



Legislation Text

File #: 18-1898, **Version:** 1

Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) recommending the Board:

- 1) Provide conceptual approval for HHSA to take planning steps to cede to the State the Low Income Weatherization Program and Emergency Heating and Cooling Services from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program; and
- 2) Provide direction to HHSA regarding recommended next steps. (Est. Time: 10 Min.)

FUNDING: Annual funding contract through California Department of Community Services and Development .

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND:

LIHEAP is a federally funded program that is administered by California Department of Community Services and Development (CSD). The LIHEAP program is for income-eligible residents and is comprised of two components: (1) Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and (2) the Low Income Weatherization Program (LIWP).

The HEAP program provides assistance with utility bills or assistance obtaining firewood, propane, pellets or heating oil, and this element of the LIHEAP program is not part of the recommendation being presented.

The LIWP is the focus of this recommendation. In the LIWP program, the County installs and/or provides energy efficient home improvements to reduce heating and cooling costs. Home improvements may include: attic or floor insulation, caulking, heating and cooling system repair/replacement, and other similar energy conservation measures. Emergency heating and cooling services (ECHS) are also part of the LIWP program.

There are 5.4 staff allocated to the LIWP program, however two of the full time equivalent (FTE) positions are vacant. The assigned positions include: one (1) FTE vacant Weatherization Supervisor position; three (3) FTE Weatherization Technicians, one of which is vacant; a 0.35 FTE Program Assistant who provides support to the program; and a 0.05 FTE Program Manager. Additionally, the program has one (1) limited-term FTE Weatherization Technician.

Administrative oversight for the LIWP program has increased in the past few years, including a minimum of three monitoring visits to review the files and work done in the field. This program is one of the most frequently audited programs in the Agency.

In FY 2017-18, primarily due to the administrative requirements and restrictions of this funding stream, the County declined \$70,914 in weatherization program funding.

In addition to increasing program requirements, there is an unmeasured liability to the County due to HHSA staff performing construction-like work and home energy improvement measures on private residences, which is outside of the scope and oversight expertise of HHSA.

Currently LIWP and EHCS services are provided to Alpine County as a part of their having ceded those programs to the State in 1985. Alpine has been notified that HHSA is considering a proposal to cede.

Therefore, HHSA is recommending the Board consider the following and provide direction to HHSA on next steps:

Cede the weatherization services (LIWP) and emergency heating and cooling services (EHCS) to the State, thereby relinquishing the weatherization component of the LIHEAP program. Ceding is an arrangement in which a service provider (County) retains its right to the territory or service area but may divest itself from the oversight responsibility associated with subcontracting, by relinquishing the weatherization component of its grant allocation to another agency (sister agency) such as a private non-profit who specializes in this work.

Strengths:

- ☐ County would retain rights to the territory/service area; the State (CSD) would contract with a sister agency to provide weatherization services in El Dorado County
- ☐ Divest the County from oversight responsibility and associated audits required in subcontracting the Weatherization program
- ☐ County maintains the HEAP program
- ☐ Public access and referrals to the program remains similar to current practice
- ☐ May be permanent or time-limited

Significant Impacts:

- ☐ Ceding LIWP would cause a Reduction-in-Force for two (2) FTE Energy Weatherization Technicians, and one FTE limited term staff member (at a future date once oversight is transferred to the State).
- ☐ Ceding LIWP would cause ending two contracts with local vendors (at a future date once oversight is transferred to the State).
- ☐ LIWP services in Alpine County would no longer be provided by El Dorado County. Alpine County would need to engage CSD in discussions to procure services through another sister agency. Alpine County is aware of this proposal to cede the program back to the State, and is assessing their next steps.

ALTERNATIVES:

Should the Board decline to approve this recommendation, the Board could direct HHSA to:

- 1) Continue to maintain the current service level of LIWP through existing practice and contracts with vendors; or
- 2) Subcontract out LIWP services and maintain administrative oversight. In subcontracting out the field operations, the County would minimize direct operational involvement; however, program and contract compliance requirements remain, as well as administrative time and audit processes.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION:

N/A

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

County Human Resources/Risk Management; Operating Engineers Local No. 3; and Alpine County.

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board approve this item.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

For Fiscal Year (FY) 2018-19 budget, the LIWP program has budgeted revenue of approximately \$708,000, with an additional \$40,000 in General Fund. For FY 2017-18 there were no fixed assets associated with the LIWP program; however, the value of inventory was approximately \$51,000 for materials related to LIWP services.

This recommendation to cede the LIWP program back to the State would result in no additional costs to the County; however, there would be a General Fund savings of approximately \$40,000. Additionally, ceding of the LIWP program could potentially make space available at the 937 Spring Street location for other uses.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

Clerk of the Board to provide Minute Order indicating the Board's direction on next steps to Health and Human Services Agency Contracts Unit located at 3057 Briw Road.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT:

N/A

CONTACT

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