly calls with CNCS to discuss potential program design changes; however, a final determination has yet to be made about the size of the ongoing VISTA program.

With the Orangewood Children's Foundation subcontract expiring shortly, staff moved forward with an agreement with Prevent Child Abuse California (PCA CA) for administrative support services for the remainder of the current VISTA program year. Given the complex federal program requirements and audit requirements, it is critical that the Commission ensure consistent compliance with all such requirements. Staff used the Executive Director's authority (maximum of \$50,000) to execute an agreement with PCA CA for a maximum contract amount of \$43,136 for the period of June 9, 2014 through November 30, 2014. The agreement has a limited term and modified scope of work that focuses on supporting the current members, placement sites and the required reporting through the end of the current VISTA program year.

Prevent Child Abuse California has extensive experience with managing both AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps/VISTA programs, and currently manages the statewide AmeriCorps program as a subcontractor to the First 5 Association. The long term goal is to look at opportunities to reduce program administration costs for both the statewide AmeriCorps and VISTA programs as well as to look for opportunities to leverage both programs to create even greater impacts on the families receiving services as well as the non-profit host agencies.

This staff report serves as notification to the Commission of the changes in the program. No Commission contract action is necessary at this time. Commission staff will continue to work with CNCS to conclude the negotiations around the VISTA program redesign and size, and return no later than October 2014 with funding recommendations for member stipends and a complete scope of work for program administration.

STRATEGIC PLAN & FISCAL SUMMARY:

The proposed action has been specifically reviewed in relation to the Commission's Strategic Plan and is consistent with the Commission's Capacity Building goals. The total funding amount of up to \$43,136 is included in the FY 2014/15 budget within the Capacity Building funding category.

PRIOR COMMISSION ACTIONS:

- May 2014 – Program update and funding action for the AmeriCorps program
- March 2014 – Capacity Building Goal Area Update
- May 2013 – AmeriCorps funding approval for program year 2013/14
- June 2012 – Updated funding approval for FY 2012/13
- March 2012 – Funding approved for program year FY 2012/13

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive AmeriCorps/VISTA program update and notification of the transition of AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps/VISTA program administration support services from Orangewood Children's Foundation to Prevent Child Abuse California.

Contact: Kim Goll