



Legislation Text

File #: 22-0718, **Version:** 1

Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) recommending the Board adopt and authorize the Chair to sign Resolution **075-2022** to:

- 1) Delegate authority to the Director of HHS, or designee, to accept the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) funding, and to execute the Funding Agreement 21Z-9554 (County Agreement 6540), the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Form, and the Lobbying Form, with the California Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) for the provision of LIHWAP services to eligible residents of El Dorado and Alpine counties for a retroactive term beginning April 1, 2022 through August 31, 2023, in the initial amount of \$107,960; and
- 2) Authorize the Director of HHS or their designee to administer said agreement and subsequent amendments, if any, contingent upon approval by County Counsel, and to further authorize the Director of HHS or the HHS Agency Chief Fiscal Officer to execute any required fiscal and programmatic reports.

FUNDING: 100% Federal Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) Funding.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND:

On December 27, 2020, the Consolidated Appropriations Act was signed into law and appropriated \$638 million to the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). Additionally, on March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act appropriated \$500 million to LIHWAP.

The federal LIHWAP funds are administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the California Department of Community Services and Development (CSD), as designated by Governor Newsom, and passed down to local governmental agencies. LIHWAP is a new federally funded program that assists income-eligible households with payment assistance toward their water and wastewater bill arrearages.

On January 25, 2022, CSD released their LIHWAP final program design overview, which incorporates an intermediary contractor to directly reimburse water agencies for the expenses of the program participants that reside in their service area, and reimburses counties for their administrative costs of enrolling participants and managing the program. The program design also indicated that the distribution of agreements to counties would occur in early March 2022.

HHS received the Agreement 21Z-9554 (FENIX 6540) from CSD on April 12, 2022 with a retroactive term effective April 1, 2022 through August 31, 2023 totaling \$107,960, and immediately began processing it for Board approval. The retroactive term allows for counties to bill CSD their administrative start-up costs for the new program, with LIHWAP services anticipated to become available to households beginning in June 2022. In addition, this retroactive Funding Agreement covers both El Dorado and Alpine Counties.

ALTERNATIVES:

Disapproval of this item will result in the loss of critical revenue which allows HHSa to provide assistance to qualified El Dorado County and Alpine County residents who are eligible to receive payment assistance toward their water and wastewater bill arrearages. Applicants who are income-qualified and meet all other LIHWAP eligibility requirements are eligible for services on a first-come, first-served basis; therefore, prioritization is not applicable to LIHWAP assistance.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION:

N/A

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Approved by County Counsel.

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

Approve as recommended.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with this revenue Agreement. Sufficient appropriations were included in the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Budget and any additional funds made available through contract amendment(s) will be included in future budgets.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT:

Healthy Communities

CONTACT

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