AGENDA ITEM or FINAL CONTRACT REVIEW SUBMITTAL FORM

Agenda Item: Grant Application; City of Gunnison, Colorado; $20

Action Requested: Other County Manager Approval to apply

Parties to the Agreement: City of Gunnison

Term Begins: 1/1/2021 **Term Ends:** 12/31/2021 **Grant Contract #:**

Summary:

HHS would like to apply for a renewal grant with the City of Gunnison for the ECC and Multi-cultural Services to address early childhood needs and interpretation services.

Fiscal Impact:

Submitted by: Margaret Wacker **Submitter's Email Address:** mwacker@gunnisoncounty.org

Finance Review: (●) Required ( ) Not Required

Comments:
Renewal, no concerns, kw

Reviewed by: GUNCOUNTY1\kweak Discharge Date: 10/29/2020

County Attorney Review: ( ) Required (●) Not Required

Comments:

Reveiwed by: Discharge Date: Certificate of Insurance Required Yes ( ) No ( )

County Manager Review:

Comments:

Reveiwed by: GUNCOUNTY1\mbirnie Discharge Date: 11/6/2020

(●) Consent Agenda ( ) Regular Agenda ( ) Worksession Time Allotted: 0

Agenda Date: 11/10/2020

Revised April 2015

Organization Name*

Gunnison-Hinsdale Early Childhood Council and the Multicultural Resource Office housed under Gunnison County Department of Health and Human Services

Contact

Lana Athey – GHECC Co- Coordinator, lathey@gunnisoncounty.org

Mailing Address

220 N. Pine Street, Gunnison, CO 81230

Provide a brief description of the program or service:

The Gunnison-Hinsdale Early Childhood Council (GHECC) and the Multicultural Resource Office (MRO) are both housed under Gunnison County's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Both the GHECC and the MRO are focused on creating solutions to issues related to our vulnerable populations, including youth, low income and minority populations.

In February of 2018, as part of the Colorado Health Foundation and the City of Gunnison Public Service Grant Program requirements, the MRO and GHECC hosted a Community Café with over fifty Spanish-speaking adults who provided input on the following topics: parenting classes & childcare; healthy eating & active living; health & housing; communication; and mental health. The results of the Café provided much information on the barriers that many of the Latinx families in our community are facing in regards to accessing quality child care. Some families reported that they don't always trust the person they leave our kids with. All respondents agreed that childcare is too expensive and that there are not enough slots are available to serve the need in the community.

This is not new information as we have heard similar comments from many of our community members over the last 3 years through various formats, including a recent parent survey that was distributed throughout the community in August 0f 2020. The survey had 152 respondents, all of which had young children or were expecting a child. The results of the survey indicated a lack of infant/toddler slots, parents' inability to afford childcare (which increased in comparison to 2019 parent survey results), and trouble with turnover in the EC workforce.

As 8 home providers have closed their doors over the last 6 years, we have lost 51 childcare slots in our area. This loss of slots has stretched current childcare resources very thin and made it difficult for families to find care for their child. Inability to find childcare directly affects parents' ability to work and provide for their family.

The current COVID19 pandemic has exacerbated these issues making it increasingly harder for our local childcare centers and licensed family childcare home providers to maintain operations. Child care providers have been pushed towards operating at reduced hours while incurring

increased operating costs due to the COVID19 pandemic. Childcare centers have always faced some difficulty in recruiting and maintaining staff. The early childhood workforce is a unique and vulnerable population. Licensed childcare centers' regulations require rigorous training, costly background clearances, and year-round professional development for all employees. Nationwide, the early childhood workforce has received notoriety for being underpaid, overworked, and unappreciated. The COVID-19 public health emergency has added a new level of stress on our early childhood teachers. Employees of childcare centers returned to classrooms as frontline workers after stay at home orders were lifted. These individuals provided quality care for the children of frontline healthcare workers and others in our community leading the charge against COVID19. Now, almost six months after reopening childcare programs in our community, we recognize that working in childcare during a pandemic has made an already stressful and low-paid job even more difficult.

The GHECC and MRO are requesting funding to help support our efforts to:

- increase access to affordable quality care and education
- provide greater supports to our local early childhood workforce
- raise awareness around the issues facing early childhood care and education programs in our valley
- improve collaboration among organizations that have the potential to remedy this situation and develop solutions that can meet the needs of our community.
- Provide translation services to the City of Gunnison for community messaging including, recreational program information, emergency communications, etc.

Our overarching goal in these efforts is to reduce the amount of toxic stress that parents and children might be experiencing due to a lack of or inability to access resources available in our community.

Funding Impact*

Please describe the resulting impact to your program or service in the event funding is not approved or your application is only funded in part.

Should the funding for this service not be approved, the GHECC and MRO would continue to work on the tasks outlined in the program description. However with a limited amount of staff hours dedicated specifically to these efforts the development of promising outcomes could advance slowly. The GHECC believes that it is critical to work on this initiative at an increased rate as we are seeing a greater number of families struggling to find quality, trusted care for their young children and a greater number of childcare providers struggling to maintain operations and keep their workforce intact. The is very concerning for our community members, increasing the amounts of toxic stress experienced by a large number of families in the community and having a lasting effect on the overall function of our community and the healthy development of children.

· Population Served*

How many participants are directly impacted by or participate in your program or service? Please enter a NUMBER - don't just indicate a geographic area to which you provide services.

The entire community

Why do you think the program or service should be funded by the taxpayers of the City of Gunnison?

Quality early childhood care and education plays a crucial role in the health and well-being of children, families, and the community. The efforts outlined in this proposal will strengthen our local early childhood system. COVID19 has had a significant impact on our local early childhood system. The pandemic has depleted our licensed provider's cash reserves, causing more workforce turnover, and effecting families ability to afford tuition. Support from the City of Gunnison would help to insure that the early childhood workforce feels appreciated and supported. Local families will be able to remain employed and have the opportunity to access quality care for their children. These efforts to better support the early childhood system and increase access to quality early childhood care and education is a protective factor that buffers against the toxic stress and supports the healthy development of young children.

Special Marijuana Tax Revenue Eligibility*

Does this program or service impact regulation of the marijuana industry or provide social, recreational, and educational programs within the community such as substance abuse prevention, education and counseling?

Yes

Please list three measurable objectives and include how attainment of the goals/objectives will be measured.

Objective #1*

Develop an action plan to address areas of concern in our current early childhood landscape.

- Organize at least 3 early childhood task force meetings led by GHECC and MRO staff to develop a plan to address key areas of concern in our current early childhood landscape. Action plan will include steps to address:
    - Recruiting and retaining a quality early childhood workforce
    - Increasing access to quality early childhood programs
    - Increasing affordability of quality early childhood programs
    - Spanish interpretation services will be provided at meetings if needed.

- Increase Latinx community's awareness around resources available through the City of Gunnison as well as support the City of Gunnison in communications to the Latinx community in emergency situations.
    - MRO will provide translation services to the City of Gunnison for community messaging including, recreational program information, emergency communications, etc.

Objective #1 Measurement*

Action plan completed with input from key stakeholders

Translation services will be provided

Objective #2*

Increase access to quality early childhood care and education.

- The GHECC and MRO staff, in collaboration with the Gunnison County Libraries, will be responsible for organizing Family Friend and Neighbor (FFN) (non-licensed caregivers) trainings and pre-licensing. These trainings will be for individuals currently providing care in their homes and those interested in becoming licensed child care providers in our area. These trainings will include many of the pre-licensing courses necessary for an individual to become a licensed childcare provider, such as First Aid, CPR, Standard Precautions, and Medication Administration. Outreach to Spanish speaking providers will be a priority area. Spanish interpretation will be provided at each training or trainings will be offered in Spanish.
- The GHECC and MRO staff will plan the 2021 Nurturing the Young Child Conference, which provides 6 hours of continuing education as well as the opportunity for attendees to earn a CEU through Western Colorado University. Spanish interpretation will be provided at the conference or some sessions will be offered in Spanish.
- The GHECC staff will work closely with Western Colorado University and the Pathways program offered through the Gunnison Watershed School District to develop a plan to begin offering more Early Childhood Education courses at a local level in order to better support the EC workforce.

Objective #2 Measurement*

- At least 6 FFN and/or pre-licensing trainings will be offered throughout the year.
- The Nurturing the Young Child Conference will be offered in November 2021, with Spanish interpretation services offered and/or sessions presented in Spanish.

- The GHECC staff will continue to meet with Western Colorado University and the Pathways Program. At least one Early Childhood Education course will be offered at the Summer Teacher Institute on the Western Colorado University campus in June of 2021.

Objective #3*

Support early childhood programs in the recruiting and retaining early childhood educators through a reward system.

- GHECC and MRO staff will work closely with local childcare providers to encourage new and existing early childhood professionals to work towards achieving Levels 2-5 early childhood credential through the Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System. EC Professionals will receive a small stipend upon completion of each level of the early childhood credential system. Stipends will be rewarded as follows:
    - Credential Level 2 $100 Stipend
    - Credential Level 3 $200 Stipend
    - Credential Level 4 $300 Stipend
    - Credential Level 5 $400 Stipend
- Create a workgroup to look into innovative platforms utilized by other Colorado communities to recruit and retain the early childhood workforce.
- Explore innovations in professional development, salary supplementations, and health care stipends.
- Explore funding opportunities to provide more supports to early childhood professionals.

Objective #3 Measurement*

- At least 10 early childhood professionals will complete coursework to achieve an early childhood credential of 2-5.
- The Council will pursue funding from at least one additional funding source to provide greater supports for the early childhood workforce.
- EC workforce subgroup will be formed and develop an action plan for 2021-2022.

· Please upload the following information:

1. Most recent year's actual income and expenses - include reasonable detail for the agency as a whole (if you are requesting funding for a specific event or project, please provide the event or project actuals as well)

2. Most recent budget - include reasonable detail for the agency as a whole (if you are requesting funding for a specific event or project, please provide the event or project budget as well)

3. Names and addresses of all board members including designation of officers

4. (optional) Please feel free to include any other documents that you think will support your application

- File Upload*

Certification

- Certification*

I hereby attest that the information provided in this application is accurate as of the date of submission.

City of Gunnison Multicultural Resource Services and Early Childhood Council Grant Budget

Multicultural Resource Services Staff	$7,000	Staff time for translation, interpretation, and outreach activities, including events. 3.5 hours per week
Early Childhood Council Staff	$7,000	Staff time for recruitment and retention of licensed childcare providers, including providing trainings. 3.5 hours per week
AmeriCorps Member Stipend	$1,000	Contributions towards $7,500 host site fee for AmeriCorps member, who can help plan events and provide coordination
Food, Materials, and Incentives for Trainings and Events	$1,000	$250/event for 4 Outreach events
Stipends for EC Educators – EC Credential	$4,000	Stipends given to EC Educators as they increase their EC Credential in Colorado Shines Professional Development System
Total Requested	$20,000	