

Meeting Date: February 29, 2024 Agenda Type: Consent Items for Action

From: Vania Fuentes-Caballero Reviewed by: Dawn Schriewer

Customer Service Manager Chief Financial Officer

Submitted by: Dawn Schriewer **Approved by:** Ryan Kelso

Chief Financial Officer Chief Executive Officer

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorize CEO or His Designee to Negotiate and Execute a

Professional Service Agreement with the San Antonio Food Bank d/b/a New Braunfels Food Bank for the Utility Bill Assistance

Program

BACKGROUND

After conducting a comprehensive review of New Braunfels Utility's Low-Income Discount Program and noting the low level of customer participation, we are working to merge the program with the NBU Utility Bill Assistance Program. This consolidation will involve using a single professional, a unified application process, and a combined budget. Additionally, it will enable NBU to raise the threshold for Federal Poverty Level assistance from 125% to 250%. These changes will allow NBU to achieve a greater reach with the program and assist those who are truly in need.

NBU utilizes a professional to provide all labor, material, and equipment necessary to administer the NBU Utility Bill Assistance Program for electric, water, and wastewater billed usage. The professional will determine applicant eligibility and priority for approval using NBU approved evaluation criteria. Services include accepting utility assistance applications, qualifying applicants, determining the amount of contribution per applicant, and disbursing electronic vouchers to approved applicants. The following criteria must be met for a customer to qualify: a) low-income households at or below 250% of federal poverty guidelines that demonstrate need; b) unemployment of the applicant or a primary income provider of the household that has created financial hardship; c) illness of the applicant, a primary income provider or an immediate family member that has created financial hardship; d) death of a primary income provider of the household or an immediate family member that has created financial hardship due to burial expenses; e) hardship that has caused a lack of adequate resources for applicant to pay his or her utility bill; f) military veterans who have significantly decreased abilities to regulate their body's core temperature.

On November 16, 2023, NBU staff solicited Request for Proposal (RFP) 24-0020 from vendors for the Utility Bill Assistance Program. NBU received one proposal from the current provider, San Antonio Food Bank DBA New Braunfels Food Bank (the "Professional"). This Professional Services Agreement (the

"Agreement") will be effective for a period of one (1) year from March 1, 2024, to February 28, 2025 (the "Initial Term") After the expiration of the Initial Term, this Agreement shall automatically renew for four (4) successive one-year terms

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The total financial impact of the Agreement with "the Professional" is not to exceed the lesser of (i) fifteen percent (15%) of the distributed Program funds for each Term or (ii) \$90,000. For the duration of the Agreement, NBU shall not exceed the lesser of (i) fifteen percent (15%) of the distributed Program funds for the duration of the Agreement, or (ii) \$450,000. These funds are currently budgeted within NBU's Fiscal Year 2024 through Fiscal Year 2029 NBU Board Approved 2024 budget.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Customers and Community

Financial Excellence

EXHIBITS

1. Professional Service Agreement with San Antonio Food Bank DBA New Braunfels Food Bank