



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY EXECUTIVE

File #: 24-210

Board Meeting Date: 3/26/2024

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Michael P. Callagy, County Executive
Iliana Rodriguez, Assistant County Executive

Subject: Contract with Focus Strategies to Conduct an Evaluation of the Emergency Financial Assistance Programs

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution authorizing and directing the President of this Board of Supervisors to execute an agreement with Focus Strategies to conduct an evaluation of the County's Emergency Financial Assistance Program, for the term of March 26, 2024, through June 30, 2025 in an amount not to exceed \$270,000.

BACKGROUND:

The County of San Mateo's Human Services Agency (HSA) facilitates the Homeless Prevention and Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA) Program, which provides one-time financial assistance to eligible San Mateo County residents who are either experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. HSA operates the EFA Program through an agreement with Samaritan House, which, in turn, works with the County's eight (8) Core Services Agencies to provide available financial assistance tailored to help stabilize the living situations of eligible applicants.

On November 14, 2023 in response to increased applications for rental assistance due to inflation, job market instability, the end of state and federal COVID-related rental assistance programs, and other challenges associated with housing costs in San Mateo County, this Board of Supervisors approved an Appropriation Transfer Request (ATR) in the amount of \$1,500,000 from the County Executive's Office Special Projects and Grants Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Addiction Program (Homelessness) to expand the EFA Program.

DISCUSSION:

After a competitive bidding process, Focus Strategies was selected to conduct an evaluation of the EFA Program. The evaluation will include research and analysis from County and State data systems, interviews with key stakeholders, and surveys of EFA Program participants. The evaluation aims to identify whether EFA Program recipients were able to stabilize their housing situations, best

practices, areas for improvement, and recommendations to enhance the Program's effectiveness in preventing homelessness and supporting residents in need.

The term of the agreement with Focus Strategies is March 26, 2024 through June 30, 2025 and includes a maximum fiscal obligation not to exceed \$270,000.

The County Attorney has reviewed and approved as to form the agreement with Focus Strategies and resolution.

EQUITY IMPACT

Individuals and families facing homelessness often represent our most vulnerable and marginalized residents, and many suffer the daily trauma of not knowing whether they will be able to sleep in a safe environment or obtain regular meals, are highly vulnerable to violence, victimization, and adverse health outcomes, and a disproportionate number have experienced past forms of trauma such as child abuse and domestic violence. The EFA Program assists these individuals and families, and an evaluation of the Program will help ensure the County is providing them equitable and effective access, an impact that is consistent with the County's commitment to equity.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Funding for the agreement with Focus Strategies has been included in Non-Departmental Services FY 2023-24 Adopted Budget.