



TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

RESOLUTION 2019-05-22 (14)

Date: May 22, 2019

To: THA Board of Commissioners

From: Michael Mirra, Executive Director

Re: Approval of Contract for Third Party Evaluation of the Children's Savings Account Program

This Resolution will allow Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) to enter into contract for third party evaluation, research and consultation for the Children's Savings Account Program.

Background

In February 2019, Policy, Innovation and Evaluation (PIE) issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to seek a services for third-party evaluation of the Children's Savings Account program. Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) received one submission from BERK Consulting Group, a Seattle based firm. PIE staff recommend THA to award BERK Consulting Group with the service contract for third-party evaluation.

PIE and Client Support and Empowerment (CSE) staff interviewed BERK in April and were pleased with the level of familiarity they have with Tacoma, the fields of housing and education, the literature and research of CSAs and asset building initiatives, as well as their knowledge around data collection methods and reporting. Further, they have completed previous work with the City of Tacoma's Community Needs Assessment and are currently lending facilitation assistance to the Post-Secondary Environmental Scan project of Degrees of Change and Graduate Tacoma.

The purpose of this particular evaluation stems from THA's long-term vision for the CSA to be accessible to Tacoma families city-wide. In order to scale the program, THA must contemplate how the CSA should be administered and what THA's role will be in order to expand and sustain the program moving forward.

Third party evaluation will provide THA the analysis and engagement capacity needed to thoroughly investigate the effectiveness of the CSA and help THA define the future expansion plan for the program. THA received a grant from College Spark in 2018 to fund a three-year assessment of the CSA. It plans to use this grant to pay for a third-party evaluator. The evaluation will also build upon the initial research completed by Urban Institute in 2017.

The scope of work for this project includes research and technical supports to evaluate the following key areas of interest:

- Conduct community and family feedback to evaluate challenges related to program engagement and test design assumptions, with specific lens toward racial, cultural or ethnic barriers and inequities. The contractor will conduct focus groups and surveys among participants, prospective participants and community stakeholders that study these challenges and identify gaps and opportunities in program design;
- Literature and data review of the impact of program design elements (e.g. seed, incentives, match and scholarship) and explores the possibilities of integrating the CSA into existing programs such as THA's Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program and Washington State's 529 college savings programs;
- Evaluate organizational characteristics and resources necessary to effectively administer and expand the CSA program. The evaluator will provide recommendations on the scope of work for the CSA expansion that addresses strategic and capacity gaps;
- Review and recommend ways THA defines its role in cultivating a college-and-career focused culture that supports Tacoma students enrolling, persisting and completing their post-secondary education;
- Support the identification and implementation of methods to measure short and long-term program outcomes.

The contractor will be eligible to renew service contract annually, up to a total of three years, pending the outcome of the project's deliverables and the decision of THA leadership and Board of Commissioners.

Recommendation

Approve Resolution No. 2019-05-22 (14) allowing THA's Executive Director to negotiate, and if those negotiations are successful, to execute a contract with BERK Consulting Group for third party evaluation services for the Children's Savings Account Program in an amount not-to-exceed \$135,000 over the next three years. This work will begin spring of 2019.



TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

RESOLUTION 2019-05-22 (14)

(Approval to Negotiate and Award a Contract for the Third Party Evaluation Services for the Children's Savings Account Program)

A **RESOLUTION** of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Tacoma

WHEREAS, Tacoma Housing Authority's Children's Savings Account (CSA) Program is currently undergoing redesign for expansion in the fall of 2019; and

WHEREAS, On February 1, 2019, Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) Staff issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) from firms interested in providing third party evaluation, research and consultation services for the redesign of the CSA; and

WHEREAS, The RFP was posted on THA's website, the Tacoma News Tribune and shared with THA's local network on February 1, 2019; and

WHEREAS, One (1) firm submitted proposals by the deadline of March 15, 2019; and


WHEREAS, An interview team comprised of PIE and CSE staff interviewed this firm; and

WHEREAS, The evaluation and interview team voted unanimously in favor of awarding a contract to the firm of BERK Consulting, Inc.; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City Of Tacoma, Washington, that:

The Executive Director is authorized to negotiate, and if those negotiations are successful, to award a contract with BERK Consulting Group for third party evaluation, research and consultations services for the Children's Savings Account Program in an amount not-to-exceed \$135,000 over the next three years.

Approved May 22, 2019



Dr. Minh-Anh Hodge, Chair