



**Board Report**

**File #:** 2022-0127, **File Type:** Contract

**Agenda Number:** 40.

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
APRIL 21, 2022**

**SUBJECT: LOW INCOME FARE IS EASY (LIFE) PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR SERVICES**

**ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

AUTHORIZE the Chief Executive Officer to:

- A. EXECUTE Modification No. 1 to Contract No. PS6056400A with FAME Assistance Corporation (FAME) for Administration of Metro’s LIFE program for the Southwest and Northwest Service Regions in the amount of \$965,932, increasing the total contract value from \$2,991,965.01 to \$3,957,897.01, for the remaining two years of the contract; and
- B. EXECUTE Modification No. 1 to Contract No. PS6056400B with the International Institute of Los Angeles (IILA) for Administration of Metro’s LIFE program for the Southeast Service Region in the amount of \$467,085, increasing the total contract value from \$1,605,248 to \$2,072,333, for the remaining two years of the contract.

**ISSUE**

At its meeting of September 25, 2019, the Metro Board of Directors approved the award of competitively procured contracts PS6056400A and PS6056400B, effective January 1, 2020, with FAME and IILA respectively, to provide program administration and oversight activities of the countywide LIFE program. Each organization has specific responsibility over Metro designated geographic regions within the county.

At its meeting of September 23, 2021, the Metro Board adopted Motion 40 (Attachment C) to, among other things, promote a doubling of enrollment in Metro’s LIFE program. To achieve this goal, program administrators have significantly increased current resources towards this objective. While remaining within the scope of the original contract, this increase in the required level of effort to comply with the goal of the Board is consuming personnel and other resources at a rate greater than originally planned or anticipated.

**DISCUSSION**

In response to the Board motion, staff has worked to support the doubling of LIFE program enrollment through a number of supportive vehicles that increased access to the program, ease of application to the patron, and provided among the largest incentive to enrollment in the program's history. These improvements included:

- The development of an on-line portal that allows potential enrollees to submit applications through any internet connected device. These applications are routed to the administrators for review, and, if approved, LIFE database entry.
- The revision of program guidelines to allow an individual to "self-certify" with respect to qualifying level of income.
- The elimination of the requirement that an individual applying for the program present a currently valid TAP card. Under the new guidelines, if a potential enrollee does not have a TAP card, they may indicate so on the application and one is provided.
- The development of a 90-day, region wide pass, good for unlimited trips on any one of the 13 LIFE program participating transit operators for all new program enrollees.
- The application of the full LIFE discount to Metro's 50% promotional fare reduction beginning January 10, 2022.
- Metro directed and administrator staffed in person, pop up events at major transit centers, community events, and other locations.
- Marketing, outreach and promotional activities designed to increase program awareness and attract new enrollees.
- Significant improvements to the LIFE program website to ease access to information.
- The expansion of locations that an individual may submit a program application including Metro Customer Service Centers among others.
- Exploring opportunities with Los Angeles County social service agencies to connect and highlight the LIFE program with their respective constituencies.

Combined, the efforts above have led to:

- an increase of over 38,471 enrollees in the program since mid-October, representing 42.2% towards attainment of the Board's goal of doubling enrollment and brings the total LIFE program participants to 128,136.
- Average LIFE enrollments per week are currently 2,187 that is an 37% increase in weekly enrollments compared to average enrollments before COVID
  - 55% of new enrollments submitted through the new online application/portal
  - 38% of applications submitted via self-certification; and
- More than 55% of new applicants issued a TAP card.

The contract modification will increase the staffing level at FAME by eight and at IILA by three full-time staff. The new full-time staff will collectively work to assist in delivering expanded services, reviewing, evaluating, and processing applications through in-person enrollment and online portal applications that require the same level of processing support as paper applications. Staff will also be attending outreach events, providing bilingual/multi-lingual support as well as responding to an increase in community inquiries. On average, administrators now receive over 100 -150 phone or email inquiries per day, a 60% increase from the previous level of inquiries. Staff further expects

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recent increases in the program to continue as awareness of the program by individuals continues to expand, and riders seek to take advantage of the incentives of program enrollment.

As an example, an enrollee in the LIFE program, upon expiration of their 90-day new enrollee incentive pass, can apply the full LIFE discount to a 50%-off regular 30-day Metro pass for a final discounted pass price of \$26 - Less than \$1 a day for unlimited trips on Metro Bus and Rail transit through the end of June.

### **CONTRACT MODIFICATION**

Staff is seeking approval for contract modifications to reflect increased administrator levels-of-effort to accommodate:

- Significant current and expected future program enrollment activities by FAME and IILA, through both in person enrollments and the greatly expanded on-line portal applications. At the time of initial contract award, the on-line portal was not envisioned.
- Administrator attendance at Metro directed outreach, or pop-up events that require additional administrator staff including interpreters.
- Mailing and postage requirements for those individuals requesting a TAP card
- Future income verification for enrollees using the self-certification process of income levels.

### **DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT**

Metro Board adoption of staff recommendation would have no adverse impact on Metro or the regional transit system's safety

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

The approval of the staff recommendation will have a modest financial impact over the life of the contract as a result of seeking double the number of LIFE program enrollees in a 15 month period.

#### **Impact to Budget**

As a result of decreased activity due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is sufficient FY22 budget within the LIFE Program to absorb expenses generated by these two contracts prior to June 30, 2022. Upon Board approval of the recommendation, staff will ensure FY23 budget is sufficient to cover for these contract expenses within the LIFE Program.

### **EQUITY PLATFORM**

The proposed action would provide needed capacity for the contracted LIFE program administrators that have significantly advanced progress towards the Board's goal to double enrollment in the LIFE program. Community outreach from trusted service providers is critical to informing lower income riders of the program's benefits and facilitating access to these benefits. As the median annual

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income of Metro's bus riders is less than \$18,000, reducing barriers to the LIFE program will alleviate significant transportation cost burdens for many system riders.

Adoption of the staff recommendation and the work of our program directly support increased access and mobility for low income individuals throughout Los Angeles County.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

Adoption of staff recommendation supports Strategic Plan Goal 3 to: Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity.

### **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The Board could choose to not approve to increase resources for LIFE program administration. Staff does not recommend such an action. In order to achieve the Board directed goal of doubling enrollment in the LIFE program, program administrators are the key community partner in the achievement of this goal. As non-profit, community based organizations, neither FAME nor IILA has the capital resources to sustain this increased level of effort without appropriate commitment from Metro.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Upon Board approval, staff will execute the contract modifications and continue to work with our administrator partners to achieve the Board directed goal of doubling enrollment in the LIFE Program.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

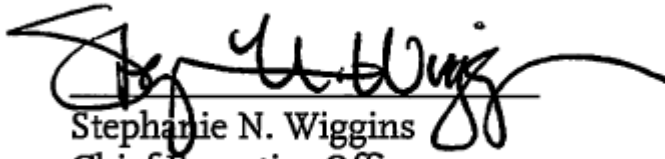
- Attachment A - Procurement Summary
- Attachment B - Contract Modification/Change Order Log
- Attachment C - DEOD Summary
- Attachment D - Board Motion #40

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