

**REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF  
THE CITY OF OAKLAND  
AGENDA REPORT**

FILED  
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
OAKLAND

2003 DEC 30 AM 8:45

TO: Office of the Agency Administrator  
ATTN: Deborah Edgerly  
FROM: *Community and Economic Development Agency*  
DATE: January 13, 2004

RE: **A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GRANT TO ASIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN ADVOCATES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$25,000 FOR THE INSTALLATION OF ERGONOMIC CHAIRS IN LOCAL GARMENT FACTORIES**

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**SUMMARY**

The requested action will authorize the Agency Administrator to negotiate and execute a grant agreement with Asian Immigrant Women Advocates (AIWA) for the purchase and installation of ergonomic chairs to be used by employees of local garment companies. Agency funding will be used exclusively for the purchase of these chairs as a key component in AIWA's Ergonomic Chair Library Program, which was developed out of the Ergonomic Improvement Project. The proposed contract amount, \$25,000 would provide new ergonomic chairs for 135 Oakland garment workers. Under the Ergonomic Chair Library Program, AIWA: (1) recruits local, eligible garment factories to participate in the program, (2) purchases ergonomic chairs, (3) leases and distributes chairs to participating factories under a contractual agreement, (4) trains employees and managers on the correct usage of the chairs, (5) monitors the program, and (6) provides public education and program marketing.

Many workers in the garment industry suffer from work related injuries as a result of poorly designed work stations and chairs. These injuries can lead to permanent disabilities and worker's compensation claims. AIWA, in partnership with the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) has significantly reduced these injuries, since the Ergonomic Improvement Project's inception in 2000. Additional benefits of the program include increasing production speed up to 20%, higher quality work and faster turnaround time on orders.

This contract would utilize up to \$25,000 in Central District land sale proceeds funds that were budgeted for technical assistance to garment companies under 2001-03 carry forward funding. These services were to be provided by Made By the Bay, a regional, non-profit corporation.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

\$25,000 is available in Central District Redevelopment Program 2001-03 carry forward funds from land sales proceeds. These funds are identified as ORA Unrestricted Land Sales Proceeds Capital Improvement Project (Fund: 9553, Organization: 94800, Project: P221610). The proposed contract will be for a one year period.

CEDA staff will provide performance and financial monitoring. This project will not require hiring new staff or reassigning existing staff.

Item: 5  
CED Committee  
January 13, 2004

## BACKGROUND

Asian Immigrant Women Advocates is a community based organization that works to improve the living and working conditions of low-income women and their families through education, leadership development and collective action. AIWA was founded by workers, community activists, and union organizers in 1983 and is headquartered in Oakland. AIWA's constituents are primarily Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean women who work in the garment, electronics, and hotel industries in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties. Most of AIWA's Oakland constituents live and work in the Central District and the Central City East redevelopment project areas.

In 2000, AIWA, in partnership with the University of California, San Francisco, opened the Asian Immigrant Women Workers Clinic (AIWWC). This clinic, currently under the auspices of UCSF, has a staff of 3 and is located in Oakland. This Clinic was originally conceived as an occupational health screening and referral service for garment industry workers in Alameda County. However, due to the lack of specialty services for follow-up care and the barriers most of the workers faced in accessing occupational health care (language barriers, lack of health insurance, etc.), the clinic almost immediately expanded its mission to include basic treatment services.

AIWWC has monitored the health of its clients (and the affects of the workplace) for the past three years. Key findings are:

- (1) 99% of clinic patients had one or more work-related health conditions, including back, neck or shoulder strains
- (2) 94% of patients experienced pain severe enough to interfere with their daily activities
- (3) 66% reported "poor" or "fair" health. This is over three times higher than the rate for women in California.
- (4) 94% reported one or more problem with their workstations
- (5) 90% reported inadequate seating
- (6) 67% reported having to do awkward bending and twisting, and
- (7) 48% reported breathing problems due to fabric dust.

As a result of the patient data collected at the AIWWC, AIWA, the Department of Health Services and UC Berkeley/UC San Francisco launched the Ergonomic Improvement Project. The Project set up a testing lab to measure work postures and identify the best equipment to prevent injuries, finding simple and cost effective ergonomic modifications that can be made to the workstations to prevent the common musculoskeletal injuries workers experience.

In 2002, AIWA provided outreach services to over 40 garment contractors. The majority expressed concern about how to fund ergonomic changes, specifically the ergonomic chair, which is the most costly yet critical change needed for garment workers' health and safety. Given the nature of the garment industry, especially in light of the economic downturn we experience now, very few contractors have the financial resources to fund ergonomically safe practices in their workplace.

## **KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS**

In order to complete the training and technical assistance components of the project, AIWA must secure funding towards a total cost of \$161,100. To date AIWA has received \$8,000 in grant funding for this project from the Alameda County Partnership Grant Program and is in the process of applying for \$100,000 from the Tides Foundation Marianas Fund. AIWA is identifying additional funding sources from foundations, corporations, and government and individual donors and is currently exploring 5 grant programs. AIWA has committed to begin the project as soon as Oakland Redevelopment Agency funding is made available and will distribute a minimum of 50 chairs, and provide the required employee and employer training, in the first five months of the project. Staff will require that AIWA verify the availability of \$1,100 in training, technical assistance and program monitoring funds that will be needed for each chair purchased, at an approximate cost of \$185 per chair, prior to the release of Agency funds. This will ensure that as chairs are purchased and placed in local shops, the associated training and technical assistance will be completed. A total of 135 chairs will be provided during the one year agreement period.

The proposed use of funds, purchase of equipment to be used for industrial and manufacturing operations, is eligible for redevelopment funding, if a public hearing is held and certain findings are made. Since the specific source of funds is land sales proceeds, these funds are not restricted to use within the Central District. However, it is the intent of the project to assist workers who live and work in the Central District and Central City East Redevelopment Project Areas.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

AIWA has identified 48 garment factories located in the Central District and Central City East Redevelopment Project Areas based on the California State Garment Manufacturer and Contractor Registration Database. These companies will be contacted to determine eligibility for the program. Currently, two Oakland factories are participating in the Ergonomic Chair Library Program. These companies are located in the Central City East Redevelopment Project Area and have received 20 chairs under the program. AIWA needs additional funds to continue the program. The proposed contract amount, \$25,000, would provide new ergonomic chairs for 135 Oakland garment workers. These chairs will be leased to the companies from AIWA and will become the property of the garment companies after one year if all of the lease conditions are met (participate in training, proper maintenance of chairs, payment of a participation fee (10% of the cost of the chairs) to AIWA for program administration and training, etc.). AIWA will also provide training to employees and managers on correct usage of the chairs and workstations. AIWA will also provide health and safety training to 6-15 participating Oakland factories using their previously developed garment industry training program.

Garment companies will be selected based on the following criteria: (1) location in the Central District and Central City East Redevelopment Project Areas, (2) commitment to participate in the program and to adhere to all program terms and conditions, (3) company must have and maintain a City Business License and adequate liability insurance, and (4) company must be in compliance with City zoning and land use regulations.

### **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

Economic: This project will assist 135 local garment workers to be more productive and healthier. It will result in increased productivity and a reduction in health problems and workers compensation claims.

Environmental: It is commonly noted that occupational health and safety issues are considered to be environmental issues. Based on this concept, the project will enhance the workplace environment in the garment factories by providing ergonomic chairs for garment workers. The project will also reduce waste and energy efficiency by increasing productivity and reducing mistakes that waste material.

Social Equity: Since many local garment workers live near their factories, this project will benefit the residents of the immediate neighborhood. It will also assist these low and moderate income workers, many of whom have major language barriers.

### **DISABILITY AND SENIOR CITIZEN ACCESS**

All participating garment factories will comply with ADA Accessibility guidelines and other applicable local, state and federal disability laws.

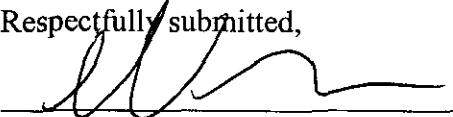
### **RECOMMENDATION(S) AND RATIONALE**

Staff recommends that the Agency approve an Agency grant to Asian Immigrant Women Advocates in an amount not to exceed \$25,000 for the installation of ergonomic chairs in local garment factories.

### **ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**


Staff requests Agency approval of a resolution authorizing an agreement with Asian Immigrant Women Advocates in an amount not to exceed \$25,000 for the installation of ergonomic chairs in local garment factories.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Daniel Vanderprie, Director of Economic  
Development and Redevelopment Divisions

Prepared by:  
Mark Beratta, Urban Economic Coordinator  
Business Development Unit

### **APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO THE COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:**

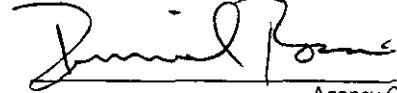
  
Office of the Agency Administrator

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APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY



Agency Counsel

## REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF OAKLAND

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

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### A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GRANT TO ASIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN ADVOCATES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$25,000 FOR THE INSTALLATION OF ERGONOMIC CHAIRS IN LOCAL GARMENT FACTORIES

WHEREAS, Health and Safety Code Section 33444.6 authorizes a redevelopment agency to assist with the financing of facilities or capital improvements on properties used for industrial or manufacturing purposes; and

WHEREAS, Asian Immigrant Women Advocates (AIWA) has developed and implemented programs to assist garment industry workers in Oakland with health and safety issues; and

WHEREAS, AIWA has requested assistance with financing the installation of ergonomic chairs in Oakland garment manufacturing facilities for use by garment workers under its Ergonomic Chair Library Program in an amount not to exceed \$25,000; and

WHEREAS, AIWA's services are important for the continuation of growth in the Oakland apparel industry and the prevention of blight in the City by insuring continued operation of these businesses, thus serving a redevelopment purpose; and

WHEREAS, funding to assist the garment industry was included in the Redevelopment Agency's FY 2001-03 Approved Budget, and the funds are available from Agency land sales proceeds; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing on this funding request was held as required by Health and Safety Code Section 33444.6; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Agency hereby authorizes grant financing to AIWA in an amount not to exceed \$25,000 to finance the installation of ergonomic chairs in Oakland garment manufacturing facilities for use by garment workers; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Agency hereby finds and determines that the Agency financial assistance is necessary for the economic feasibility of the development of ergonomically-

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appropriate work spaces in Oakland garment manufacturing facilities, and that the assistance cannot be obtained on economically feasible terms in the private market for such development; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Agency Administrator is authorized to negotiate and execute a grant contract with AIWA in an amount not to exceed \$25,000 for this purpose; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the funding for this project shall come from Agency land sales proceeds identified as Fund: 9553, Organization: 94800, and Project P221610; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Agency Administrator or her designee is hereby authorized to take whatever action with respect to this funding which is necessary and consistent with this Resolution and its basic purpose; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That all documents to be executed shall be reviewed and approved as to form and legality by Agency Counsel prior to execution.

IN AGENCY, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, \_\_\_\_\_, 2003

**PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:**

AYES- BROOKS, BRUNNER, CHANG, NADEL, QUAN, REID, WAN, AND CHAIRPERSON DE LA FUENTE

NOES-

ABSENT-

ABSTENTION-

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

CEDA FLOYD

Secretary of the Redevelopment Agency  
of the City of Oakland, California

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