



AGENCY:	City Council
MEETING DATE:	Oct. 23, 2017
DEPARTMENT:	Community Development
PRESENTED BY:	J. Owen
EMAIL ADDRESS:	jowen@fortbragg.com

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

TITLE:

RECEIVE REPORT REGARDING ACTIVITIES AND CLOSE-OUT OF CDBG-FUNDED HOME ENERGY LINK PROGRAMS (HELP)

ISSUE:

The City's 2014 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) #14-CDBG-9881 provided funding for several activities including two Home Energy Link Programs: HELP Plus and HELP H2O. The two HELP programs have been operated by Renewable Energy Development Institute (REDI) since 2015. The expenditure period for the 2014 CDBG grant ends on October 31, 2017. Information about the CDBG funding and grant specifics is provided below. REDI personnel will be present at the October 23, 2017, City Council meeting to provide a report about program activities and accomplishments during the grant term.

ANALYSIS:

The City received notification of award of the 2014 grant in October 2014. The 2014 CDBG grant award was \$2 million for a variety of activities including: a public facility (homeless services), microenterprise assistance program, and three public service activities (Garden Employment Training Program and two HELP programs). In addition, two Supplemental Activities funded by CDBG Program Income have been completed or will be completed by the October 31, 2017, grant expenditure termination date.

The two 2014 HELP programs include HELP Plus and HELP H2O. Both programs are operated by Renewable Energy Development Institute (REDI), a non-profit organization based in Willits. The City entered into a subrecipient agreement with REDI in February 23, 2015. The HELP program was awarded \$213,953 for HELP Plus and \$65,116 for HELP H2O, and those full amounts were allocated to REDI for program operation. The program's launch was delayed until grant General Conditions were cleared by CDBG. HELP Plus General Conditions were cleared on April 15, 2015, and HELP H2O General Conditions were cleared on June 22, 2015. To implement both programs, REDI rented an office at 119 North Franklin Street and hired employees to provide services during regular office hours.

As described in the CDBG grant application, the purpose of HELP Plus was to provide access to and information about an array of energy efficiency and water conservation services, information, and funding sources. In addition, the program goal was to help Fort Bragg residential water utility customers with personalized assistance and education about energy efficiency and water conservation tools and tips designed for their household. The HELP Plus program was able to serve all Fort Bragg residents without limitations on household income. The HELP Plus program was designed to be very similar to a highly successful HELP program funded from the City's 2012 CDBG grant. The 2014 HELP Plus program included all elements of the 2012 program with the addition of water conservation counseling and education.

The HELP H2O program was funded by CDBG as a "subsistence payments" program. HELP H2O provided one-time-only water/sewer bill payments to low-income city residents. Program applicants were required to submit CDBG Self Certification forms to attest as to their household income,

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7D

which had to be below income thresholds published by CDBG (that is, 80% or less of Mendocino County Median Household Income). Payments were limited to one-half of an outstanding bill, and the account holder had to pay the other half of the outstanding balance before the program could assist. Assistance under this program was only for a rate holder's primary residence, and it was tied to mandatory home water audits, water conservation counseling and education.

REDI personnel will provide further details about program accomplishments in an oral report.

When CDBG grants are closed, CDBG requires submittal of completion reports for each grant activity. In addition, once all completion reports are submitted, a public hearing must be held before the governing body to discuss accomplishments under the entire grant. The close-out public hearing provides general information about accomplishments and must be held before the October 31, 2019, grant agreement close-out date. Staff expects to hold the close-out public hearing for the 2014 grant #14-CDBG-9881 in early 2018.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

No action. This is a report.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

None.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Direct activities of the HELP Plus and H2O programs were fully funded by CDBG. All grant activity funds were allocated to REDI to operate the programs. In addition to the HELP program activity funding, CDBG provides General Administration funding for CDBG program administration. General Administration was funded for the 2014 CDBG grant at 7.5% of the entire \$2 million award (\$139,535). Staff time required to administer the HELP programs has been funded by grant General Administration funding.

CONSISTENCY:

Both the HELP Plus and the HELP H2O program support overall energy conservation measures in the City's 2012 Climate Action Plan. Energy efficiency measures and water conservation are also addressed in the Sustainability Element (09) and Housing Element (10) of the Inland General Plan. Implementation of the Climate Action Plan and increased energy Independences are also addressed in the City's 2014 Economic Development Strategy, Priorities 4.1 and 4.2.

IMPLEMENTATION/TIMEFRAMES:

As explained above, a formal close-out public hearing is required for the entire CDBG grant #14-CDBG-9881. That hearing is required to be held before the grant agreement termination date of October 31, 2019, and is expected to be held in early 2018.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. REDI's PowerPoint presentation.

NOTIFICATION:

1. Keith Rutledge, REDI