



Board Report

File #: 2024-0405, File Type: Contract

Agenda Number: 19.

FINANCE, BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE JULY 18, 2024

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

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION

AUTHORIZE the Chief Executive Officer to execute Modification No. 6 to Contract No. PS60564000B with International Institute of Los Angeles (IILA) for Low Income Fare is Easy (LIFE) Program Administrator Services to include the Southwest, Southeast and Northwest service regions of Los Angeles County, in the amount of \$984,603, increasing the total contract value from \$ 2,792,333 to \$3,776,936 and extending the period of performance from September 30, 2024 to December 31, 2024.

ISSUE

On May 6, 2024, Metro was informed by FAME Assistance Corporation (FAC), Metro's LIFE Program Administrator for the Southwest and Northwest service regions, that it has filed for Chapter 7 Bankruptcy proceedings. FAC informed Metro that they would complete their contractual responsibilities for the LIFE program through the contract term ending on June 30, 2024.

Upon notification, staff has worked closely with FAC and IILA to develop a plan to mitigate any disruption to program services for LIFE Program participants. As part of this plan, IILA agreed to manage the geographical regions and administrator duties currently assigned to FAC. In addition, IILA has agreed to hire some of the FAC staff to maintain program continuity. This modification remains within the scope of services of IILA's existing LIFE Program Administrator contract. However the hiring of FAC's staff and other resources requires allocating additional funding to their contract. This modification will also allow for the payment of administrator services fees, printing of taxi vouchers, and reimbursement for taxi service providers during the extension period.

BACKGROUND

On September 25, 2019, the Metro Board of Directors approved the award of competitively procured Contract Nos. PS6056400A and PS6056400B, effective January 1, 2020, with FAME Assistance Corporation (FAC and International Institute of Los Angeles (IILA)), respectively, to provide program administration and oversight activities of the countywide LIFE program. For the last five years, each

organization has been responsible for program management with different Metro designated geographic regions within the county. This includes screening patrons for program eligibility, maintaining administrative accountability, conducting community outreach, developing partnerships with over 150 community-based organizations each, and implementing the taxi voucher program that provides transportation subsidy services to individuals with short-term and immediate needs, which is distributed to riders through approved agencies such as hospitals and shelters.

DISCUSSION

LIFE program administrators, including IILA, play a key role in supporting and leading many of Metro's efforts to enhance and expand the program to support riders throughout Los Angeles County, especially in Equity Focus Communities (EFCs). Their expanded services have helped drive the largest increase in enrollment in the program's history. These services include:

- 14 full time and 3 part time staff
- 267 agencies assisting with enrollments
- 104 agencies distributing taxi program services.
- 12 taxi company partnerships
- 91 agencies providing 4-ride tickets
- 18 DPSS offices assisting with enrollment
- 30 pop-up events each month
- Over 250 daily applications (online portal, customer centers, DPSS, mail, events)

Combined, the efforts above have led to:

- An increase of over 255,458 enrollees in the program since September 2021, representing 280.5% towards attainment of the Board's goal of doubling enrollment and bringing the total LIFE program participants to 345,271.
- An average of 2,000 LIFE enrollments per week
- 38% of new enrollments are submitted through the new online application/portal
- 37% of applications are submitted via self-certification; and
- More than 48% of new applicants have been issued a TAP card.
- In 2023, LIFE customers saved over \$8 million riding Metro.

Considerations

The contract modification will increase the staffing level at IILA by eight additional 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 more outreach events, providing bilingual (Spanish) support while partnering with agencies who provide multi-lingual services (Korean, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Armenian, Russian) to assist with enrollments, as well as responding to an increase in community inquiries. On average, administrators receive 100 - 150 phone or email inquiries per day. Staff expects the recent increases in the program enrollment to continue as program awareness expands, and riders seek to take advantage of the incentives of

program enrollment.

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 funding of \$984,603 for this contract is included in the FY25 Budget in Cost Center Number 2315, LIFE Program, under Project Number 410021, LIFE Program.

There is sufficient funding within the FY25 LIFE Program budget to implement this modification based on funding allocation for two administrators, which is now being turned over to one administrator and extend the contract through December 31, 2024. Approval of this recommendation authorizes Metro to disburse these funds to the LIFE Program Administrator.

Impact to Budget

The sources of funding are Proposition C 40% and Measure M 2% Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit/Metro Discounts. Proposition C 40% is eligible for bus and rail operating or capital expenses while Measure M 2% ADA Paratransit/Metro Discounts is earmarked for ADA paratransit for people with disabilities and Metro discounts for seniors and students.

EQUITY PLATFORM

Reduced-fare transit programs, like LIFE, are an investment in social mobility and an important tool to assist in the fight against income and health inequality. These programs, which include enrollments, outreach, partnerships with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and taxi vouchers for individuals with short-term/immediate transit needs, make Metro more accessible to riders facing financial and other barriers while providing financial relief from the ever-rising cost of living.

The contract modification will ensure the program continues to maintain the level of services to reach and enroll marginalized riders across Los Angeles County in the LIFE Program, especially in Equity Focus Communities. It also aligns with Metro's Equity Platform Framework, Pillar 3 "Focus and Deliver", by removing barriers and increasing access to opportunity for all. Not proceeding with this change will greatly impact equitable services to a large geographical region of LA County, thus reducing enrollments, outreach, partnerships with CBOs, and LIFE boardings.

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 not to approve increased resources for IILA for LIFE program

administration. Staff does not recommend such an action as it would negatively impact LIFE Program participants in Southwest, Southeast and Northwest service regions of Los Angeles County. In order to achieve Board directed goals to continue to enhance and expand services as well providing a level of services for all of Los Angeles County regions, the program administrator is a key community partner in the achievement of this goal. As a non-profit CBO, IILA does not have the capital resources to sustain this increased level of effort without appropriate commitment from Metro.

NEXT STEPS

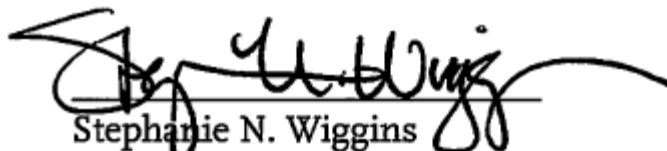
Upon Board approval, staff will execute Modification No. 6 to Contract No. PS60564000B with IILA to ensure program services continue in all service regions throughout Los Angeles County.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A - Procurement Summary
- Attachment B - Contract Modification/Change Order Log
- Attachment C - DEOD Summary

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