

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
CITY OF OAKLAND  
AGENDA REPORT

2007 APR 27 AM 10:28

TO: Office of the City Administrator  
ATTN: Deborah Edgerly  
FROM: Department of Human Services  
DATE: January 23, 2007

**RE: A Resolution Authorizing the City Administrator To Execute An Agreement Between The City Of Oakland And Volunteers Of America, Bay Area, Inc. For An Amount Not To Exceed \$78,000 To Provide Project Choice Reentry Housing Assistance For The Period Of May 1, 2007 To December 31, 2007**

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## SUMMARY

The Department of Human Services seeks City Council approval to enter into a grant agreement with Volunteers of America, Bay Area, Inc. for an amount not to exceed \$78,000 for eight months from May 1 to December 31, 2007, to provide Project Choice reentry housing assistance to youth and young adult offenders who are returning to Oakland from adult and juvenile prisons.

## FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of this resolution will authorize a grant agreement with Volunteers of America, Bay Area, Inc., which shall be funded by a grant to the City of Oakland Project Choice Program from the Community Action Partnership Community Service Block Grant funding. The funds will be allocated from State of California Y Fund (2159), DHS Administration Unit Organization (78111), CAP/CSBG 2006 Project (G265010), Fostering Safe and Health Program (SC22). The terms of this agreement shall be for eight (8) months for an amount not to exceed \$78,000. This grant agreement will not impact the General Fund.

## BACKGROUND

Led by the City of Oakland Department of Human Services, Project Choice is a collaborative partnership of public agencies, service providers, and individuals seeking to improve public safety by offering hope, support and accountability to juvenile and young adult prisoners re-entering the Oakland community. Through funds raised through Measure Y (The Violence Prevention and Public Safety Act of 2004) and through a Intergovernmental Partnership Grant from California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, the City of Oakland funds approximately \$2.4 million in reentry programs, offering employment opportunities, case management, and mental health/substance abuse assessment to young adults on parole and

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probation. Of this amount, \$760,000 annually supports Project Choice intensive case management services through three nonprofit agencies: The Mentoring Center (TMC) serves young men in, and coming home from, the Department of Juvenile Justice (formerly California Youth Authority) facilities in Stockton; Allen Temple Housing and Economic Development Corporation (ATHEDCO) serves adult parolees through the Oakland Parole office and PAC (Police and Corrections) team meetings; and Volunteers of America, Bay Area (VOABA) serves adult parolees in, and returning from, San Quentin State Prison.

Beginning January 1, 2006, the Project Choice program received an award from the Oakland Community Action Partnership for \$46,000 per year over two years to provide “transitional housing placement and reentry support as well as housing advocacy and coordination for ex-offenders.” Toward this end, Project Choice engaged in a series of negotiations with the Oakland Housing Authority and other property owners to identify a suitable facility to transform into a Project Choice Housing Academy. Simultaneously, a Project Choice Housing Coordinator was hired to work with Project Choice participants from all three agencies – TMC, ATHEDCO, and VOABA – on addressing their immediate and long term housing issues. Approximately \$14,000 of the \$92,000 award has been spent in these processes.

### **KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS**

Many ex-offenders have “burned their bridges” with their families, have little or no social support, and become homeless upon release. National studies indicate that 55% of inmates released from prison to parole are homeless within the first year of parole. This is further compounded by the notoriously high cost of housing in the Bay Area. Parolees to Oakland face the same access to housing and affordability issues that all low-income individuals and families face. These barriers are further compounded by employment barriers; lack of savings or other public benefit income; lack of identification documents; and by parolees’ undesirability as tenants in the eyes of landlords (more and more of whom have access to background check technology). Homelessness is a major obstacle to parolees’ stable employment, avoidance of criminal activity, and successful re-entry.

Recognizing the expertise of VOABA in the field of reentry housing, VOABA was selected from among the Project Choice grantees to take on employment and supervision of the Housing Coordinator (currently a Temporary City Employee) and the administration of remaining Project Choice housing funds which will be used to provide housing assistance to Project Choice participants at all three grantee agencies. The Executive Directors of all Project Choice agencies were consulted prior to the selection of VOABA as the coordinating agency for these funds.

Volunteers of America, Bay Area, Inc. (VOABA) was founded in 1896, and has been a local provider of social service programs for the past 110 years. Among VOABA’s other programs for parolees are the crew-based sheltered employment program currently funded through Measure Y, as well as two residential programs. VOABA’s Elsie Dunn Center and West House are residential community based reentry programs for nonviolent offenders released from prison.

The programs are designed to give parolees the knowledge and skills needed to reintegrate into mainstream society, making positive contributions and avoid repeating offenses. Both facilities have a total of 120 beds and serve over 500 men annually. Over 80% of the participants have housing and employment before they are released. Under their current grant agreement with the City of Oakland, VOABA serves 120 San Quentin inmates per year through Project Choice. Each of these clients has access to VOABA employment programs, substance abuse treatment, and residential opportunities – as well as continued case management and support groups – upon their release.

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Through the currently proposed grant agreement, VOABA would offer housing advocacy, coordination, and placement to all Project Choice participants at the three grantee agencies. Of these participants, 50 will receive services that help them maintain an independent living situation.

## **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

**Economic:** Providing reentry programs for Oakland young adults will increase their economic stability by linking them to organizations that can provide them with job training and job placement.

**Environmental:** No environmental impacts are expected at this time.

**Social Equity:** Project Choice assists (literally) disenfranchised young adults in Oakland in achieving a greater degree of social equity. Reentry programs increase the likelihood that young adults avoid arrest and incarceration.

## **DISABILITY AND SENIOR CITIZENS ACCESS**

All programs funded by Measure Y will be accessible to persons with disabilities.

## **RECOMMENDATION(S) AND RATIONALE**

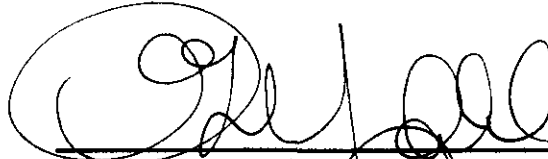
Staff requests that the City Council adopt the resolution to authorize the grant agreement outlined in this report, for Volunteers of America, Bay Area, Inc. to receive up to \$78,000 for eight months from May 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007. This agency has a proven track record demonstrating its ability to deliver tangible outcomes that will reduce recidivism in the City of Oakland.

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**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

That City Council approve a resolution authorizing the City Administrator to execute an agreement between the City of Oakland and Volunteers of America, Bay Area, Inc. for an amount not to exceed \$78,000 to provide Project Choice Housing Assistance for the period of May 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007.

Respectfully submitted,



**ANDREA YOUNGDAHL**

Director, Department of Human Services

Reviewed by:  
Sara Bedford, Manager  
Policy and Planning Unit

Prepared by:  
Anne Marks, Violence Prevention Planner  
Policy and Planning Unit

**APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO THE  
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE:**



**OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR**

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*Margaret Austin*  
City Attorney

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
440 9810

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# OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION No. \_\_\_\_\_ C.M.S.

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF OAKLAND AND VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA, INC. FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$78,000 TO PROVIDE PROJECT CHOICE REENTRY HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR THE PERIOD OF MAY 1, 2007 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007**

**WHEREAS**, City of Oakland voters passed Measure Y, the Violence Prevention and Public Safety Act of 2004, in November 2004, approving a series of taxes to support violence prevention programs including the Project Choice program for parolees; and

**WHEREAS**, through a competitive Request for Proposals process Volunteers of America, Bay Area, Inc. was the most qualified and competent entity to implement Project Choice intensive case management; and

**WHEREAS**, through a grant to the Project Choice program from the Community Action Partnership, additional funding is available to support housing for parolees served through Project Choice; and

**WHEREAS**, the funding for this agreement is allocated to State of California Y Fund (2159), DHS Administration Unit Organization (78111), CAP/CSBG 2006 Project (G265010), Fostering Safe and Health Program (SC22); and

**WHEREAS**, the City wishes to enter into an agreement with Volunteers of America, Bay Area, Inc. for an amount not to exceed \$78,000 to implement this program; now, therefore be it

**RESOLVED:** That the City Administrator is hereby authorized to execute an agreement with Volunteers of America, Bay Area, Inc. for \$78,000, for the purpose of providing Project Choice housing support for reentering offenders for the period of May 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the City Administrator is hereby authorized to conduct all negotiations, execute and submit all documents, including but not limited to applications, agreements, amendments, modifications, payment requests and related actions which may be necessary in accordance with its basic purpose; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED:** That said agreements shall be approved as to form and legality by the Office of the City Attorney and placed on file in the Office of the City Clerk.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_

**PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:**

AYES- BROOKS, BRUNNER, CHANG, KERNIGHAN, NADEL, QUAN, REID, and PRESIDENT DE LA FUENTE

NOES-

ABSENT-

ABSTENTION-

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
LATONDA SIMMONS  
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council  
of the City of Oakland, California