



CITY OF

NEWPORT BEACH

City Council Staff Report

September 14, 2021
Agenda Item No. 16

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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TITLE: Approval of Grant Agreement with Trellis International

ABSTRACT:

Trellis International (Trellis), a non-profit organization, recently approached the City of Newport Beach (City) to discuss its Community Impact Team (CIT) program wherein current and former homeless individuals, working to re-enter stable employment and housing, work in volunteering positions to participate in needed work projects within a city. Through these projects, the participants develop/refine regular scheduled attendance, direction and instruction; increase levels of work abilities; and develop other job skills and traits needed to re-enter the job market. Through the proposed grant agreement, the City would grant \$30,000 to Trellis for providing four-person volunteer teams, to undertake eight City-defined work projects each month over a one-year term. Trellis would be responsible for all supervision, transportation and oversight of the volunteers.

RECOMMENDATION:

- a) Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
- b) Authorize the Public Works Director and City Clerk to execute a grant agreement with Trellis International that provides City funding in the amount of \$30,000 covering a one-year period.

DISCUSSION:

Trellis is a 501C-3 non-profit organization located in Costa Mesa, CA, working to close the loop with homeless and housing insecure individuals by assisting them in re-entering the workforce and eventually returning to a self-sustaining level of employment and thereby shelter. As part of the City's effort to identify, evaluate and work to render assistance and aid to homeless individuals within the City in the form of connecting them with needed medical/mental or social services, and then into housing, the next step for these individuals is regaining or transitioning back into a stable employment position.

Understanding this, Trellis approached the City to discuss its CIT program. The CIT arm of Trellis is an innovative program that creates voluntary service projects in partnership with local businesses, municipalities, other non-profits, the faith community, and community or resident groups. CIT participants volunteer to undertake projects within the community, gaining valuable work experience and skills, while at the same time receiving necessary basic support and assistance for their service. Trellis has been engaged in this activity for approximately eight years in the City of Costa Mesa and works closely with the Costa Mesa and Newport Beach Bridge Shelter. The CIT program offers a proven pathway to employment, permanent housing, and a better life, as 65% of individuals who have served on a team end their homelessness.

The Public Works Department is in the process of further developing a broader volunteer program to help address ongoing, unmet needs, and increased service level demands with limited resources. Although there is history of some volunteer efforts in the City, primarily associated with beach and bay cleanups, there are many other areas throughout the City that would benefit from cleanup efforts as well, such as: City parks, roadsides, trails and open space areas. Trellis' CIT program would help address some of those service-level gaps.

Under the grant agreement, Trellis would undertake eight or more work projects each month for a one-year term. Trellis provides their volunteers water, snacks, transportation to and from the work project site, and access to restroom facilities. All volunteers at the work project site will be clearly identifiable in a Trellis team t-shirt and hat. Volunteers will have continuous supervision and Trellis requires all volunteers to be well presented and professional by adhering to the CIT zero-tolerance policy for objectional behavior, such as foul language, smoking, and/or drug/alcohol use. Work projects will be conducted by teams of three to four volunteers, including one supervising team leader. Over time, as the program develops, other projects could be completed. Exhibit A within Attachment A, Grant Agreement, provides examples of potential work projects that could be undertaken.

FISCAL IMPACT:

As a one-year trial program, the cost of the agreement will be covered within the Public Works Operating Budget, through anticipated salary savings resulting from position vacancies associated with retirements and unfilled positions. Based on the experience with the program, additional funding may be proposed for FY 2022-23.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Staff recommends the City Council find this action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

NOTICING:

The agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Council considers the item).

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment A – Grant Agreement