



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY MANAGER

File #: 22-201

Board Meeting Date: 3/22/2022

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Michael P. Callagy, County Manager
Peggy Jensen, Assistant County Manager

Subject: San Mateo County Recovery Initiative Funding for a Workforce Development Pilot Program Agreement with NOVAworks

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution authorizing the County Manager, or designee(s), to negotiate and execute an agreement with NOVAworks for a term of March 22, 2022 through October 31, 2022 in an amount not to exceed \$400,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funding to conduct the 2022 Pilot Workforce Development Program for San Mateo County residents negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

BACKGROUND:

In April 2020, the San Mateo County Recovery Initiative, which brought together over 300 representatives of local agencies, nongovernment organizations, private partners, and community residents to develop a strategic pandemic recovery plan, identified as a top recovery priority assisting workers displaced by the pandemic and those without career opportunities through workforce development programs. Recent community engagement work by the Gardner Center at Stanford University and the County's Chief Equity Officer reaffirmed that workforce development, especially in the communities most impacted by the pandemic, remains a high community priority.

In late 2020, the County contracted with NOVAworks to conduct a pilot program focused on small workforce development. The pilot program demonstrated that, at the time, displaced workers were not ready to return to work and employers were not ready to bring on additional staff. However, to prepare for the time when workers and employers were both ready, the County contracted with NOVAworks to convene workforce development providers and other community partners to develop a comprehensive approach to preparing displaced and underemployed workers for well-paying jobs. That work resulted in a plan to offer a suite of options for workforce development clients negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, ranging from resume and interviewing skills to providing tuition, childcare, and other support so clients can fully focus on learning and career development opportunities.

The County has been allocated \$148,050,000 in Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The first tranche of ARPA funds, \$74,025,000, was received by the County in May of 2021. The Board set aside \$10,000,000 of the first tranche funds for ARPA-eligible community initiatives.

On February 8, 2022, as part of the proposed allocation plan for the \$10,000,000 set aside for community initiatives, the Board approved \$400,000 for a new workforce development pilot project that incorporates the suite of services developed by NOVAworks and their community partners.

DISCUSSION:

A. Pilot Clients

For the 2022 Pilot Workforce Development Program (“2022 Workforce Pilot”), NOVAworks will provide comprehensive workforce services to 25 adult clients and 10 young adults enrolled in the NOVAworks summer youth employment program. The clients will be residents of historically underserved communities with limited access to career opportunities that have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including but not limited to North Fair Oaks, East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, Daly City and the Coastsides.

To reach potential adult clients, NOVAworks will work with community partners including the community colleges, adult schools, core services agencies, Central Labor Council, Community Equity Collaborative, REACH Coalition and Job Train. Many of these organizations, along with the libraries throughout the County, have offered space to NOVAworks for client meetings.

In addition, NOVAworks is partnering with the San Mateo Union High School District and the Department of Rehabilitation to serve 10 youth with disabilities who are graduating from high school and need to prepare to enter post-secondary education or employment. The young adults will work up to 200 hours in the summer and receive assistance with college applications.

B. Pilot Services Provided

The first step for a client under the 2022 Workforce Pilot will be a meeting with a NOVAworks career advisor. At that initial meeting, the client and advisor will discuss the client’s skills, experiences, career aspirations and all the barriers that may hinder successful job training and achievement of the client’s job search goals. Based on this information, customized job search plans will be developed for each client.

The customized plans will include career navigation training such as resume development, interview preparation and learning about leveraging professional networks. Depending on the client’s goals, the plan may also include short term training opportunities with strong records of career success, such as community colleges, adult schools, and other education and training providers. The assessment of the client’s barriers will determine the supportive assistance provided, which could include childcare, stipends of up to \$500 a month during training, tuition support and/or transportation assistance.

NOVAworks will use a range of resources to connect clients with employers. Those resources include a job board where vetted employers seek employees, direct requests from employers for

referral of employee candidates, established relationships with public and private organizations committed to hiring members of historically underserved communities, and a variety of partnerships with local high-tech and biotech programs supported by private firms and the State of California. NOVAworks will also work with SAMCEDA and local chambers of commerce to identify employers willing to hire clients. In addition, NOVAworks will engage San Mateo County employers participating in the Skillful initiative, which promotes diversity and equity through skills, not credentials-based hiring.

C. Agreement with NOVAworks

The 2022 Workforce Pilot will run for six months, from March 22, 2022 through September 30, 2022. NOVAworks will provide an interim progress report after three months and a final report at the end of the Pilot. The reports will include client demographic data, user experience data gathered through client interviews, details on services provided, and training and employment outcomes.

The performance goals for the 2022 Workforce Pilot are (a) that all 10 youth clients will have successful summer employment and be prepared to enter college or have unsubsidized employment and (b) at least 19 of the 25 adult clients are fully employed within three months of the end of the training program.

The County Manager, or designee(s), will negotiate and execute an agreement with NOVAworks for a term of March 22, 2022 through October 31, 2022 in an amount not to exceed \$400,000 of ARPA monies to fund the 2022 Workforce Pilot ("Agreement").

FISCAL IMPACT:

The allocation of \$400,000 in ARPA funds is included within the \$10,000,000 of first tranche ARPA funding that was accounted for in the FY 2021-22 budget, and approved by this Board. There is no further impact on the County General Fund associated with the negotiation and execution of the Agreement and ARPA expenditure for the 2022 Workforce Pilot. In addition, staff is seeking authorization for the County Manager, or designee, to apply state and/or federal funds, to include those appropriated by ARPA, that may be made available for all or a portion of the monies expended on the Agreement.