



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY EXECUTIVE

File #: 24-202

Board Meeting Date: 3/26/2024

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Michael P. Callagy, County Executive

Subject: Use of District-Discretionary **Measure K** Funds - Supervisorial District 2

RECOMMENDATION:

Measure K: Adopt a resolution authorizing a one-time grant of district-discretionary **Measure K** funds, not to exceed \$70,000, to Elevate Community Center for the “Empowering Families” pilot program to provide legal services in the areas of domestic violence/family law and tenants’ rights, for the term March 26, 2024 through July 31, 2024, and authorizing the County Executive, or designee, to execute the grant agreement.

BACKGROUND:

Measure K is the half-cent general sales tax initially approved by San Mateo County voters in November 2012 and extended in November 2016 for a total of thirty years.

The Board of Supervisors (Board) held study sessions on **Measure K** expenditures and approved funds for the fiscal year (FY) 2023-24 budget cycle, divided equally among the five supervisorial districts, for one-time district-discretionary needs and projects. District 2 has submitted a request to use their district-discretionary **Measure K** funds as shown below and described in the Project Summary section of this memorandum:

District/Project	Amount
District 2 (Supervisor Noelia Corzo) - Elevate Community Center: Fund “Empowering Families” pilot program to provide legal services in the areas of domestic violence/family law and tenants’ rights	\$70,000

This item is consistent with the criteria for district-discretionary **Measure K** funds approved by the Board in December 2018. District 2 indicates that this organization is either a public entity operating within the County or a nonprofit organization registered and in good standing with the California Attorney General. District 2 indicates that the sponsoring Board member, member’s family, and

member's supervisory staff do not serve as an officer, director, or play a policy role for the grantee organization.

PROJECT SUMMARY:

This is a request to authorize a grant to Elevate Community Center ("Elevate"), and resulting grant agreement, in an amount not to exceed \$70,000, to provide for legal services in the areas of domestic violence/family law and tenants' rights. The County Executive's Office will administer and manage the proposed agreement.

District 2 indicates that this organization has not previously received **Measure K** district-discretionary funding.

Elevate was founded with a goal of filling some of the existing gaps in legal services in the Bay Area—gaps created by the overwhelming need for free and low-cost legal services, together with the limited availability of legal services.

Elevate provides legal services and representation to low-income individuals and families in the San Francisco Bay Area, with a focus in the counties of San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Alameda. Elevate specializes in the areas of domestic violence/family law, criminal record clearance, landlord/tenant disputes, and other areas of civil litigation. Elevate has assisted individuals with obtaining and enforcing domestic violence restraining orders, requesting and enforcing child custody/visitation requests, challenging Notices to Quit and/or Unlawful Detainers stemming from domestic violence, addressing rental habitability issues, wrongful evictions, and more. Elevate's services include drafting petitions to the court and providing court representation, including at hearings, trials, and other proceedings such as emergency screenings and post-mediation hearings.

Over 95% of Elevate's clients are considered Extremely Low Income (below 30% of Area Median Income), and over 80% are BIPOC. Services are provided in English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Chinese. Clients have the option of meeting with Elevate staff in person at Elevate's offices, at a free legal clinic, or remotely through video platforms such as Zoom.

This district-discretionary grant will be used to fund the following:

Elevate will initiate an "Empowering Families" three-month pilot program in San Mateo County, with a goal of establishing legal services, demonstrating ability to serve unmet legal needs, and gathering data which it will use to apply for and secure longer-term grant funding.

The "Empowering Families" program will provide San Mateo County residents with increased legal representation in domestic violence/family law court proceedings, as well as increased legal services for landlord/tenant disputes such as habitability issues and wrongful evictions. Services will include drafting and enforcing requests for domestic violence restraining orders, drafting and enforcing requests for custody/visitation, drafting demand letters to address habitability issues, responding to wrongful eviction claims, and other family law/tenant rights' issues. Priority will be given to legal proceedings involving minors, as well as proceedings where the opposing party is represented by counsel. To be eligible for services, residents must make below 250% of federal poverty line and be residents of San Mateo County.

San Mateo County residents will be able to request services at any time through Elevate's website. In addition, Elevate plans to offer two drop-in legal clinics per month for San Mateo County residents, one in person and the other virtual.

Elevate's legal services will result in more equitable outcomes for families and lead to increased

household/financial stability, mitigate the risk for homelessness, and prevent separation of children from caretakers. Services will be provided in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese. Elevate will also make referrals to organizations that provide mental health support, counseling, homeless prevention services, and other agencies as appropriate.

District 2 has informed the grantee organization that this grant is one-time only, and that the grantee organization will need to find other sources of funding going forward. The grantee organization will use the **Measure K** grant to pay for the “Empowering Families” pilot program staffing needs as follows:

- Executive Director (\$6,500): The Executive Director will oversee all programs and services, correspond with community stakeholders, and enter into agreements on behalf of Elevate in order to implement services.
- Staff Attorneys (\$27,500): Staff attorneys will provide general legal services including legal advice and court representation.
- Paralegal (\$10,000): The paralegal will assist with drafting court pleadings, corresponding with opposing parties and opposing counsel, and the service and filing of legal documents under the supervision of attorney.
- Administrative Assistant (\$7,500): The administrative assistant will assist with screening clients for eligibility, collecting client documents, organizing client files, and corresponding with clients under supervision of attorney.
- Program Officer (\$10,000): The program officer will assist with outreach and promoting services, as well as tracking program outcome and client data.
- Administrative costs (\$8,500)

The project or services funded by this district-discretionary grant will be implemented or provided beginning March 26, 2024, and is estimated to be completed by July 31, 2024.

Total Measure K Request: Not to Exceed \$70,000

The release of funds will be contingent on the execution of an agreement providing for the County’s confirmation of the expenditure of funds for the purposes stated herein. The County will disburse funds to the following organization for the purposed described above:

Elevate Community Center

Sharine Xuan, J.D., Executive Director

275 Saratoga Ave. Ste. 105

Santa Clara, CA 95050

sharine@elevatecommunitycenter.org

(408) 357-9538

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Description	Target
Provide two legal clinics per month (a total of 6 clinics over three months), one in person and one virtual, to provide free legal services to San Mateo County residents.	Complete
Provide legal advice to 20 San Mateo County residents per month (a total of 60 residents during the grant period) in areas of domestic violence/family law, tenant rights, and other general civil litigation.	Complete
After providing legal advice, provide additional legal services (either limited scope or full scope legal services) to 4 San Mateo County residents per month (a total of 12 residents during the grant period) in the areas of domestic violence/family law, tenant rights, and other general civil litigation. Services can include drafting legal documents and court representation.	Complete

The County Attorney's Office has reviewed and approved the agreement and resolution as to form.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There are sufficient **Measure K** funds for this specific FY 2023-24 **Measure K** request. These funds are budgeted in the Non-Departmental Services FY 2023-24 Adopted Budget.