



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: CEO
Department No.: 012
For Agenda Of: September 22, 2020
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
Director(s)
Contact Info: Barney Melekian, Assistant County Executive Officer
 Kelly Hubbard, Director, Office of Emergency Management

SUBJECT: **Agreement with Community Action Commission of Santa Barbara County (CAC):
2-1-1 Helpline Service for COVID-19 Community Information and Referrals**

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve and ratify the Emergency Agreement for the provision of 2-1-1 Helpline Services for COVID-19 related community information and referrals between the County and the Community Action Commission of Santa Barbara County (CAC), a local vendor, for a contract amount not to exceed \$49,029 for the period from March 16, 2020 through June 3, 2020 (Period 1), and a contract amount not to exceed \$177,989.34 for the period from August 22, 2020 through June 30, 2021 (Period 2), for a total contract amount not to exceed \$227,018.34; and
- b) Authorize the County Director of Emergency Services (DES), or a designee, until otherwise ordered by the Board, to continue utilizing the Emergency Agreement to provide 2-1-1 Helpline Services for COVID-19 response for an amount not to exceed \$227,018.34
- c) Determine that the activity is not a "Project" subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review per CEQA Guideline Section 15378(b)(5), since the activity is an organizational or administrative activity of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

This item is on the agenda in order to approve the Agreement with Community Action Commission of Santa Barbara County (CAC) for 2-1-1 Helpline Services to address the local surge in calls for information and linkage to resources resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the value of existing purchase requisitions with CAC cumulatively exceeding \$200,000, this item is before the Board for consideration.

Background:

The 2-1-1 Helpline Service is a resource connecting individuals to critical health and human services resources. These services include, but are not limited to, counseling, food assistance, domestic violence services, health care, senior services, legal assistance, and housing. The 2-1-1 Helpline Service also provides local disaster response public information to the Santa Barbara County community at large. This program operates as a resource on behalf of all County individuals 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and in over 150 languages at no cost to the caller. The Department of Social Services (DSS) maintains oversight of the current 2-1-1 Helpline Service contract.

On November 4, 2014, the Board of Supervisors approved the original Agreement with CAC and DSS for the 2-1-1 Helpline Service. CAC's administration of 2-1-1 Helpline Services includes resource database maintenance, reporting, community outreach, and subcontracting with Interface Children and Family Services – Ventura County's 2-1-1 call center – to provide 2-1-1 Helpline Services. CAC launched the 2-1-1 Helpline Service in March 2015.

The Ventura County 2-1-1 call center answers Helpline Service calls for Santa Barbara County and twenty-one other 2-1-1 Helplines throughout California. Since 2016, the 2-1-1 Helpline Service has supported various Santa Barbara County disasters, including fire- and debris flow-related evacuations. The multi-county call center model provides some flexibility to handle temporary local disaster call surges. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in surges for local information and linkage to resources, requiring additional call center resources to sustain. This Agreement is to address the local surge in calls resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Calls to 2-1-1 Helplines nationwide began surging to unprecedented levels as Stay-at-Home Orders were issued and community need for human services and supports increased. 2-1-1 call specialists field multiple calls daily for a myriad of COVID-19 related information and resource requests, including inquiries for financial assistance stemming from lost wages, the status of business and school closures, how to access testing, and guidance for those who are COVID-19 positive and/or exposed. By March 18, 2020, 2-1-1 Helplines in 31 states had a 74% increase in call volume and recorded the highest call volume in 2-1-1 history. As of April 26, 2020, cumulative requests to 2-1-1 Helplines exceeded 1 million calls, compared to 500,000 in 2019, with the most requested resources being food, housing, and utility support.

In early March, due to exceptional call volume, the 2-1-1 Helpline began providing additional support to the Santa Barbara County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to answer COVID-19 related inquiries. From March 16, 2020 through June 3, 2020, the eleven weeks covered in Period 1 of this Agreement, 5,660 COVID-19 related calls were received, 25% within the first three weeks. The calls were in addition to the 2,730 information and referral calls also received by the 2-1-1 Helpline for non-COVID-19 related calls funded by the ongoing contract with DSS. For this period, the combined total of

COVID-19 related and non-related calls and 2-way text messages were 8,390, a six-fold increase in the number of County residents who reached out to the 2-1-1 Helpline as compared to the same time period in FY 2018-2019. Without this Agreement, the 7,000 allocated calls in FY 2019-2020 contract would have been over-expended in this three-month period alone.

Governor Newsom's Stay-at-Home Order is still in place and County residents continue to experience a numerous challenges related to COVID-19. It is anticipated that residents will seek information and referrals for COVID-19 related financial and guidance information, emergency food resources, senior services, mental and emotional wellness resources, and other forms of assistance for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic and during the recovery phase.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Yes

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) provided funding directly to the Ventura County and other 2-1-1 call centers in the state for COVID-19 related calls for the months of June through August. This funding was a one-time lump sum and will not be extended by the state. To ensure ongoing COVID-19 related information and referral assistance for the community, CAC agreed to provide 2-1-1 Helpline Services beginning August 22, 2020 through June 30, 2021, representing Period 2 of this Agreement. For Period 2, this Agreement allows for suspension and reactivation of 2-1-1 Helpline Services based on the needs and progression of the COVID-19 incident, including call surges prompted by changes in Health Officer Orders, major announcements from county, state and federal officials, and the availability and distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine. EOC and Joint Information Center (JIC) personnel will periodically monitor call volume and review data provided by 2-1-1 to identify call trends. A Call Center Liaison has been designated to provide updated incident information, assist with complex questions, and address customer service and quality concerns.

The costs of the County run call center were very comparable to the cost of these 2-1-1 services. At this time, the cost of COVID-19 related community calls are understood to be reimbursable by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The County plans to pursue FEMA reimbursement for these incurred costs. CAC will submit eligible costs to the County with the appropriate documentation required for FEMA reimbursement processes. The County would be required to pay CAC for all eligible costs for which they submit appropriate documentation per this Agreement, regardless of FEMA reimbursement.

Funding for Period 1 of this Agreement was included in the CEO General Fund FY 2019-20 Budget. The recently adopted FY 2020-21 Budget includes funding to cover CEO and Office of Emergency Management (OEM) COVID-19 incident costs in FY 2020-21, including 2-1-1 Helpline Services provided during Period 2 of this Agreement. Assuming the County can recover all associated costs from FEMA (75% cost share) and California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) is not approved, the County would be responsible for 25% of the cost. If call volume for COVID-19 information and referrals remains constant and this Agreement is active from August 22, 2020 through June 30, 2021, the 25% cost share will total \$56,754.59 (this is 25% of Period 1 actual costs and Period 2 projected costs combined, or \$227,018.34). If CDAA funds are approved, the County's cost share is reduced to 6.25%. Any costs recouped through FEMA and CDAA will be directed to reimburse the CEO General Fund.

Fiscal Analysis:

<u>Funding Sources</u>	<u>Previous FY Cost:</u>	<u>Current FY Cost:</u>	<u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u>
General Fund	\$ 49,029.00	\$ 177,989.34	\$ 227,018.34
State			
Federal			
Fees			
Other:			
Total	\$ 49,029.00	\$ 177,989.34	\$ 227,018.34

Special Instructions:

Please send a copy of the executed contract to Wesley Welch and Yaneris Muñiz.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Agreement for Services of Independent Contractor with CAC

Authored by:

Wesley Welch, CEO Business Manager
Yaneris Muñiz, Emergency Manager