



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
DISTRICT 4
File #: 20-496

Board Meeting Date: 7/7/2020

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Supervisor Warren Slocum, District 4

Supervisor Don Horsley, District 3

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

RECOMMENDATION:

Measure K: Adopt a resolution:

- A) Authorizing the contribution of \$1,000,000 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
- B) Authorizing the County Manager, or his designee, to execute a grant agreement with Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County and Mission Asset Fund for the contribution of a total amount not to exceed \$1,000,000 to the San Mateo County Immigrant Relief Fund and distribution to selected recipients for a term of July 15, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

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. The Board of Supervisors (the "Board") 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.

Although the Health Officer recently issued a new order aligning the County with the Statewide Shelter-in-Place/Resilience Roadmap, the local economy will take time returning to something approximating “normal.” As the State and County begin to reopen, the number of identified COVID-19 cases continues to grow.

As of July 1, 2020, there are 3,170 confirmed cases, and 108 COVID-19 related deaths within San Mateo County, and 232,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases, and 6,083 COVID-19 related deaths, in California.

While the long-term societal and economic impacts of COVID-19 are not yet known, the immediate impacts to the local community have been substantial, as residents throughout the County are continuing to experience 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.

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 services agencies programs funded by grants from SMC Strong, some cities and other funders. However, there is a greater need than can be satisfied by the core services agencies program. There are residents who have not received any assistance in paying bills or feeding their families for as long as three and a half months.

DISCUSSION:

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. The Board of Supervisors (the "Board") ratified and extended this declaration of local health emergency, which remains in effect.

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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 services agencies programs funded by grants from SMC Strong, some cities and other funders. However, there is a greater need than can be satisfied by the core services agencies program. There are residents who have not received any assistance in paying bills or feeding their families for as long as three and a half months.

DISCUSSION:

The creation of a County financial assistance fund to support those residents who are ineligible for federal financial assistance programs due to their immigration status is critical. Upon the request of the sponsoring Supervisors, staff identified and assessed multiple options for distributing the funds. The San Mateo County Immigrant Relief Fund (the “Relief Fund”), which is being coordinated by the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County (“LASSMC”), was chosen as the preferred mechanism for distributing the funds. The Relief Fund has been seeded by a contribution of \$100,000 from the Grove Foundation, which along with other contributions, will be distributed to selected recipients in the manner set forth below.

Through a contribution to the Relief Fund, the County will provide unrestricted cash assistance for up to 1,000 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 \$1,000,000 contribution will come from unrestricted **Measure K** funds. Those who are selected to receive assistance (individuals or families who share finances) based on an assessment of demonstrated economic need due to COVID-19 will receive a

target level of assistance of \$1,000. Depending on the availability of funding, there may be a second round of assistance given to those verified applicants with a continued demonstrated need, up to a maximum of \$2,000.

The County will partner with LASSMC, which is coordinating the Relief Fund, and Mission Asset Fund (“MAF”), a nonprofit financial services organization with expertise administering emergency COVID assistance to low-income residents that is administering the Relief Fund. The County will make its \$1,000,000 contribution upfront to MAF.

MAF will identify and select eligible recipients through its web platform at <https://missionassetfund.org/immigrant-families-grant-sm/> and then distribute the financial assistance from the Relief Fund to those eligible recipients. Residents needing assistance will be pre-screened by submitting responses to a brief pre-application questionnaire on MAF’s website, confirming 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.

During this pre-screening process, MAF will prioritize potential applicants for receipt of Grant funds based on demonstrated level of need, which may include loss of income, number of dependents, illness or disability, or other particular hardships. MAF will then invite those pre-screened applicants by e-mail to complete an application online through MAF’s secure web portal, which would require (1) uploading government issued identification (even if expired or not from the U.S.); (2) verifying their 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 will be available in four languages: English, Spanish, Arabic and Chinese.

MAF will then select and approve applications accordingly. Once an application is approved for assistance, MAF will deposit funds in the applicant’s bank account or issue a paper check or pre-aid debit card to the applicant within two to five business days.

LASSMC and its network of partner organizations countywide, which provide community, immigration, and legal services to low-income immigrant residents, including numerous County core service agencies, will conduct outreach in their communities to raise awareness about the Relief Fund and encourage existing clients and new people to get pre-screened and apply on MAF’s website. Importantly, the partner organizations will help individuals access MAF’s web portal for the Relief Fund, walk them through the pre-application and application process, including helping them get an email address, which is a pre-requisite to participating in the Relief Fund, and set up a checking account, if requested.

To raise awareness and increase participation in the Relief Fund among especially vulnerable residents, the County will work with LASSMC to augment its existing network of partners with additional community organizations to do outreach referral to MAF. The County will also work LASSMC’s partner organizations to assist those residents who do not have access to WiFi or need other assistance in applying for the cash assistance being offered by the County through the Relief Fund.

One hundred percent (100%) of funds raised for the Relief Fund (and therefore, County **Measure K** funds) 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.

John Sobrato has provided a challenge grant of \$5 million to encourage philanthropists and others to contribute to the Relief Fund. As of July 2, he has raised an additional \$1 million from other philanthropists. The County's contribution will add to these private funds, together reaching thousands of the most vulnerable residents in the County.

Samaritan House and Faith in Action will also be partnering with LASSMC on the Relief Fund to provide case management for applicants to connect them with other community services.

The agreement between the County, LASSMC and MAF will include the following material terms:

- All of the \$1,000,000 in unrestricted **Measure K** funds will be wire transferred by the County upfront to MAF and not on a reimbursement basis. MAF will then distribute the funds after it has identified, pre-screened, and prioritized selected recipients.
- LASSMC and its partner organizations will conduct outreach in their communities to raise awareness about the Fund and encourage eligible individuals to apply for relief through the Fund and assist them with the pre-application and application process.
- LASSMC will execute memoranda of understanding with all the referral partners to formalize the agreements, which memoranda will provide that LASSMC's partner organizations will help individuals access MAF's web portal for the Relief Fund, guide them through the pre-application and application process, including helping them get an email address, which is a pre-requisite to participating in the Relief Fund, and set up a checking account, if requested.
- Residents needing assistance will be pre-screened by submitting responses to a brief pre-application questionnaire on MAF's website, confirming their residency in the County, household size, whether their average monthly income for household falls below the income limits set for Economic Impact Payments under the federal CARES Act, that they are ineligible for federal financial assistance (Economic Impact Payments and unemployment benefits) due to immigration status, and they have a demonstrated economic need as a result of COVID-19.
- During this pre-screening process, MAF will prioritize applicants for receipt of Grant funds based on demonstrated level of need, which may include loss of income, number of dependents, illness or disability, or other particular hardships.
- MAF will send an e-mail to those who successfully complete the pre-screening process and invite them to complete an application online through MAF's secure web portal, which would require (1) uploading government issued identification (even if expired or not from the U.S.); (2) verifying their 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).
- MAF will then select and approve applications accordingly. Once an application is approved, MAF will deposit funds in the applicant's bank account or issue a paper check or pre-aid debit

card to the applicant within two to five business days.

- Both the pre-application questionnaire and the application will be available in four languages: English, Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese.
- There will be no administrative costs charged by LASSMC or MAF associated with the County's contribution. One hundred percent (100%) of the County's contribution will be distributed to recipients in need of the financial assistance described here.
- Those who are selected to receive assistance (individuals or families who share finances) based on an assessment of demonstrated need will receive a target level of assistance of \$1,000. Depending on the availability of funding, there may be a second round of assistance given to those verified applicants with a continued demonstrated need, up to a maximum of \$2,000.
- MAF and partner organizations will report to LASSMC on invitations sent, applications completed, and number and amount(s) of payments made to County residents, and LASSMC will provide information to funders and partners (including County) on recipients, which would include location of residence (i.e. name of city or unincorporated area) and referral partner organization, if applicable.
- County funds must be distributed to eligible, selected recipients as soon as possible, but no later than December 31, 2020.

County Counsel has reviewed the resolution as to form and will review the agreement with LASSMC and MAF prior to execution.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The \$1,000,000 for this contribution will be paid for from proceeds of the **Measure K** sales tax. There is no Net County Cost associated with this action.