



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY EXECUTIVE

File #: 23-926

Board Meeting Date: 11/14/2023

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Michael P. Callagy, County Executive
Subject: ARPA Grant for Acquisition of Mobile Hygiene Unit

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution authorizing and directing the President of the Board to execute a grant agreement with WeHOPE for a total amount not to exceed \$258,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funds to fund the acquisition of a mobile hygiene station to serve unhoused individuals in San Mateo County.

BACKGROUND:

Since its emergence in early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted public health and the economy on a global scale, in the country and in San Mateo County. The pandemic has had broad and continuing effects, impacting households, small businesses and nonprofit organizations and exacerbating disparities for vulnerable populations and communities.

To help address these issues, the County has received State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds under the federal American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA"). ARPA funds can be used, among other applications, to respond to the pandemic-related public health emergency and its negative economic impacts.

DISCUSSION:

The County has taken extensive steps over the past three years to address and respond to the pandemic and its negative economic consequences. The County has launched and funded a wide range of programs to provide financial assistance and other services to impacted households and small businesses.

The homeless population in San Mateo County has been impacted by the pandemic and its negative economic consequences, requiring emergency assistance for individuals experiencing homelessness, either individual-level assistance (e.g., rapid rehousing services) or assistance for groups of individuals, among other interventions and services.

WeHOPE is a nonprofit organization that provides services to individuals experiencing homelessness in San Mateo County. WeHOPE's Mobile Homeless Services meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness through initiatives that include access to free showers, laundry, safe parking for

vehicle dwellers, virtual medical assessments, and comprehensive case management to assist in securing permanent housing.

In connection with its Mobile Homeless Services program, WeHOPE has requested assistance to fund the acquisition of a mobile hygiene station (also known as Dignity on Wheels) that includes showers, bathrooms and laundry facilities for unhoused individuals in San Mateo County that are living in encampments, streets, or other facilities which lack hygiene equipment. The mobile hygiene station consists of a truck, custom built trailer, generator, water tank and custom vehicle wrapping in order to deliver services to those in need. The total cost for the mobile station is \$258,000.

Given the continuing need for these mobile services among the unhoused, a community in the County that has been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and its negative economic consequences, staff recommends that the County enter into a grant agreement with WeHOPE to fund the acquisition of the mobile hygiene station.

WeHOPE has agreed in connection with the grant that the unit will be dedicated to serving unhoused individuals in the County and will travel weekly to East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Redwood City, Pescadero and the Coast area to reach those in need.

The County Attorney's Office has reviewed the resolution and grant agreement as to form.

EQUITY STATEMENT

The proposed grant will advance equity in San Mateo County by funding a resource that will be used to provide support for unhoused individuals, a vulnerable and underserved community, many of whom are immigrants, women, and people of color.

There are no anticipated negative equity impacts resulting from the proposed grant.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The grant agreement with WeHOPE 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 or otherwise.