



Agenda Item No: 1.i

PLACENTIA CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: July 15, 2025

Submitted by: Lydie Gutfeld

From: Community Services

Subject:

Approval of the License Agreement with Higher Ground Youth and Family Services for Teen Programming and Counseling and Therapy Services for Individual, Family and Group Sessions at the Teen Center in Kraemer Park

Financial Impact:

Fiscal Impact:

Expense: \$0

Revenue: \$1 FY25-26

Summary:

The City of Placentia is entering into a license agreement with Higher Ground Youth and Family Services, which will provide after-school teen programming in addition to free counseling and therapy sessions at the teen center located at 116 N. Walnut Ave, within Kraemer Memorial Park. Higher Ground Youth and Family Services is a nonprofit organization committed to building strong families and resilient communities through mentorship, mental health services, enrichment programs, and access to essential resources. Staff recommends a one (1) year initial license for a price of \$1 per year to commence services beginning in September 2025, with the possibility of extending the services long term under a lease.

Recommendation:

Recommended Action: It is recommended that the City Council take the following actions:

1. Approve a one (1) year License Agreement with Higher Ground Youth and Family Services for teen programming, counseling and therapy services from the date that the agreement is fully executed with a \$1 per year payment due September 1, 2025.
2. Authorize the City Administrator and/or her designee to execute the necessary documents, in a form approved by the City Attorney.

Strategic Plan Statement:

This item is consistent with the City Council approved 5-Year Strategic Plan Goal: To Increase Community Engagement: By providing much needed teen programming and counseling and therapy sessions, the city can increase their quality of life of its residents and engage a vulnerable teen population with awareness of positive recreational opportunities in the city.

Discussion:

Currently, the building is used as a hub for the PARKS program with very limited attendance,

ranging from 4 to 12 students (school age/non-teen). The PARKS program is able to relocate to the Backs Community Center across the park with no delays or issues with service delivery. Staff is confident that adding the additional services provided by Higher Ground will enhance the service portfolio for the area and will increase the visibility of positive recreational opportunities for the teenage population that attends Kraemer Middle School and Valencia High School, located less than one (1) block away. Higher Ground Family and Youth Services has a successful program in the cities of Anaheim and Fullerton and should be considered as a viable option to provide services that the City is not capable of providing at this time.

Proposed activities and programs include:
Immediate Services (To Launch September 2025)

Core Services:

- Free Counseling & Therapy: Individual, family, and group sessions provided by Marriage Family Therapist/Master of Social Worker interns under licensed supervision to address trauma and stress, break cycles of generational trauma, improve academic and social outcomes, reduce stigma and promote mental health awareness, and foster community resilience and long-term health.
- Teen Center: A safe, supportive, after-school environment offering mentorship, tutoring, wellness workshops, and youth leadership activities.
- Case Management: One-on-one support connecting families to housing assistance, legal aid, utilities relief, and more.
- Basic Needs & Food Access: Distribution of clothing, hygiene items, and food boxes to underserved families through case management services.
- Adult Workshops & Workforce Development: Courses in ESL, financial literacy, job readiness, parenting, brain/mental health, and life skills.
- Ongoing Community Events: Monthly family dinners, cultural celebrations, and youth showcases.
- University Partnerships: Site-based student internships to provide additional youth mentoring and connection to teens in the after-school program.

Possible Expansion Opportunities (Post-2026, depending on need within the community)
Expanded Choice Market & Basic Needs Pantry:

- A dignified shopping experience for food and essentials.
- Expanded Counseling and Case Management Support: Multiple therapy rooms and space assigned for mental health and case management support.
- Expanded Teen Center to provide additional programming and educational opportunities for local youth.
- Expanded workshops and workforce development space and offerings.
- Community Kitchen: On-site preparation and distribution of meals to families and individuals.
- University Partnerships: Site-based student internships, faculty-led workshops, and in-kind academic support.

By increasing these much-needed services in the Kraemer Park area, Staff is confident that the services will increase community engagement and work towards helping a vulnerable teen population while also providing equity and inclusion with responsive programming to serve the residents in the surrounding area. Having a license agreement benefits the City by allowing there to be a short-term agreement and giving the City time to evaluate the success of the program. In addition, it does not create any property rights so it will allow the City to terminate

and then end the agreement if the City determines either the program is unsuccessful, or the City has a need for the facility.

Fiscal Impact Summary:

There is no fiscal impact. The City would continue to maintain the teen center surrounding areas, including the roof and exterior of the teen center, in addition to utility costs. Higher Ground would pay the \$1 license fee to become the service provider in the building and would also pay for interior building maintenance.

Attachments

[Higher Ground Proposal for Teen Center 2025.pdf](#)

[License sept. 1.25 to aug 31.26- higher ground.pdf](#)

[LIO Prime General Liability Enhancement Endorsement.pdf](#)

[Higher Ground City of Placentia certificate.pdf](#)