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AGENDA ITEM BRIEFING

Commissioners Court –August 18, 2020

AI Number: 76923

Project Number: 2020-454

Information: [Requesting authority to authorize a discretionary exemption for Lease/Rental of Office Space to accommodate the additional staffing for Hidalgo County in order to assist with County actions to facilitate compliance with public health measures addressing the ongoing COVID 19 emergency.]

Description of AI: Requesting exemption from competitive bidding under TxLGC 262.024 (a)(1)(2) and/or (6); Authority to enter into a short term lease agreement

Funding Source: CARES Act Relief Fund (TBD) **Acct. #** 0-1287-441-42-115-096-0-441

Requested by: Eduardo “Eddie” Olivarez, Health Director **Department:** Health Department

Prepared by: Yolanda Velasquez, Contract Specialist II **Department:** Purchasing Department

BACKGROUND

On March 17, 2020, pursuant to the authority under Texas Government Code Section 418.108, Hidalgo County Judge Richard Cortez issued a Declaration of Local Disaster for Public Health Emergency due to the imminent threat arising from the Coronavirus (COVID-19). On March 22, 2020, in accordance with Texas Government Code Section 418.108(b), the Commissioners Court of Hidalgo County issued an Order of Continuance of Declaration of Local Disaster for Public Health Emergency that affirmed the activation of the Hidalgo County Emergency Management Plan and extends the Declaration of Local Disaster.

Hidalgo County Offices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic public health emergency has identified a need for increased staffing as part of the response to COVID-19.

The 2010 Census has indicated that Hidalgo County has a low to moderate income level of 54.75% and the Texas Department of State Health Services estimated Hidalgo County’s population to be 1,005,539. With this large impoverished population, but limited lab testing capacity, the detection, mitigation and response to COVID-19 has been largely impacted. Current public health directive emphasizing the importance of preventing and mitigating the spread of COVID-19. However, given our current trend, we are projected to have a large segment of the population severely impacted by the pandemic.

COMPLIANCE

In compliance with the national preparedness goal under the Presidential Policy Directive (PPD-8), the Homeland Security Presidential Directives 5 (HSPD-5) and the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention, Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Capability 12 and pursuant to the Order of Continuance of Declaration of Local Disaster for Public health Emergency that affirmed the activation of the Hidalgo County Emergency Management Plan and extends the Declaration of Local Disaster, request the Court's approval for the necessary property lease agreement to address the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic public health emergency.

ADMINISTRATION

Approval of the item is consistent with Hidalgo County's response to COVID-19 while continuing to provide necessary services to mitigate, control and manage the spread of the virus.

AGENDA ITEM CAPTION

- A. Discussion, consideration, and action to approve a necessary CARES Act Relief Fund Expenditure to cover cost not accounted for in the current budget and cannot be lawfully funded by line item, allotment or allocation, for the [***Lease/Rental of Office Space to accommodate the additional staffing in order to assist with County actions to facilitate compliance with public health measures addressing the ongoing COVID emergency***], the Court having reviewed the Agenda Item Briefing, herein finds that such expenditure is reasonable and necessary for the intended use.
- B. Requesting exemption from competitive bidding requirements under the Texas Local Government Code, Section 262.024(a)(1),(2) and/or (6) as further detailed as attached herein;
- C. Acceptance and approval of a short-term Lease/Rental Agreement between Hidalgo County and Astchar, LLC to address additional staffing required to address the COVID-19 public health emergency with a commencement date of September 01, 2020 for an initial [3,627 sq. ft.] and county's option to rent all square footage available subject to compliance with all statutory and county requirements and legal counsel's final review and approval as to form.

RECOMMENDATION

Approval of the items will allow Hidalgo County to continue to respond to the current public health emergency of COVID-19. As previously stated, with these large impoverished population and continued incurred case search; therefore, this is deemed a reasonable and necessary expenditure related to the County's COVID-19 Public Health Response. Expenditures will be charged to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and/or other assistance available to address the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Attachments:
