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MILPITAS POST

Milpitas council approves nearly \$400,000 in grants

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Fifteen service providers dedicated to assisting Milpitas' neediest residents with housing mediation, food, legal aid and elder care received confirmation last week that they will receive grant funding from the city.

Milpitas City Council voted unanimously April 21 to approve Community Development Block Grant funding allocations of more than \$393,400 for the 2015-16 fiscal year as well as adopt a one-year action plan.

Each year, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development provides grants to assist groups that cover public and nonpublic services. Milpitas Community Advisory Commission held a public hearing on March 4 to review 17 applications received and then provided funding recommendations to the city council for 15 groups.

The commission's funding recommendations were based on setting aside up to 15 percent for public services (\$59,000); 65 percent for non-public services (nearly \$255,770); and 20 percent toward program administration (nearly \$78,700).

This year, groups approved to receive grant funds for public services, which include activities such as child care, job training and education programs, are:

- Child Advocates of Silicon Valley (\$5,290) -- Provides court-appointed special advocates for vulnerable children in the foster care system. About 10 to 15 Milpitas children are supposed to benefit from this service.
- City of Milpitas Recreation Services Assistance Program (\$7,206) -- Provides recreational services to low-income families. The program is expected to benefit nearly 50 youth and seniors.

- HomeFirst Services of Santa Clara County (\$5,025) -- The project provides shelter and supportive services to about 20 homes for city residents.
- The Health Trust (\$6,350) -- The group provides Meals on Wheels to increase social interaction to home-bound seniors. About eight homebound Milpitas seniors are expected to benefit.
- Live Oak Adult Day Services (\$5,338) -- The organization provides recreational adult day care for frail, low-income seniors. The program is expected to benefit about 10 Milpitas residents.
- Milpitas Food Pantry (\$14,519) -- The nonprofit provides the city's poorest residents, new clothing and toiletries. The Food Pantry serves about 3,000 to 4,500 residents annually.
- Next Door Solutions To Domestic Violence (\$5,106) -- The group provides emergency shelter and other support to victims of domestic abuse and their children. About 20 to 30 Milpitas residents are served.
- Project Sentinel (\$25,000) -- The organization provides fair housing services and investigation services of housing discrimination and complaints as well as tenant-landlord counseling services. All Milpitas residents can use this service. The group will receive \$10,000 from CDBG funding and \$15,000 from the Milpitas Housing Authority.
- Senior Adults Legal Assistance, SALA (\$5,110) -- The group provides free legal services to Milpitas' senior citizens. About 30 to 35 seniors are expected to benefit.
- YWCA Silicon Valley (\$5,080) -- The program provides 24-hour comprehensive services for victims of domestic abuse and their children. Nearly 45 Milpitas residents will benefit. Agencies or groups approved to receive grant funds for non-public services, which include activities such as new construction, acquisition of land or existing buildings and rehabilitation of facilities, are:
 - Charities Housing Development Corp./Milpitas Senior Homes LLC (\$32,800) -- The low-income seniors affordable housing program is meant to benefit 10 Milpitas senior residents.
 - Milpitas Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program, Revolving Loan (\$135,442) -- The funds will be used as rehabilitation loans to low- and very low-income households. However, funds for this program come out of current revolving loan funds and not from CDBG entitlement funds, city reports state.
 - Milpitas Public Works Department (\$60,648) -- The project will provide for pavement resurfacing that includes installation of new curb ramps at various city locations to aid the disabled. The project is meant to benefit all Milpitas residents.
 - Rebuilding Together Silicon Valley (\$49,610) -- The organization helps seniors and low- to very low-income homeowners make safety repairs and home improvements to increase mobility. This will help nearly 30 Milpitas households.

- Terrace Gardens Senior Housing Inc. (\$112,713) -- Monies will assist with the façade and exterior improvements to the senior housing complex. The project will benefit a total of 184 residents.

At the April 21 council meeting, one unfunded group that applied -- Fresh Lifelines for Youth (FLY), which works with youthful offenders as part of a law program -- saw representatives speaking about the program's goals and benefits to possible program participants who are currently students at Calaveras Hills High School.

Later, Vice Mayor Carmen Montano said she would like to see FLY funded for at least \$5,000 as she believed there were fewer city services offered specifically for youth.

Similarly, Mayor Jose Esteves said he wanted another unfunded group, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County and its long-term care ombudsman program that helps the elderly, funded as well. Saying the program protected the city's most frail citizens from potential elder abuse, Esteves wanted the program to also receive at least \$5,000.

In the end, the council agreed to look at ways to possibly use existing city funds and not federal grant monies to assist those two groups. The council may look at this matter during upcoming budget discussions for the 2015-16 fiscal year, which begins July 1.

The council is scheduled to approve next year's final city budget by May 19.