



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY MANAGER

File #: 20-791

Board Meeting Date: 10/20/2020

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Michael Callagy, County Manager

Subject: **Measure K:** Contribution to San Mateo County Immigrant Relief Fund

RECOMMENDATION:

Measure K: Recommendation to:

A) Adopt a resolution authorizing:

1. A second contribution of \$2,000,000 in **Measure K** funds to the San Mateo County Immigrant Relief Fund to provide financial assistance to residents of San Mateo County who have been economically impacted by COVID-19, and who are ineligible for federal financial assistance programs because of their immigration status; and
2. The County Manager, or designee, to amend the grant agreement with Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County and Mission Asset Fund for the contribution of a total amount not to exceed \$4,000,000 to the San Mateo County Immigrant Relief Fund and distribution of this amount to selected recipients for a term of July 15, 2020 through December 31, 2020; and

B) Approve an Appropriation Transfer Request (ATR) in the amount of \$2,000,000, transferring revenue from **Measure K** to Mission Asset Fund.

BACKGROUND:

On March 3, 2020, pursuant to Section 101080 of the California Health and Safety Code, the San Mateo County Health Officer (the "Health Officer") declared a local health emergency throughout the County related to COVID-19. This ratified and extended this declaration of local health emergency, which remains in effect.

In addition, on March 3, 2020, pursuant to Section 8630 of the California Government Code and Chapter 2.46 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code, the San Mateo County Director of Emergency Services proclaimed a local emergency throughout San Mateo County related to COVID-19. The Board ratified and extended the proclamation of local emergency, and this local emergency

remains in effect.

On March 4, 2020, Governor Newsom issued a Proclamation of State of Emergency related to COVID-19 effective throughout California.

On March 16, 2020, the Health Officer issued an order that, among other things, directed all individuals currently living within San Mateo County to shelter in their place of residence ("County Shelter-in-Place Order"), and authorizes individuals to leave their residences only for certain "Essential Activities," "Essential Governmental Functions," or to operate "Essential Businesses," all as defined in the Shelter-in-Place Order.

On March 19, 2020, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-33-20, which imposed a statewide shelter-in-place order requiring individuals to remain in their places of residence except as needed to maintain continuity of operations of the federal critical infrastructure sectors or to access necessities such as food, prescriptions, and health care or other authorized activities.

On May 8, 2020, Governor Newsom announced a plan to allow the limited reopening of some businesses beyond those in the category of essential critical infrastructure, which is part of the "Resilience Roadmap" for California, the multiphase plan to modify the Statewide Shelter-In-Place Order.

Several times since March 16, 2020, and most recently, on June 4, 2020, the Health Officer issued revised Shelter-in-Place Orders extending the Original Shelter-in-Place Order due to evidence of continued significant community transmission of COVID-19 within the County and throughout the Bay Area.

On June 16, 2020, the State approved the County's request for a variance allowing the County to align with the Resilience Roadmap for California.

On June 17, 2020, the Health Officer rescinded the June 4, 2020 revised Shelter-in-Place Order and replaced it, effective immediately, with a new order aligning the County with the Statewide Shelter-in-Place Order/Resilience Roadmap, emphasizing individual behavior and the practices that businesses must follow as they resume operations, including limiting gatherings to no more than 50 people, outlining social distancing and face covering requirements, allowing for social bubbles, and requiring businesses to implement a social distancing protocol and written health and safety plans, based on evidence of continued significant community transmission of COVID-19 within the County and throughout the Bay Area.

In September, the State revised the health guidance rating system, instituting a four-tier structure with reopening of business activities increasing through the tiers. The criteria to advance through the tiers includes the number of new COVID-19 cases, positivity rates, and a recently added equity metric. When the new approach was announced, San Mateo County was in the purple (i.e., the most restrictive) tier. The County recently moved into the red tier which has allowed limited reopening of select businesses.

While the County is making progress on the state metrics through testing, contact tracing, and the promotion of face coverings, encouraging physical distancing and discouraging large gatherings, the number of identified COVID-19 cases continues to grow and it will take time before the local economy is fully reopened. Thus, the impacts of the pandemic on the local community, including significant income loss due to layoffs, business and school closures, and a loss of work hours and

wages, as well as extraordinary out-of-pocket medical expenses, will continue to be substantial.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit San Mateo County, it highlighted the plight of the County's most vulnerable residents, many of whom struggle with the high cost of living and live paycheck-to-paycheck. While large numbers of County residents have been financially impacted by this pandemic, losing their livelihoods and now struggling to make ends meet, many have qualified for, and received, COVID-19-related financial assistance through various federal and state programs. Other residents, who due to their immigration status do not qualify for federal or state assistance, have received emergency financial support through the Core Service Agencies' programs funded by grants from SMC Strong, some cities and other contributors. However, there is a greater need than can be met by the Core Services Agencies' programs, which is why this Board contributed \$2 million to the San Mateo County Immigrant Relief Fund (the "Relief Fund") on July 21, 2020.

The Relief Fund is coordinated by the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County ("LASSMC") and provides \$1,000 grants to individuals or families who share finances based on an assessment of demonstrated economic need due to COVID-19. The hope was to raise enough funds to provide an initial grant of \$1,000 to all eligible applicants and then provide a second round of grants up to a maximum of \$2,000 per household to those households with a continued demonstrated need. The Relief Fund is administered by Mission Asset Fund ("MAF"), a nonprofit financial services organization with expertise administering emergency COVID assistance to low-income residents.

As of September 28, 2020, the pre-screening questionnaire for grant eligibility had been completed by 22,745 applicants who confirmed their residency in the County, that they fall within the income limits set for Economic Impact Payments under the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security ("CARES") Act, that they are ineligible for federal financial assistance due to immigration status, and that they have a demonstrated economic need as a result of COVID-19. MAF prioritized the potential applicants based on level of need, which included consideration of loss of income, number of dependents, illness or disability, or other hardships.

Based on the pre-screening, MAF invited 15,908 applicants to complete an on-line application through MAF's secure web portal, which requires (1) uploading government issued identification (even if expired or not from the U.S.); (2) verifying responses to the pre-application questionnaire; and (3) confirming the mode of payment for the financial assistance (i.e. direct deposit into a checking account, issuance of paper check, or issuance of a pre-paid debit card). Both the pre-application questionnaire and the application are available in four languages: English, Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese. To date, MAF has received 11,152 applications for the \$1,000 grant.

DISCUSSION:

The Relief Fund received \$10,600,000 in contributions from the County and private donors, including seed funding of \$5,000,000 from John Sobrato. As of October 5, 2020, 96% of the available funds have been distributed to 10,156 applicants deemed by MAF to be those households most in need. According to MAF, 46% of the grantees to date have no monthly income, 63% have three or more household members, and over 30% of the grantee households have had one or more members infected by the COVID-19 virus.

While the Relief Fund has assisted over 10,000 individuals and households, other, eligible households await assistance. To address this unmet need, on October 6, 2020, the Board of Supervisors directed the County Manager to bring for the Board's consideration materials to authorize and allocate an additional \$2,000,000 in **Measure K** Funds to MAF for the Relief Fund to meet the ongoing needs of eligible applicants to the Relief Fund, for a total County contribution of

\$4,000,000 to the Relief Fund. The additional funds will provide unrestricted cash assistance for up to 2,000 of the County's most vulnerable individuals and families who do not qualify for otherwise commonly available forms of assistance, such as unemployment benefits or federal stimulus funds, due to their immigration status. The County's additional \$2,000,000 contribution will also come from unrestricted **Measure K** funds

As with the first County contribution to the Relief Fund, one hundred percent (100%) of the additional \$2,000,000 will be distributed to the verified applicants. There are no administrative costs to LASSMC or to its partner organizations, which will be providing the outreach and coordination, and services as an in-kind donation. There are also no administrative costs to MAF, which is being funded by the Kellogg Foundation to provide its services.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Authorization of the ATR in the amount of \$2,000,000 in **Measure K** funds will provide financial assistance to residents of San Mateo County who have been economically impacted by COVID-19, and who are ineligible for federal financial assistance programs because of their immigration status. There is no Net County Cost associated with this action.