



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY EXECUTIVE

File #: 23-567

Board Meeting Date: 7/11/2023

Special Notice / Hearing: None

Vote Required: 4/5ths

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Michael P. Callagy, County Executive
Justin Mates, Deputy County Executive
Ken Cole, Director, Human Services Agency

Subject: **Measure K:** Approve an Appropriation Transfer Request for the Guaranteed Income Pilot Program for Transitional Age Foster Youth

RECOMMENDATION:

Measure K: Approve an Appropriation Transfer Request (ATR) transferring **Measure K** funding from Non-Departmental Services in the amount of \$732,153 for the San Mateo County Guaranteed Income Pilot Program for Transitional Age Foster Youth (Pilot Program) and receive a report on the recommendations of the Ending Poverty in California Report.

BACKGROUND:

On January 17, 2023, the Board received a presentation regarding guaranteed income projects in the county, and the Board created an ad hoc committee comprised of Supervisors Canepa and Corzo to further study the issue and return to the Board with recommendations. Staff has since been working with the committee to develop a County-operated guaranteed income pilot focusing on transitional age foster youth, as described below.

Assembly Bill (AB) 12 was enacted on January 1, 2012, allowing foster youth in California to receive extended foster care services from age 18 until 21 to better prepare foster youth for successful independent adulthood. These foster youth are known as "Non-Minor Dependents." The first few years in a young person's life following adulthood are a critical transitional period when many young people invest in their futures, and AB 12 recognizes that former foster youth face additional barriers during this time and can benefit from additional supports. Currently, all eligible San Mateo County foster youth opt in to receive extended foster care services under AB 12. Although AB 12 has improved outcomes, San Mateo County Non-Minor Dependents face unique economic challenges due to the high cost of living in the county.

The San Mateo County Guaranteed Income Pilot Program aims to bridge the gap for the Non-Minor

Dependent population, as well as former foster youth as they exit the foster care system and experience a critical transition period. The average monthly cost of living for a single adult without children in San Mateo County is \$5,704, a significant financial burden for SMC foster youth, who already face multiple challenges trying to remain in their county of residence. The Pilot aims to provide key upstream support as part of San Mateo County's trauma-informed system of care and wraparound services.

DISCUSSION:

The Pilot Program will target current and former San Mateo County foster youth aged 18-22. The Pilot is estimated to serve a total of 70 eligible individuals during the project period, including youth who turn 18 during the project period. Each participant will receive \$1,000 monthly for up to 18 months, depending on the date of enrollment. All former SMC foster youth and current Non-Minor Dependents within the age range will be eligible regardless of current residency. The target project start date is January 1, 2024, with distribution of GI Payments through June 30, 2025. An evaluation period will follow and conclude by December 30, 2025.

The Pilot Program will leverage existing programs, advisory boards, collaborative communities, and partner with community-based organizations to engage priority populations. In addition, both through the existing Independent Living Program for non-minor dependents aged 18-21 and through a separate program for youth aged 21+, all program participants will be provided services relevant to independent living, including case management, educational support, housing navigation/support, and linkage to mental/physical health services, employment services, and enrichment activities.

The Pilot Program is grounded on the idea that an additional \$1,000 in monthly income will provide greater income stability during early adulthood and, in combination with the other counseling and programmatic supports, will help our former foster youth further invest in their education, their career development, and their overall health, thereby increasing the likelihood that they can reach or get closer to the self-sufficiency standard in San Mateo County. The Pilot Program includes an evaluation that will test this idea and measure the impact on outcomes for our former foster youth. The project evaluation will include analysis and cross-comparison with local, statewide, and national outcomes for the foster youth population, including critical outcomes such as high school completion, post-secondary program enrollment, attainment of gainful employment, housing stability, and proximity to county of origin.

The Foster Youth Advisory Board and other stakeholders will be invited to engage in the program design and implementation phases of the Pilot Program to continuously share feedback and suggestions. Social Workers will host transitional conferences, and additional supportive services will be provided through the Independent Living Program (ILP) and contracted providers to all program participants.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT:

Approval of this request aligns with the County's commitment to equitable outcomes, particularly in addressing racial disparities within the public child welfare system. The Pilot Program aims to address the intersectionality between poverty and racial inequities for foster youth in a high-cost

county. By providing regular cash payments, the program seeks to create more opportunities for transitional age foster youth to remain in San Mateo County and thrive.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE:

Performance measures will be determined in development with the program evaluator during the planning period.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The San Mateo County Guaranteed Income Pilot Program for Transitional Age Foster Youth estimates a total budget of \$2,032,841 during FY 2023-25. Funding sources for the Pilot Program will include a one-time allocation of \$1,000,000 from the Wraparound Trust Fund, as approved by the Child and Youth System of Care (CYSOC) Executive Team, and a \$100,000 contribution from the Silicon Valley Community Foundation. Total personnel costs will be covered by the Human Services Agency in the amount of \$200,687. Adequate **Measure K** funding is included in FY 2023-25 Recommended Budget to support the remaining funding gap of \$732,153.

ENDING POVERTY IN CALIFORNIA

In addition to studying a guaranteed income pilot, the Board committee was also tasked with evaluating the recommendations of the 2022 report Ending Poverty in California Report: A Blueprint for a Just and Inclusive Economy (EPIC Report, available [here](https://inequality.stanford.edu/publications/reports-briefs/policy-plans-reduce-poverty-and-inequality) <<https://inequality.stanford.edu/publications/reports-briefs/policy-plans-reduce-poverty-and-inequality>>). To facilitate this analysis, staff developed the attached program summary, which lists specific County programs and actions undertaken during the most recent two fiscal years (FY 2021-23) as well as general programs and policies that correspond with and implement or address the recommendations of the EPIC Report. At the committee's request, this program summary is being shared with the full Board for informational purposes.

The program summary highlights that the County has in recent fiscal years implemented a wide range of programs and actions that address EPIC-recommended supplements to the safety net system to support overlooked populations and reduce transaction and application costs, while also making a wide range of recommended investments "upstream" of the safety net, including supports for the development of affordable housing, enhancements to childcare and early education offerings, and support for small business ownership. Many of the EPIC Report recommendations, however, cannot be implemented at the local level and require policy and legal changes at the state and federal levels to implement changes to the institutions that contribute to poverty. The program summary identifies those recommendations that fall within this category.