



Legislation Text

File #: 20-142, Version: 1

Approve a Mental Health Student Services Act grant application of \$4,000,000 to enhance mental health services in school settings, in collaboration with Solano County Office of Education (SCOE) and participating school districts, for a period of four years

Published Notice Required? Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing Required? Yes ☐ No ☒

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION:

The Department of Health and Social Services recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve a Mental Health Student Services Act grant application of \$4,000,000 to enhance mental health services in school settings, in collaboration with Solano County Office of Education (SCOE) and participating school districts, for a period of four years.

SUMMARY:

Solano County Health and Social Services would like to apply for the MHSSA of 2019 grant to enhance existing partnerships among Solano County Behavioral Health, Solano County Office of Education (SCOE), and participating school districts. These enhanced partnerships are expected to increase services and supports that bolster prevention and early intervention of mental illness for students, strengthen crisis intervention, aid in stigma reduction, and provide additional resources for vulnerable students. Most importantly, it is expected that the receipt of this grant will result in a collaborative approach that decreases youth suicides and suicide attempts, reduces drop-out rates, and increases overall access to mental health services and supports on school campuses and for students who may be homeschooled due to a mental health condition and/or recent hospitalization

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Grant funding may be used to supplement, but not supplant, existing financial and resource commitments. The grant application includes a section for counties to explain local matching funds that will support and/or sustain the program during the term of the grant and beyond. Existing services and supports currently funded by Mental Health Service Act (MHSA) and local education agencies will be used as match for the grant. This grant application does not impact the County General Fund. The costs associated with preparing the agenda item are nominal and absorbed by the department's FY2019/20 Adopted Budget.

DISCUSSION:

The MHSSOAC, governing body for MHSA, recognized that the effects of mental health crises are evident on school campuses and that reaching pupils in the school setting is practical as a first point of contact for mental, behavioral, and substance use disorder services for youth. The MHSSOAC is administering funds provided through California Senate Bill 75, which includes establishing mental health partnerships between County Behavioral Health Departments and educational entities. The MHSSA of 2019 is a competitive grant program established to fund these partnerships for the purpose of increasing access to mental health services in locations that are easily accessible to students and their families.

The grants awarded shall be used to provide support services that include, at a minimum, services provided on school campuses, suicide prevention services, drop-out prevention services, placement assistance and service plans for students in need of ongoing services, and outreach to high-risk youth including youth involved in the foster care system, youth who identify as LGBTQ, and youth who have been expelled or suspended from school. This grant would provide an opportunity to expand upon existing partnerships to provide mental health services in school settings, including the culturally responsive school-based wellness center initiative.

Solano County Behavioral Health, if awarded the grant, will designate the SCOE to serve as the recipient of the funds and lead agency in developing and implementing a four-year plan in partnership with participating educational partners including local school districts.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board could choose not to allow an application for the MHSSA of 2019 grant and to refuse receipt of funds from this grant if awarded. This is not recommended as the grant provides funding for expansion of a collaborative approach to prevention, early intervention, and mental health service delivery to vulnerable children and youth in Solano County schools. Additionally, not having adequate access to services addressing the needs of students can result in untreated mental illness leading to the development of more serious, disabling mental health conditions, and increased high school dropout rates that could put youth at risk for unemployment, homelessness, and increased youth suicides.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The Department is collaborating with Solano County Office of Education and multiple school districts to develop and submit a grant application which outlines collaborative mental health programming for vulnerable students in Solano County. Through the MHSA community planning process stakeholders have identified the need for increased mental health services in school settings.

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION