



Agenda Item:
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COUNCIL COMMUNICATION City Manager's Office

GENERAL INFORMATION

Agenda Date: 01/23/06
Agenda Item Type: Resolution

Communication No.: 046
Roll Call No.:

Submitted by: Richard Clark, Acting City Manager

SUBJECT—

Approval and authorization for a contract with United Way of Central Iowa to provide funding for Hurricane Katrina case management services through Human Touch, Michelle Taylor Frazier, Executive Director, 1620 Pleasant Street, Suite 223.

SYNOPSIS—

This action approves the contract with United Way of Central Iowa and authorizes the Mayor to sign the contract. Funding will be provided directly to United Way, but United Way will pass funding onto Human Touch to provide the case management services. Human Touch's services to evacuees include: assistance to individuals in completing FEMA requirements to receive interim living assistance; tutoring services to displaced children; job placement assistance; and housing assistance.

Funding will be provided through United Way for three reasons. First, United Way currently has a contract with Human Touch and has been monitoring their work. Contracting with United Way will provide the easiest transition for Human Touch. Second, United Way has offered to monitor the work of Human Touch without any administrative compensation from the City. Though City Staff monitors the performance of programs that receive Community Development Block Grants, Staff believes that United Way is better qualified to provide oversight over Human Touch's work. Third, United Way is providing a match to the City of Des Moines' funding and will need to monitor the work of Human Touch. This will consolidate the oversight of both the City and United Way.

\$200,000 was allocated, as outlined in the background section of this document for local needs related to Hurricane Katrina. Human Touch is the only organization that has been identified that meets the Council's direction.

FISCAL IMPACT—

A total of \$44,000 of City funds will be allocated for Human Touch over a period of three-months, or approximately \$14,467 each month. Funding will be released each month only upon meeting the performance goals identified in the Contract with United Way. In addition to the City funds, United Way is matching 25% of the City's contribution with approximately \$11,000 or approximately \$3,365 each month and will also provide oversight at no cost for Human Touch's work. City funds will not be expended without United Way's participation.

Combined, Human Touch will receive \$17,832 monthly. If United Way determines that Human Touch is not meeting its performance objectives, funding will be returned to the City. In addition, if Human Touch receives alternative funding, or if it ceases its operation, funds will be returned to the City.

\$61,000 of available funding was previously identified in the Flood Relief account, SP761 CMO970808. The \$44,000 assistance to Human Touch will be expended from this account.

RECOMMENDATION—

Approval

BACKGROUND—

On August 30, 2005 the Gulf Coast area of the country was hit by Hurricane Katrina, a powerful hurricane that caused extensive and severe damage over 180,000 square miles of the southern United States including the City of New Orleans. As the City has done in the wake of other disasters, the City of Des Moines identified \$200,000 for hurricane relief efforts at its September 6, 2005 meeting by Roll Call 05-2138. The Council indicated that it would like the funding to be used locally. At one time, it was anticipated that as many as 5,000 evacuees might relocate to Des Moines. The impact locally of the hurricane has been much smaller and the local need has not materialized to the level once anticipated. Human Touch is the only organization that has been identified with financial needs that this funding could assist under the goals expressed by the City Council.

The evacuees that have relocated to Des Moines have faced many challenges that Human Touch has been able to assist with. First, many have had difficulty navigating the FEMA processes necessary to receive funding that they are entitled for living expenses. In many cases, evacuee files have been closed due to mistakes in reporting to FEMA. Second, many evacuee children have felt significant impacts from the disaster. Not only are the education systems different in Iowa and the gulf coast, but many children have missed significant amounts of schooling in the transition following the disaster. Third, evacuees have lost their means of income and have a need to reestablish themselves, and last, have in many cases needed to find permanent residences.

Since Human Touch has been created, it has been supported primarily through funds identified for Katrina Relief through United Way of Central Iowa. Through January, United Way had invested \$36,000 in Human Touch's services. Though the United Way's Katrina Funds have been expended, United Way will match the funds from the City of Des Moines with an additional \$11,000. United Way is very supportive of Human Touch's services and has been a willing partner with the City to help provide funding to continue to address the needs of the evacuees. Staff has also obtained favorable information from other agencies and recipients of Human Touch's services. This information has led the City Manager to recommend this funding.

The City's funding is only temporary. The City will not provide funding beyond the three months identified in this communication. There is a chance that Human Touch will not need the entire funding specified. FEMA is in the process of developing a case management program for evacuees. Funding has already been awarded to ten areas most impacted by the tragedy. An additional \$5 million will be available to case management contracts nation-wide and FEMA is encouraging local organizations to apply for this funding. A Request for Proposals is expected to be released soon and will allow Human Touch to pursue this funding. If FEMA funding is obtained, funding from the City and United Way will be returned.

At this time, 38 families in Des Moines are being assisted by Human Touch in addition to 12 families elsewhere in the Metropolitan Area. A communication from Human Touch is attached to the Roll Call.