



County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Board Report

File #: 23-143, Version: 1

- a. Receive a presentation on the proposed project for the Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF) opportunity offered through the California Interagency Council on Homelessness;
- b. Approve and authorize the County Administrative Office to submit an Encampment Resolution Funding grant application to assist with the housing of people living in the Pajaro River encampment; and,
- c. Authorize the Assistant County Administrative Officer, or designee, to execute all necessary documents required to be awarded the Encampment Resolution Funding allocation.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a. Receive a presentation on the proposed project for the Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF) opportunity offered through the California Interagency Council on Homelessness;
- b. Approve and authorize the County Administrative Office to submit an Encampment Resolution Funding grant application to assist with the housing of people living in the Pajaro River encampment; and,
- c. Authorize the Assistant County Administrative Officer, or designee, to execute all necessary documents required to be awarded the Encampment Resolution Funding allocation.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

Under the authority of Chapter 7 of Part 1 of Division 31 of the California Health and Safety Code (sections 50250 et seq.), the Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF) Program was established to increase collaboration between the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (CAL ICH), local jurisdictions, and continuums of care (CoC's) to accomplish the following:

- Assist local jurisdictions in ensuring the wellness and safety of people experiencing homelessness in encampments, including their immediate physical and mental wellness and safety needs arising from unsheltered homelessness and their longer-term needs addressed through a path to safe and stable housing.
- Provide encampment resolution grants to local jurisdictions and continuums of care to support innovative and replicable efforts to resolve critical encampment concerns and to support individuals to access safe and stable housing, using Housing First approaches.
- Encourage a data-informed, coordinated approach to address unsheltered homelessness at encampments by establishing, through the encampment resolution grants, effective, scalable, and replicable demonstration projects.

The 2022-2023 State budget allocated \$300 million for FY 2022-2023 (round 2) and \$400 million for FY 2023-2024 (round 3). Funding is available for use for 2 years and must be fully expended no later than June 30, 2026.

The ERF is a flexible funding opportunity, however strong applications must:

- Demonstrate cross-systems collaboration
- Leverage local resources and initiatives
- Demonstrate the capacity to implement a Housing First approach
- Create pathways to permanent housing

Eligible uses include:

- Rapid Re-Housing
- Operating Subsidies
- Street Outreach
- Services Coordination
- Systems Support
- Delivery of Permanent Housing
- Prevention and Shelter Diversion
- Interim Sheltering
- Improvements to Existing Shelters
- 5% Administrative Costs

The Pajaro River encampment continues to be a major health and safety concern and is subject to clean-ups annually to protect people living in the river and surrounding communities from the threat of flood. Homeless services in north Monterey County and south Santa Cruz County are limited and the people often return to the river once the rain season subsides.

For this reason, it is recommended that this encampment be the target focus of a round 2 funding application, released on December 1, 2022. Applications will be reviewed in three windows and awards will be announced no later than April 30, 2023, June 30, 2023, and August 30, 2023.

The Community Health Engagement (CHE) outreach team has been working with individuals in the river to understand the varying level of needs the encamped occupants are experiencing. CHE has collected a growing list of 40+ individuals interested in participating in the ERF program, should the County be funded. Occupants provided a list of services they feel would substantially impact their ability to move into stable housing, including legal/citizenship, medical, pet, and employment services. Homeless Services Staff is actively seeking service provider partnerships from both counties to include in the ERF proposal in partnership with the City of Watsonville and the County of Santa Cruz' Health & Human Services Department.

The strategy to move people into safe housing is categorized into three distinct phases: Outreach & Engage, Stabilize, and Sustain, which are outlined in the presentation (attachment A).

The encampment site restoration activities (e.g., removal of tents and structures, trash cleanup, removal of damaged and overgrown trees, pruning, working with landscape architect to design hardscape and softscape to help preserve the restored area and discourage the return of encampment residents, and native tree, shrub, and grasses planting) will be fully funded and administered by the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency (PRFMA).

The City of Watsonville and Counties of Santa Cruz and Monterey have worked together to identify a church partner interested in renting out their property to develop a micro-village of 34 non-congregate Cubes, which will be developed by Dignity Moves - a well-known and trusted entity with histories of developing similar projects utilizing State funding. The County of Santa Cruz will identify the primary service provider to operate the new navigation center in partnership with Monterey County's Homeless Services Program and the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

If funded, the County Administrative Office will enter into MOU with the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers, the County of Santa Cruz' Health & Human Services Department, the City of Watsonville, Westview

Presbyterian Church, Dignity Moves, Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency, and other community-based organizations. Monterey County Sheriff's Office will also serve as a key partner throughout the duration of the project.

FINANCING:

The total project expenses are approximately \$8 million, in which the County could earn a 5% administrative fee of approximately \$380,000. The County of Monterey will administer the grant but will hold no responsibility for the sustainability of the project after the grant term expires. Santa Cruz County agrees to assume responsibility for expenses incurred after the demonstration project ends. Both Counties are working with the Managed Care Provider to identify leverage funding to reduce the overall ask. A grant budget is in process but has not yet been finalized. The only other expenses incurred will be staff time for those assisting with contracts and processing checks.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

This initiative correlates to the Health & Human Services Strategic Initiative adopted by the Board of Supervisors by working collaboratively to address and develop a plan for ending homelessness.

Mark a check to the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives

- ☐ Economic Development
- ☐ Administration
- ☒ Health & Human Services
- ☐ Infrastructure
- ☐ Public Safety

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Attachments:

- A. Presentation on Unsheltered Homelessness
- B. Encampment Resolution Funding program NOFA