



Legislation Text

File #: 17-0390, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED CONTRACT

Department(s): Resource Management

Vendor: Friends of the Forest Preserves, Chicago, Illinois

Request: Authorization for the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (the "Preserves") to enter into and execute

Good(s) or Service(s): Palos Conservation Corps Program

Contract Value: Not to exceed \$150,000.00 per year, or \$750,000.00 over the five (5) year term

Contract period: 1/1/2018 - 12/31/2022

Estimated Fiscal Impact: FY 2018 \$150,000.00, FY 2019 \$150,000.00, FY 2020 \$150,000.00, FY 2021 \$150,000.00, FY 2022 \$150,000.00

Accounts: Intern Programs 51009.521525, Habitat Enhancement 51009.521452, Habitat Restoration 51009.521444, Grant and Mitigation Accounts: 51010.29982 and 51010.22522

Contract Number(s): 17-31-117

Concurrences:

The Chief Financial Officer and Chief Attorney have approved this item.

District(s): Districtwide

Summary: Contract 17-31-117 consists of a variety of Conservation Corps internship programs focused on ecological restoration throughout the Preserves. The Conservation Corps co-facilitates innovative job training and employment programs that provide participants with paid, hands-on experiences in conservation that train the next generation to restore and be responsible stewards of the land. The Preserves issued a Request for Proposals, and received a total of nine (9) proposals from three (3) vendors for this project.

The Preserves assembled a review panel consisting of various Preserve staff that considered Friends of the Forest Preserves' proposal one of the most responsive including particular strengths in experience, match contribution, program scalability, and performance capacity as it relates to the work requested in the proposal. The Palos Conservation Corps program provides advanced conservation and leadership skills training with a focus on engaging young adults, ages 18-24. The twelve (12) month program engages four (4) participants, one (1) crew manager, and one (1) assistant crew manager in hands-on ecological restoration work to restore habitat in the Palos region. Highly skilled participants contribute to herbaceous and woody invasive species control, prescribed burn, and native seed collection activities. Additionally, the Palos Conservation Corps hosts volunteer workdays in partnership with the local site stewards to bolster volunteer recruitment and engagement in the region.

The Preserves believe it is critical to engage individuals from Cook County's diverse communities in conservation jobs at the Preserves. Conservation Corps programs have been very successful in engaging participants from a wide range of

socioeconomic backgrounds, ages and ethnicities. Corps demographic data from 2007 to 2016 show that on average 54% of participants were African American, 23% Caucasian, 18% Latino, 3% biracial, and 2% Asian.

Total project costs are \$247,000.00 annually, with \$150,000.00 in investment by the Preserves leveraging \$97,000.00 in partner match. This program advances the goals of the Next Century Conservation Plan.