

**Council Meeting: November 25, 2008****SUBJECT: Authorization for NOVA to Apply for Workforce Investment Act Funds for Veterans Employment-Related Assistance Program in the Amount of \$1,000,000****REPORT IN BRIEF**

The State of California Employment Development Department has announced the availability of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds in a solicitation for proposals for the Veterans Employment-Related Assistance Program (VEAP). Staff recommends that the Sunnyvale City Council, on behalf of the NOVA seven-city consortium, concur with the NOVA Workforce Board and authorize the submission of a proposal for \$1,000,000 in WIA VEAP funds to assist in integrating local veterans into meaningful employment.

BACKGROUND

The State of California Employment Development Department has issued a solicitation that makes available up to \$6 million of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds to provide services to veterans through the Veterans Employment-Related Assistance Program (VEAP). Funds will be allocated from two program years, 2008–09 and 2009–10 and will be subject to federal funding availability.

As with the current Veterans Employment-Related Assistance Program (VEAP) grants, half of the funding must be used to serve veterans meeting dislocated worker criteria, with a particular emphasis on recently separated veterans (those separated from military service in the last 48 months). Proposals must focus on transitioning veterans to high-wage, high-growth occupations within California using their skills obtained in the military.

The expected period of performance for VEAP grants is between 18 and 36 months. Funds will be awarded from allocations received for two program years. Once funding decisions are made, up to \$500,000 will be awarded to each grantee. An additional increment of up to \$500,000 for the second program year will become available to awardees based on achievement of performance benchmarks. Projects would start in early 2009. Staff is requesting that NOVA apply for \$1,000,000 for a 36-month term.

EXISTING POLICY

The proposed activities are consistent with the City of Sunnyvale's Socio-Economic Goal 5.1F: Provide job training and employment services within constraints of operative, federal regulations and available federal funding, to address the locally-determined employment and training needs of economically disadvantaged residents and others with special needs.

DISCUSSION

NOVA has supported local funding for veterans employment and training on an uninterrupted basis since 1988 through the Job Training Partnership Act, Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program funding from the Department of Labor, and since February 2005, through WIA VEAP funds.

NOVA has a well-developed and unique partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and a community-based veteran services agency, Next Step Center, located on the grounds of the VA Palo Alto Menlo Park Health Care System (VAPAHC).

VAPAHC is one of the largest VA medical centers on the west coast. Its multiple programs provide a wide range of rehabilitative services to veterans including, but not limited to: the Traumatic Brain Injury Center, National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Women's Trauma Recovery Program, Homeless Veterans Rehabilitation Domiciliary, Mental Health Clinic, and numerous substance abuse rehabilitation programs. Many recently separated Bay Area veterans come to VAPAHC for services.

Special tactics will be employed to outreach to and recruit recently separated veterans, in addition to current outreach methods. Information gathered for nine months in 2006 and five months in 2007 by the County Department of Veterans Service Officers found 591 recently separated veterans returning to Santa Clara County (an average of 42 per month) and 199 to San Mateo County (an average of 14 per month).

NOVA's proposed project addresses the unmet needs of veterans who have significant barriers to employment and those at risk of becoming chronically unemployed within the Santa Clara and San Mateo counties service area. Half of the 500 veterans to be served will be recently separated or meet dislocated worker eligibility, and half will have significant barriers to employment.

Proposers are required to provide employment and training services, supportive services, placement and follow-up through a case management approach. Veterans served by this grant must be in at least one of the following priority

groups: 1) service-connected disabled veterans, 2) recently-separated veterans, 3) campaign veterans, 4) veterans with significant barriers, or 5) eligible spouses. It is expected that the project demonstrate linkages with the one-stop system and other public and private organizations in order to leverage client services. The ultimate objective of the services provided is to place each eligible veteran into meaningful, gainful employment in high wage, high growth occupations.

NOVA's existing VEAP grant will operate through December 31, 2009. However, this solicitation is the only opportunity to apply for VEAP funding through December 2011, as there will not be another solicitation until the new funding is exhausted. The State requires that the new grants begin by January 1, 2009. Therefore if NOVA were to be awarded funds under this proposal, the new funding would overlap with the current grant for calendar year 2009 and both sources of funding would be used for the project. Only the new funds would fund the program from January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2011.

As the NOVA Workforce Board is not scheduled to meet until December 3, its chairperson has used his authority to authorize the submission of a VEAP proposal. A full report will be made to the Workforce Board at its December 3 meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT

The source of funds for this project is Workforce Investment Act funding targeted for veterans. These funds would be awarded to NOVA and the City of Sunnyvale through a competitive application process. As such there is sufficient funding to accomplish the required work, and the funding cannot be used for any purposes not in the original proposal. There is no negative fiscal impact on the City of Sunnyvale.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made through posting of the Council agenda on the City's official notice bulletin board and at the Senior Center and Community Center, posting of the agenda and report on the City's Web site, publication of the Council agenda in the *San Jose Mercury News*, and the availability of the report in the Library and the Office of the City Clerk.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Council authorizes the submission of an application to the State of California Employment Development Department for Workforce Investment

Act funds for the Veterans Employment-Related Assistance Program in the amount of \$1,000,000.

2. Council does not authorize submission of an application.
3. Other action as determined by Council.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by staff that the Sunnyvale City Council, on behalf of the NOVA seven-city consortium and in concurrence with the NOVA Workforce Board, adopt Alternative 1: Council authorizes the submission of an application to the State of California Employment Development Department for Workforce Investment Act funds for the Veterans Employment-Related Assistance Program in the amount of \$1,000,000.

Reviewed by:

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