

Memo

To: Oak Park Village Board, District 97 Board of Education and District 200 Board of Education

From: Carolyn Newberry Schwartz, Executive Director, Collaboration for Early Childhood

Subject: Unspent Contract Revenue

Date: November 17, 2017

Annual expenditures thus far have been lower than projected when the Collaboration for Early Childhood, the Village and Districts 97 and 200 entered into a Contract for Early Childhood Educational Services in 2013. The Early Childhood Working Group that developed the IGA and the contract understood that the work and the costs to fully establish the system of early childhood services would be subject to variables that could not be anticipated, especially at the outset of the contract when the entire system was under development. Over the past four years we have increased our understanding of the service needs across the early childhood system. We have also launched important initiatives this past year to ensure that families eligible to receive specific services are found and engaged in programs.

Recognizing the temporary surplus of contracted revenues vs. expenses, unspent contract funds have been returned to the IGA Administrator (District 97) per the requirements prescribed in the Contract, Article 3, Section 2. A new invoicing procedure has also been implemented to better align the payment of contracted revenues with expenses, both currently and as program implementation and expenses reach their full anticipated level.

The timeline for the ramping up or full development of the early childhood system was ambitious. The scope and cost of the project as described in the contract continue to be on target. We do expect to be fully expending budgeted funds within the next one to two years. The conditions and reasons behind the lower expenditures to date include the following:

1. The original multi-year budget assumed a contract approval date of November 2012. The contract was signed in April 2013. This in turn resulted in contracts being issued to important vendors later than originally anticipated. The net result was a significantly lower rate of expenditures than planned for Year One and a subsequent lowering of expenses over the ensuing years as the implementation lag had a cumulative impact affecting staff hiring and related service levels.
2. Fiscal year 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 programs were significantly impacted by the lack of a State budget which affected referrals and consequently staffing needs. This was felt most acutely in the lack of a contract between the Village and the State for Nurse Family Case Management services.
 - The Village recently hired a Public Health Nurse to perform the Nurse Family Case Manager function when it receives a contract from the State. That contract was not issued for 2016-2017 but the Village anticipates receiving the contract for fiscal year 2018.

3. The 2014 gubernatorial election and change in administrations led to a slowing of work around the Data Sharing Agreements with the State. The delay resulted in significant database related expenses being lower than anticipated for fiscal years 2013-2014, 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. Much of the expense that we anticipated, however, has been deferred, not eliminated.
 - With agreements now in place, the scope of work for Chapin Hall has increased and the budget for the work is very large this year. We expect it to remain on track for the following years.

4. The decision to change the parent information and support strategy to achieve greater long-term growth and stability resulted in lower expenditures than planned for fiscal years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017.
 - Three home visiting programs are now working together on outreach and have agreed to a single point of entry for home visiting services through the Village's Public Health Nurse. This will enable us to know the capacity of each agency to provide model fidelity home visiting services and the extent to which there are openings in each program. Importantly, research has shown that coordinated intake processes decrease competition among agencies and result in greater numbers of families engaging in services due to increases in cooperation between providers and referring agencies. We expect that the need to continue to fund home visiting programs through the Collaboration's contract will grow over the next two years as we work to achieve capacity.
 - A new Parent Resource Program Coordinator was hired in January 2017. The program, designed to provide a continuum of support for all families, is growing and we expect expenditures to meet budgeted levels as the program components are put into place.
 - The Parent Engagement and Leadership Program we are initiating with Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) this fall will help us to identify key parent leaders who we plan to hire as peer ambassadors to help find, encourage and engage families that meet eligibility criteria for the home visiting programs.

It is important to recognize that the Collaboration benefits from the expertise and time of many volunteers who contribute to our work. Each strategy is led by volunteer professionals backed by a staff. We expect the next 18 -24 months to be important months in the development of the early childhood system of services contemplated in the contract. The components and leadership positions for each strategy are clearly defined and in place. We forecast that the growth in the key program activities described in this memo and the demands of back office support and administrative leadership will require the original budget expenditure plan developed in 2012-2013.