



Legislation Text

File #: 20-518, Version: 1

Consider approval of a contract with Touro University for up to \$1,020,000 over 3 years, for the period of August 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023, from the Community Investment Fund, Deep Investments category to increase community understanding of how to access mental health services; Consider approval of a recommendation to allocate up to \$758,333 over 3 years for the period of August 15, 2021 through June 30, 2023 from the Community Investment Fund, Deep Investments category, to A Better Way, in Response to Request for Proposal #2020-06 - Community Investment Fund Mental Health First Aid Training; and delegate authority to the County Administrator with County Counsel concurrence to sign the agreements and any future amendments which are administrative in nature and have no fiscal impact

Published Notice Required? Yes _____ No X
Public Hearing Required? Yes _____ No X

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION:

The County Administrator's Office recommends that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Consider approval of a contract with Touro University for up to \$1,020,000 over 3 years, for the period of August 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023 from the Community Investment Fund, Deep Investments category to map the mental health system of care and increase community understanding of how to access mental health services; and
2. Consider approval of a recommendation to allocate up to \$758,333 over 3 years, for the period of August 15, 2021 through June 30, 2023, from the Community Investment Fund, Deep Investments category, to A Better Way, in Response to Request for Proposal #2020-06 - Community Investment Fund Mental Health First Aid Training, and delegate authority to the County Administrator with County Counsel concurrence to sign the agreements and any future amendments which are administrative in nature and have no fiscal impact.

SUMMARY:

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors, the County Administrator's Office initiated a Human Services Needs Assessment (HSNA) to identify the greatest human services needs in the county. This effort resulted in the creation of a durable framework of desired outcomes with clearly defined indicators to support a process that directs limited county resources via a \$2 million Community Investment Fund (CIF).

The CIF is a three-pronged approach to funding which includes Legacy Programs, Deep Investments and One-Time Investments. For the Deep Investments category, strategies were identified in each of the 3 highest priorities of the HSNA: Mental Health, Housing Affordability and Homelessness. The contracts presented to the Board today address the two strategies within the Mental Health Category:

- Strategy 1: Increase community understanding of how to access mental health services, and
Strategy 2: Increase provider understanding of how to respond to residents with mental health needs.

This staff report brings forward a recommendation to contract with Touro University focusing on Strategy 1 by

mapping the mental health system of care, creating an access portal, and implementing a community engagement campaign. In addition, this brings forward a recommendation to focus on Strategy 2 by contracting with A Better Way in response to Request for Proposal (RFP) 2020-06 to provide mental health first aid training throughout Solano County. With the Board's concurrence on the recommendation resulting from the RFP, staff will begin negotiations with A Better Way in an effort to finalize a contract, which will be reviewed by County Counsel and signed by the County Administrator in accordance with the delegated authority authorized by the Board.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The costs associated with preparing this agenda item are nominal and absorbed by the department's FY2020/21 Budget. The costs associated with the two contracts are included in the Board's \$2 million Community Investment Fund for FY2020/21-FY2022/23.

DISCUSSION:

In September 2018, the County Administrator's Office recommended, and the Board of Supervisors endorsed, the development of a formal process to utilize qualitative and quantitative data to identify the highest needs in the county. The goal of the 3-step process was to create a durable framework of desired outcomes with clearly defined indicators and use the findings to:

1. Guide decision-making during the budget process toward priority outcomes
2. Leverage other county resources.

The Human Services Needs Assessment (HSNA) process was conducted by Applied Survey Research, a Bay Area research and evaluation firm, and was guided by a planning team that consisted of two Board of Supervisor members, Department Heads that engage in service delivery as part of their role and the County Administrator. The planning team reviewed extensive community data, conducted key informant interviews and considered data results from a community survey before recommending that the Board of Supervisors establish a Community Investment Fund to address the top human services needs in Solano County.

The top community needs that were identified in this process were:

Priority Need 1: Mental Health - Increase access to Solano County's mental health system of care with dual strategies of increasing community understanding of how to access mental health services and increasing provider understanding of how to respond to residents with mental health needs.

Priority Need 2: Affordable Housing - Work with cities to increase the supply of affordable housing under the community goal of "reducing homelessness."

Priority Need 3: Homelessness - Reduce homelessness with dual strategies strengthening capacity to address homelessness and increasing community and provider understanding of how to connect to available resources.

Priority Needs 4-6: Early Education, Youth Development, Safe and Stable Environments for Children - While mental health, housing, and homelessness rose to the top priorities, early education, youth development, and safe and stable environments for children were also highly ranked in the prioritization.

Community Investment Fund:

In June 2019, the Board of Supervisors approved the recommendation from the planning team to create a Community Investment Fund (CIF). The CIF is a 3-pronged approach which includes:

1. Legacy Programs-3-year commitment to sustain programs funded by the Board to serve a specific population.
2. Deep Programming-3-year commitment to address the top 3 priority needs by implementing strategies that were selected as part of an outcomes framework to evaluate progress toward the selected needs over time.
3. One-Time Investments-Smaller annual grants to address the top 6 priority needs.

For the deep investments category, your Board allocated \$1,300,000 annually divided as follows: \$600,000 for the top priority of Mental Health, \$200,000 for the second priority of Housing Affordability and \$500,000 for the third priority of Homelessness.

Within the mental health category, two specific strategies were identified as the ways to impact mental health: Strategy 1: Increasing community understanding of how to access mental health services; and Strategy 2: increasing provider understanding of how to respond to residents with mental health needs.

To address Strategy 1, staff reached out to Touro University to assist the county in this work. Touro has already begun work in this category, having taken the lead on the Drug Safe Solano project with Solano County Health & Social Services. The work of mapping the mental health system of care and helping individuals navigate the mental health system builds upon this work already started and creates operational efficiencies by utilizing an already established workgroup to expand its scope into the rest of the mental health arena. The contract with Touro University will be for \$340,000 per year for August 1, 2021-June 30, 2023, totaling \$1,020,000, and includes mapping the public and private mental health system of care across the mental health spectrum, creating a portal (web and phone based) to navigate residents to the appropriate care, and implementing a community education campaign to educate the community how to access the portal and services.

To address Strategy 2, a Request for Proposals (RFP) for approximately \$260,000 per year for 3 years was issued in mid-May to identify provider(s) to offer Mental Health First Aid Training within Solano County. Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour evidence-based training designed to assist a wide-variety of community providers in identifying mental health concerns, providing immediate support to people with mental health concerns, and connecting people to community resources.

In response to this RFP, 5 agencies attended the mandatory Proposer's conference to learn and ask questions about the funding opportunity. The proposals under this RFP were due at the end of June and all 5 of those agencies submitted Proposals. An evaluation committee consisting of individuals with expertise in mental health and human service needs of Solano County evaluated the Proposals and recommended that the Board consider funding A Better Way for \$260,000 per year for 3 years. A Better Way proposed to offer approximately 100 trainings per year, training up to 1,500 individuals each year in Mental Health First Aid. Additionally, the evaluation committee recommended that the second highest ranked proposal, Solano County Office of Education, be placed on an eligible list. Should future funding become available, this proposal was also very strong and should be considered for funding. Should the Board concur with the above recommendation, staff will negotiate a contract with A Better Way based on their Proposal.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board could choose not to approve the contract with Touro University or the recommendation to allocate up to \$758,333 from the Community Investment Fund to A Better Way in response to Request for Proposal 2020-06 - Mental Health First Aid Training; however, this is not recommended as the CIF was approved by the Board of Supervisors after being developed through a nine-month process with cross sector input to guide the board in decision making and the Board requested staff implement this CIF on its behalf.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

First 5 Solano is administering the CIF on behalf of the County Administrator's Office.

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION