

# County of Santa Clara

Social Services Agency

1725 Technology Drive  
San Jose, California 95110-1360



Prepared by \_\_\_\_\_  
Alette Lundeborg

Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_  
Alette Lundeborg

Submitted by \_\_\_\_\_  
Alette Lundeborg

March 12, 1997

TO: Santa Clara County  
Board of Supervisors

FROM: Yolanda Lenier Rinaldo, Director

SUBJECT: **APPROVAL OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) TO PROCURE A  
REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT CENTER UTILIZING REFUGEE  
EMPLOYMENT SOCIAL SERVICES (RESS) FUNDS**

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors take the following action:

Approve the attached Request for Proposal (RFP) for a Refugee Employment Support Center. The envisioned Center will provide a variety of innovative employment retention services for refugees who have lived in the United States for sixty months or less. This Center is one of the new models the Agency is launching as a part of the Santa Clara Valley Employment Support Initiative.

## **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

There is no impact on the General Fund, as the RESS program is 100 percent federally funded.

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**CONTRACT HISTORY**

Not applicable.

**BACKGROUND/REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

Santa Clara County is home to a dynamic and growing economy with many opportunities for employment. One of the key characteristics of the Silicon Valley labor market is a heavy reliance on a temporary labor force. Many of the AFDC/TANF recipients who secure employment are hired on as temporary workers. This has been a boon to many recipients such as limited English-speaking refugees who need employment experience. However, GAIN and Refugee programs employment retention data indicates that "job ended" is the second largest reason why recipients do not remain employed.

The need to develop employment retention services for AFDC/TANF participants was identified early in the Employment Support Initiative (ESI) planning process as a priority, given the time limits that have been placed on public assistance. An ESI Employment Retention Task Force has been meeting regularly for the past year to identify gaps in existing systems and to develop new program models. Many of the services identified by this work group focus on providing resources to unemployed or underemployed individuals who are former AFDC/TANF recipients or at risk of becoming recipients.

Agency staff has been able to secure California Department of Social Services (CDSS) approval to utilize \$277,971 of unexpended Refugee Employment Social Services (RESS) funds to develop a pilot program focusing on employment retention services. The attached RFP is for a Refugee Employment Support Center that will serve laid off, under-employed and part-time employed refugees by providing a variety of job placement and skills upgrade services. RESS funding can only be utilized for refugees residing in the United States for sixty (60) months or less. It is planned that a minimum of one

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hundred and fifty (150) refugees who are receiving or have received AFDC/TANF, Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), or General Assistance (GA) will be served during a twelve month period beginning July 1, 1997.

This RFP requires a minimum 30% match in funds from prospective bidders. With the goal of minimizing administrative overhead, and ensuring the most effective use of federal dollars, the Agency is aiming to select one (1) bidder to implement this model. The RFP review process will include oral presentations from bidders. The review committee will be composed of Employment Retention Task Force members, Agency staff, and representatives from the United Way and the Social Services Advisory Commission. The inclusion of United Way and Social Services Advisory Commission representatives is an exciting facet of this project. Both the United Way and the Agency's General Fund have set aside monies for new services for welfare recipients. Discussions have taken place and concurrence has been reached on similar outcome measures, and the need for all three funding sources to coordinate efforts. All bidders funded by the three funding sources will be involved in quarterly meetings, to encourage maximum collaboration.

#### **CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION**

If the RFP is not approved, the Agency will be unable to utilize the unexpended RESS funds to provide the proposed services for refugees.

#### **STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL**

Upon receiving Board approval, the Agency will make the RFP available to the public on April 2, 1997.