



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY EXECUTIVE

File #: 22-644

Board Meeting Date: 9/13/2022

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

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

Subject: Working Together to End Homelessness Innovation Grant Program

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution:

- A) Authorizing the appropriation of \$2,005,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funds for the establishment of a \$2,000,000 Working Together to End Homelessness Innovation Grant Program and \$5,000 for administration of the Program; and
- B) Authorizing and directing the County Executive, acting in consultation with the County Attorney, to negotiate and enter into an agreement with the San Mateo Credit Union Community Fund for the administration of the Working Together to End Homelessness Innovation Grant in an amount not to exceed \$5,000.

BACKGROUND:

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the County has worked hard to safely house our homeless residents, a population that has been uniquely impacted by the public health emergency and its negative economic consequences. Using a combination of State Home Key funds, County funds, and other sources, the County has purchased five hotels, adding 313 units of interim and permanent housing for unhoused residents. Another 240 units serving 260 individuals will be added when the Navigation Center-a County facility that will provide shelter and support services-opens toward the end of this year. The County has also expanded medical, social, and behavioral health services for residents living on the streets and in encampments.

But while we have made progress, more work remains. The 2022 one-day homeless count identified 1,092 unsheltered residents living throughout San Mateo County. This includes 352 residents living either on the streets or in encampments; 616 residents living in cars, vans, or RVs; 102 residents occupying Safe Parking sites; and 22 residents living in other locations such as abandoned buildings

and other locations not included in the other categories.

The County cannot end homelessness alone. Doing so requires assistance from cities, non-profits, faith communities, and our local businesses. That is why the County has held three virtual convenings in 2022 to educate community leaders about the effects of homelessness on individuals, families, and children, share progress about current efforts and strategies to address homelessness, and discuss next steps toward ending homelessness. The culmination of this community education and engagement work will be the Working Together to End Homelessness Summit on October 28, 2022, where attendees will contribute their ideas to ending homelessness through roundtable discussions and commit themselves and/or their organization joining the effort to end homelessness.

DISCUSSION:

At this stage, it is clear that bold and collaborative efforts will be needed to end homelessness in San Mateo County. Thus, staff is proposing creation of a countywide Working Together to End Homelessness Innovation Grant Program (WTEH Innovation Grant Program).

The WTEH Innovation Grant Program would support projects that pilot innovative approaches to assist our unsheltered residents engage with service providers and help them successfully transition to interim or permanent housing. Priority would be given to projects that test new approaches or approaches that are new to San Mateo County and proposals that can be implemented throughout San Mateo County. All local jurisdictions in San Mateo County and entities (i.e., community partners, non-profits, and other organizations) serving homeless residents in San Mateo County partnering with local jurisdictions would be welcome to apply, and collaborations between local jurisdictions and between local jurisdictions and other entities would be strongly encouraged.

Staff is proposing to fund the WTEH Innovation Grant Program through an allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. These ARPA funds may be used to respond to the public health emergency and its negative economic consequences, including through assistance to individuals experiencing homelessness and others negatively impacted by the pandemic. All grants funded with ARPA monies would be subject to ARPA eligibility requirements and regulations.

Details on the proposed WTEH Innovation Grant Program, including focus areas, eligibility criteria, the application process, evaluation criteria, proposed timeline, and administration of the Program are outlined in the following sections. The proposed Program has been reviewed and recommended by the WTEH Innovation Grant Program Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee), which includes County staff and community experts on homelessness.

A. Innovation Grant Focus Areas: Applicant proposals must address one of the following areas:

1. Unsheltered residents living on the streets and/or in encampments (352 residents according to the 2022 Point in Time Count):
 - a. Engaging unsheltered residents to connect them with services and interim housing;
 - b. Engaging and providing treatment and other support to unsheltered residents living on the streets or in encampments who may be reluctant to engage and who have mental health needs and/or substance use disorders so they can successfully transition to interim housing;
 - c. Ensuring encampments are properly cleared pursuant to law and not re-populated after

residents leave.

2. Vehicularly housed residents living in cars, vans, and RVs (616 residents plus 102 in Safe Parking programs, totaling 718 residents according to the 2022 Point in Time Count):
 - a. Engaging vehicularly housed residents to help transition them to safe parking programs/locations;
 - b. Effectively transitioning vehicularly housed residents to interim or permanent housing;
3. Economic Self-sufficiency: Assisting homeless and formerly homeless residents with job training, work experience, and other steps toward financial self-sufficiency.

B. Eligibility Criteria: All grantees must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Applicants must be either (i) a government jurisdiction in San Mateo County or (ii) an entity (i.e., community partner, non-profit, or other organization) serving homeless residents in San Mateo County partnering with a local government jurisdiction acting as fiscal agent for the entity;
2. The proposal must assist individuals or groups of individuals experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness in San Mateo County;
3. The proposal must coordinate with current services provided to homeless residents by the County and other providers in San Mateo County;
4. Applicants must provide a financial match or contribution to their proposed project;
5. The proposal must test an approach to ending homelessness that has not yet been implemented at scale in San Mateo County (i.e., at a level sufficient to address the scope of the homelessness issue) or is proposed for an underserved population or geographic area within San Mateo County where the service has not yet been offered;
6. Grantees will be required to use Clarity HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) to document all services provided, unless HSA determines that the type of service being provided by a specific grant is not an HMIS qualified type of service;
7. Grantees must agree to provide detailed performance metrics and participate in a “community of practice” where all grantees will share results, lessons learned, and best practices; and
8. Funded projects must be eligible for ARPA funding and grantees must agree to comply with all applicable ARPA-related reporting and audit requirements.

C. Application Process

Applications must include a one-page cover sheet and a written proposal of no more than 10 pages single spaced. The cost proposal does not count toward the page limit. Application details will be provided in FAQs, but are summarized below.

1. Cover Sheet (1 page maximum): Summary information on the project including focus area(s), proposers, geographic area to be served, project budget, and commitment to provide performance metrics and participate in a community of practice with other grantees.
2. Project Proposal
 - a. Executive Summary - Title, submitting organizations and concept to be piloted and how,

if successful, this work will contribute to ending homelessness in San Mateo County

- b. Project description - Detail on project tasks to be completed and anticipated outcomes, and responses to the questions:
 - i. How will the work advance equity?
 - ii. Why is project innovative and/or important to replicate in San Mateo County?

3. Experience and Expertise

- a. What experience does the applicant(s) have that has prepared them for this work?
- b. Organizational chart for the project staff

4. Performance Tracking and Timeline

- a. Detail the metrics used to measure project outcomes
- b. Provide a timeline for each project task to ensure completion by July 1, 2024

5. Cost Proposal

- a. Expense summary by category: Organization staff, consultants, services, supplies, other expenses
- b. Revenue plan by category: Innovation fund request, applicant match, other sources of funding.

All proposals will be initially reviewed by County staff to ensure the application responds to a focus area, includes a “match”, and meets all other eligibility criteria. Written proposals passing the initial screening will be distributed to the Advisory Committee for review, rating, and final selection of grantees. Applicants may submit more than one application, but only one per focus area.

D. Evaluation criteria

The grant application evaluation criteria will include, without limitation, the following:

1. The extent of the need for the proposed project in the target service area;
2. The experience and skills of the applicants to provide the proposed services;
3. Whether the proposal tests an innovative and/or replicable approach to ending homelessness;
4. The extent that the proposed project promotes equity;
5. Whether the budget is sufficient and appropriate for the proposed work and includes a match that reflects the scale of the project.

E. Timeline

The proposed timeline for the WTEH Innovation Grant Program is as follows:

- Detailed FAQs to be posted on the SMCendinghomlessness.org website if the program is approved by the Board;
- An informational session for potential applicants will be held via Zoom on September 22, 2022 at 2:00 pm.; and

- Grant applications will be accepted from September 14, 2022 through October 7, 2022 at 5:00 pm; and
- Grantees will be notified of awards during the last week of October 2022, with funds expected to be distributed by mid-November 2022.

F. Administration of the Program

In accordance with applicable procurement requirements under ARPA, County staff has selected SMCU Community Fund as the responsible provider to assist with administration of the WTEH Innovation Grant Program. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Board authorize the County Executive, or designee(s), to enter into an agreement with SMCU Community Fund to administer the WTEH Grant Program and authorizing the payment of administrative fees in an amount not to exceed \$2,500.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The County's establishment of a WTEH Innovation Grant Program, including the allocation of \$2,000,000 for grants and \$2,500 for administration fees, will be funded exclusively with ARPA funds to the extent available and eligible. However, to the extent appropriate, these costs may ultimately be covered by reimbursement from funds provided through other state and/or federal funds that may be made available in connection with the County's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.