



Legislation Text

File #: 24-0192, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT AMENDMENT

Request: Requesting authorization for the Forest Preserves of Cook County (the “Forest Preserves”) to amend its Partnership Agreement with the University of Illinois (the “University”), Champaign, Illinois and the Chicago Zoological Society (“CZS”), Brookfield, Illinois.

Reason: The Forest Preserves wishes to extend and increase its partnership agreement with the University and CZS in order to expand the Illinois Zoological and Wildlife Health Management Residency program. Given the success and productivity of the initial residency, which launched in 2022, the Forest Preserves is seeking to extend the program through 2031, providing the opportunity for a total of three additional residents to participate over the term of the agreement. This amendment would also add a second wildlife resident position into a rotation that selects a new resident every other year (2024, 2026, 2028). Each residency term would overlap for a single year to allow for mentorship between residents and integration with existing research operations.

The residency is the nation’s first and only veterinary residency program focused on free-ranging wildlife health management. The three-year program provides clinical training that enables residents to become competent in free-ranging wildlife health to meet the eligibility requirements for accreditation by the American College of Zoological Medicine, the certifying body for veterinary zoo and wildlife medicine specialists. The resident provides professional veterinary medical services for Forest Preserves field programs and assists with laboratory and field research to maintain wildlife and ecosystem health in Cook County. The program has been honored with several awards and has already made numerous important discoveries related to local wildlife health.

The initial residency program was originally approved by the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners on 2/8/2022, per Board Item No. 22-0108. All residents are directly employed by the University. Candidate selection occurs through a nationwide search coordinated through the Veterinary Internship and Residency Matching Program. The total cost for all four (4) residents over the nine (9) year agreement term is not to exceed \$1,305,000.00, which includes a base salary, fringe benefits, and an annual stipend for supplemental research and travel expenses.

Contract Period: Original: 7/15/2022 - 7/14/2025. Initial Board authority authorized an additional one-year renewal option to be exercised at the discretion of the General Superintendent to account for any delays in initial recruitment, but that option is not in the current agreement.

Proposed Partnership Agreement Extension: 7/15/2025 - 7/14/2031

Fiscal Impact: Not to exceed \$1,305,000.00 (FY 2022 \$68,109.50; FY 2023 \$68,844.05; FY 2024 \$217,500.00; FY 2025 \$108,750.00; FY 2026 \$108,750.00; FY 2027 \$217,500.00; FY 2028 \$108,750.00; FY 2029 \$217,500.00; FY 2030 \$108,750.00; FY 2031 \$80,546.45)

Account(s): Professional Services 51030.520840; Grant and Mitigation 51010.521314 and 51010.521444; and all future Professional Services accounts

Concurrences: The Chief Financial Officer has approved this item. Final amendment is subject to legal review and approval.

District(s): Districtwide