



Agenda Report

March 17, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Finance Committee

FROM: Office of the City Manager – Career Services Division

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE FOOTHILL UNITY CENTER, INC. TO RECEIVE HELPING JUSTICE-INVOLVED REENTER EMPLOYMENT (H.I.R.E) GRANT FUNDS AND TO SUB-AWARD A PORTION OF THE AWARDED GRANT FUNDS TO THE FLINTRIDGE CENTER AND AMEND THE BUDGET TO ACCEPT AND SPEND THE GRANT FUNDS

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

- 1) Find that the proposed action is not a “project” subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21065 and within the meaning of State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060(c) 15378(b);
- 2) Authorize the City Manager to enter into a contract between the City of Pasadena (administrative entity for the Foothill Workforce Development Board) with Foothill Unity Center for the receipt of H.I.R.E (Helping Justice-Involved Reenter Employment) grant funds in the amount of \$675,000 over 24-month term;
- 3) Authorize the City Manager to enter into a contract between the City of Pasadena (administrative entity for the Foothill Workforce Development Board) with The Flintridge Center to sub-award H.I.R.E (Helping Justice-Involved Reenter Employment) grant funds in the amount of \$220,000 over 24-month term; and
- 4) Amend the City Manager’s FY 2025 Operating Budget to recognize revenues and appropriate expenditures of \$675,000 in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Fund.

BACKGROUND:

In June 2022, the California Legislature passed Assembly Bill (AB) 178, which allocated \$50 million to the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) to administer a statewide reentry grant program subsequently named H.I.R.E (Helping Justice-Involved Reenter Employment). Eligible applicants were required to be either a non-profit or a community-based organization (CBO) and have a history of developing training programs with feedback from the reentry population as well as relationships with employers that hire individuals with a criminal record.

Foothill Unity Center, Inc. (FUC) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1980, with operations in Pasadena and Monrovia, CA. It is dedicated to providing essential support to individuals and families in need. The organization operates through a combination of donations, volunteers, and community partnerships, aiming to alleviate poverty and promote self-sufficiency. FUC is known for its food pantry, holiday meal programs, and back-to-school distributions, which have made a significant impact on local families facing economic hardship.

The Flintridge Center, founded in 1998 and located in Pasadena, CA, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty and incarceration by providing comprehensive support services to individuals and families. Since its establishment, the organization has focused on addressing the challenges faced by justice-involved individuals and their families, emphasizing reentry services, workforce development, and community empowerment in the Pasadena area.

In June 2023, Foothill Unity Center, Inc. (FUC), in collaboration with the Foothill Workforce Development Board (FWDB) and The Flintridge Center submitted a joint application for the H.I.R.E. grant. This partnership followed a "hub and spoke" model, with the South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB) serving as the network hub and FUC as one of the spokes. SBWIB submitted a single application to the CWDB on behalf of the partnership. However, delays at the state level in reviewing applications, notifying awardees, and finalizing contracts resulted in FUC not receiving its \$750,000 grant award until December 12, 2024.

As the spoke applicant, FUC will retain a 10% administrative fee (\$75,000) to cover personnel costs associated with processing monthly invoices and participating in quarterly updates to the CWDB. FWDB inquired with the CWDB about assuming the administrative functions for the grant but was informed that this was not possible, as the lead applicant or spoke must be a CBO or nonprofit. The H.I.R.E grant will fund training, reskilling, upskilling, and supportive services to improve employment opportunities and job mobility. As co-applicants, FUC issued an award of \$675,000 to the FWDB. Of this amount, \$220,000 will be allocated to The Flintridge Center, the other co-applicant for the H.I.R.E. grant, through a subcontract with the City of Pasadena (the administrative entity for the FWDB). FWDB will keep the remaining \$455,000 after the sub-award to The Flintridge Center.

The funding is intended to allow the co-applicants of the H.I.R.E grant, FWDB and The Flintridge Center, to participate in the following activities:

- Job Training and Skill Development: Offering programs that equip participants with in-demand skills and certifications to improve their employability.
- Career Pathways: Creating pathways to sustainable careers by connecting participants with industries that offer growth opportunities.
- Support Services: Providing wraparound services such as childcare, transportation, and counseling to address barriers that may hinder employment.
- Employer Partnerships: Collaborating with employers to align training programs with labor market needs and facilitate job placements.
- Reentry Support: Specifically targeting formerly incarcerated individuals to help them reintegrate into society and secure stable employment.

The FWDB, along with The Flintridge Center through its sub-awarded contract, will use H.I.R.E. grant funds to implement programs designed to reduce recidivism, poverty, and unemployment. These programs will empower individuals with the tools and opportunities necessary to achieve economic self-sufficiency. The partnership expects to achieve full enrollment and meet all grant performance requirements by the programs end date of March 2026.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The services funded by the H.I.R.E Initiative are consistent with the City Council's goal to support and promote the quality of life and the local economy as the primary objective of the program is to increase employment opportunities and job mobility for formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals. To achieve the goal, the program provides targeted job training, career counseling, and supportive services, addressing the unique challenges faced by justice-impacted individuals and helping them secure stable, living-wage jobs. This approach not only reduces recidivism but also promotes economic stability and self-sufficiency, improving the quality of life for participants and their families. Furthermore, by connecting these individuals with local employers, the program helps fill critical workforce gaps and supports business growth, ultimately strengthening the local economy.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The action proposed herein falls outside the definition of a "project" because it will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment under section 15060 (c), and because it is a type of project covered in 15378(b).

FISCAL IMPACT:

Approval of the recommended action will amend the City Managers Department's FY 2025 Operating Budget by recognizing revenues and appropriating expenses of \$675,000 in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Fund (681). There is no impact to the General Fund.

Respectfully submitted,



Dianne Russell-Carter
Executive Director, Foothill Workforce
Development Board

Reviewed by:



David Klug
Economic Development Manager

Approved by:



MIGUEL MÁRQUEZ
City Manager