



NEVADA COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Memo

MEETING DATE: July 14, 2020

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Rachel Roos

SUBJECT: Resolution approving execution of a renewal contract with FREED Independent Living Center, d/b/a FREED for funding to administer the SOARWorks program to eligible clients in the total maximum amount of \$100,000 for the term of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the attached Resolution.

FUNDING: Under this Agreement, up to \$100,000 is being committed to FREED for FY20-21. Funds will be used to serve six eligible participants. The program will be funded by the State Department of Social Services Housing and Disability Advocacy program funds and County in-kind matching funds from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Federal PATH funds, and allocated Federal Housing Choice Vouchers and cash match from already allocated General Funds for homeless housing services. No budget amendment is needed and there is no general fund impact associated with this item.

BACKGROUND: According to the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, people with disabilities constitute 40% of the homeless population. Approximately half of the people experiencing homelessness suffers from a mental health issue, according to the National Alliance to End Homelessness. Mental and physical health problems are exacerbated by the ongoing stress and associated trauma from living on the streets and / or in homeless shelters.

FREED has been providing services to persons with disabilities in Nevada County since 1985. FREED's mission is to promote independence and self-determination for people with disabilities through person-driven services, collaborative community partnerships and education, and leadership that advocates for fully inclusive communities.

Since 2017, FREED has provided contracted services to Nevada County residents under through the SOARWorks program. In that time FREED has established itself as one of the state's best HDAP program.

- Served 45 total individuals
- 34 of those individuals received permanent housing financial assistance
- 19 of those received temporary housing financial assistance
- 44 individuals were assisted with completion of their initial benefits applications
- 13 individuals were assisted with a reconsideration of their benefits application
- 9 individuals were assisted with an appeal of their benefits application
- 18 individuals received a benefit award
- 5 individuals received a final denial of their benefit application
- 21 individuals have exited the program
- 17 of those who exited, did so into permanent housing

SOARWorks Housing and Disability Advocacy Program:

The SOARWorks Program will provide specialized case management, direct housing support (including rental subsidies and supportive services) and disability advocacy to individuals with disabilities who are experiencing homelessness and who may be eligible for social security or disability benefits. Consistent with the core components of Housing First, Contractor will work in collaboration with the Continuum of Care (CoC) and the Coordinated Entry System (CES) to ensure populations with the highest needs are given the highest priority and are able to access SOARWorks services.

The economic ramifications of the Coronavirus pandemic are significantly impacting major funding sources relied on by the department. Social Services is monitoring the situation closely and is actively involved in advocacy efforts through the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) to ensure reasonable funding for county services. Additionally, the department has reviewed the 20-21 budget carefully and areas for reduction have been identified to reduce the pressure on existing funding sources. At the same time, demand for vital social services is likely to increase over coming months due to both the economic stress and social isolation of this time, as well as due to increasing numbers of social services customers in our county. The department is proposing to move forward with critical contracts at levels similar to what was originally budgeted, but with the understanding that midyear reductions may be necessary if revenues continue to decline. Social Service staff are in close communication with all contractors and are available to provide support to them around modifying their processes and protocols so that staff can remain safe and can safely provide community members the care they need. Providers are aware that midyear cuts may be needed if the economic situation worsens. Additional analysis and review will be done as needed throughout the year.

Item Initiated and Approved by: Rachel Roos, Director of Social Services