



County of Monterey

Item No.68

Board Report

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

Legistar File Number: A 24-534

December 03, 2024

Introduced: 11/5/2024

Current Status: General Government -
Consent

Version: 1

Matter Type: BoS Agreement

- a. Approve and authorize the Civil Rights Officer to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”), between the County of Monterey on behalf of the County of Monterey Civil Rights Office and the Middlebury Institute of International Studies (MIIS) for the term of three (3) years from the date of execution for the purpose of formalizing collaboration to jointly undertake initiatives that promote and support language access throughout the County; and
- b. Authorize the Civil Rights Officer to execute the necessary amendments to the agreement that do not significantly alter the scope of work.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a. Approve and authorize the Civil Rights Officer to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”), between the County of Monterey on behalf of the County of Monterey Civil Rights Office and the Middlebury Institute of International Studies (MIIS) for the term of three (3) years from the date of execution for the purpose of formalizing collaboration to jointly undertake initiatives that promote and support language access throughout the County; and
- b. Authorize the Civil Rights Officer to execute the necessary amendments to the agreement that do not significantly alter the scope of work.

SUMMARY:

As a federal contractor, the County of Monterey is required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the County’s Title VI Implementation Plan, and the Nondiscrimination Policy to provide language access to avoid discrimination based on race, color, and national origin. Further, it is essential to ensure that individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) can fully participate in programs, services, and activities provided by the County. By providing language assistance services, such as translation and interpretation, the County ensures that LEP individuals are not excluded from or denied benefits due to their inability to communicate effectively in English.

Through this MOU, MIIS and the County of Monterey Civil Rights Office seek to formalize a collaboration to jointly undertake initiatives that promote and support language access throughout the region. The first joint effort will be the development and implementation of the Mesoamerican Language Access Project (MeLAP). The primary goal of MeLAP is to improve the visibility and understanding of Indigenous communities in the County of Monterey by conducting a comprehensive

count of the population (census) and gathering in-depth data points through resident surveys to better understand the language needs of our residents.

This project will work not only to document the presence of Indigenous communities but also to analyze the specific language access challenges they face, especially since traditional language services often prioritize more widely spoken languages - such as European languages - leaving Indigenous language speakers underserved. The insights obtained through MeLAP can help the County address these disparities, ensuring that the needs of all community members are met equitably.

DISCUSSION:

The Civil Rights Office seeks a partnership with MIIS to bring their experience and knowledge in language services, interpretation, and culturally- appropriate education to support this project. MIIS's emphasis on experiential learning and community engagement as part of its academic approach, along with its experience in the development of methodologies and best practices make them the right partner to move MeLAP forward. Moreover, this partnership allows MIIS to contribute not only through academic and theoretical expertise but also with its practical capabilities in managing language-related fieldwork, conducting data collection, and analyzing linguistic data obtained in the surveys. Additionally, the Institute's commitment to intercultural competence and social change aligns with the goals of MeLAP and the Civil Rights Office Title VI Plan.

Additionally, the Civil Rights Office wants to foster long-term collaboration with community-based organizations and academic institutions to ensure that the program/project strategies and solutions implemented are community-driven and sustainable. By doing this, the Civil Rights Office aims not only to meet language access needs but also to inform future policy development and funding priorities for the County, ensuring that all communities are adequately supported in the long term.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The Civil Rights Office consulted with the Office of the County Counsel-Risk Management and Auditor-Controller's Office who have reviewed as to form, legality, and fiscal provisions, respectively.

FINANCING:

There is no financial impact on the general fund, no exchange of funds between the parties.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

Mark a check to the related Board of Supervisors' Strategic Initiatives

- X Economic Development
- X Administration
- X Health & Human Services
- X Infrastructure
- X Public Safety

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Approved by: Juan P. Rodriguez, Civil Rights Officer, x6614

Attachment:

Memorandum of Understanding between Middlebury Institute of International Studies and the County of Monterey on behalf of the Civil Rights Office

(Attachments on file with the Clerk of the Board)