



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: Social Services
Department No.: 044
For Agenda Of: April 23, 2024
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Daniel Nielson, Social Services Director
Director(s) (805) 346-7101
Contact Info: Amy Krueger, Assistant Director, Adult and Children’s Services
(805) 346-8351
SUBJECT: Agreement with Santa Barbara Foundation for Digital Equity Coalition Access to Technology Program

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 authorize the Chair to execute an Agreement with Santa Barbara Foundation (local vendor) to implement the Digital Equity Coalition Access to Technology Program for a total contract amount not to exceed \$494,953 for the period of April 23, 2024 and ending September 30, 2024;
- b) Determine that the activity is not a “Project” subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review per CEQA Guideline Section 15378(b)(4), 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 Santa Barbara Foundation (SBF) to implement the Digital Equity Coalition (DEC) Access to Technology (ATT) Program for a total contract amount not to exceed \$494,953 for the period of April 24, 2024 through September 30, 2024. The ATT Program will assist aging adults and adults with disabilities with connectivity and devices to access the internet. Connecting this target population will help reduce isolation, increase connections, and enhance self-confidence.

Background:

Governor Newsom issued Executive Order (EO) N-73-20 to improve broadband speed and access in California, including improving download speeds for all Californians and to bridge the digital divide for two million Californians who lack broadband access. The EO specifies older adults as a priority population, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, as older adults are more vulnerable to COVID-19, are continuing to shelter in-place and may be experiencing reduced interactions with other people and their communities. This has led to increased risks of loneliness and isolation for older adults with potentially negative outcomes to mental and physical health. The EO is also in alignment with goal three of Governor's Newsom's Master Plan on Aging that prioritizes addressing the digital divide that directly impacts older adults.

In 2021, the Governor signed Assembly Bill 135 into law, which added Welfare & Institutions Code section 9104, which required the California Department of Aging (CDA) to create the ATT Program. The ATT Program provides funding in alignment with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Home and Community Based Services spending plan, to connect older adults and adults with disabilities to technology to help reduce isolation, increase connections, and enhance self-confidence. Grant funds appropriated for the ATT Program were made available by the CDA. The Santa Barbara County Department of Social Services (DSS) opted to participate by submitting a grant proposal and was awarded funds to implement the program.

On September 6, 2023, DSS released an Invitation to Bid (ITB) to organizations that could demonstrate the capacity to manage the ATT Program. Although DSS received inquiries regarding the ITB, no proposals were received in response to this program.

After no responses were received for the ITB, DSS moved forward with procurement by negotiation. This involved reaching out to trusted partners who had the background and resources to implement the ATT Program. Discussions were held with potential agencies including Santa Barbara Foundation (SBF), and it was decided SBF would be contracted as the project fiscal agent. SBF will work directly with DSS to administer the ATT Program. This endeavor will create a pilot program establishing the skills-based development of Digital Navigators (individuals who address the whole digital inclusion process) to assist aging adults and adults with disabilities with connectivity and devices to access the internet.

SBF is an organization that has been instrumental in strengthening the local community since 1928. This well-established organization is a strong candidate to take the helm of the ATT Program due to its relationship with the Digital Equity Coalition (DEC). The DEC is a group of elected individuals and educators working to bridge the digital divide for our community. Since 2022, SBF has served as the primary convener of the Santa Barbara County-wide Digital Equity Coalition. It has worked closely with partners across different sectors in the community in their effort to close the digital divide locally.

SBF is well positioned to leverage their knowledge, established resources, and collaborative relationships, to support the success of the ATT Program in the short period of time allotted for this project. SBF is prepared to quickly begin this project along with their established co-collaborators and participating agencies: Family Service Agency, CommUnify, Community Partners in Caring, Independent Living Resource Center, and American GI Forum. They will utilize the National Digital Inclusion Alliance framework to establish Intra-Agency Digital Navigators and an assessment-based system to determine the greatest program supplies and connectivity needs and a process to expedite the supplies to the targeted audience. In addition, SBF (in partnership with the DEC) is tracking future grant opportunities supporting broadband access and digital literacy to sustain and build on the foundation started with the ATT Program. DSS has been in communication with the CDA and despite

the short time frame for implementation, they are supportive and approve of DSS moving forward with SBF to address this highly endorsed need and concern at both the state and local level.

Performance Measure:

The following regional goals are included in the Agreement with SBF:

- Expand the use of digital devices among older adults and adults with disabilities.
- Increase broadband access and internet connectivity for older adults with disabilities, especially those who reside in underserved communities.
- Increase access to digital literacy education, training and ongoing support that is tailored to the needs of older adults and adults with disabilities.
- Build self-confidence and self-empowerment through digital literacy education and support.
- Reduce social isolation through digital connection.
- Support health and wellbeing through participation in online education and telehealth.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Yes

Fiscal Analysis:

<u>Funding Sources</u>	<u>Current FY Cost:</u>	<u>Annualized On-going Cost:</u>	<u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u>
General Fund			
State	\$ 494,953.00		
Federal			
Fees			
Other:			
Total	\$ 494,953.00	\$ -	\$ -

Narrative: This Agreement is fully funded by a grant allocation award from the CDA. Execution of this Agreement will not result in additional General Fund contributions.

Key Contract Risks:

The risk assessment worksheet has been completed and DSS has determined that SBF is a (Medium Risk) vendor. SBF is insured for General and Professional Liability.

Staffing Impacts:

<u>Legal Positions:</u>	<u>FTEs:</u>
0	0

Special Instructions:

Please scan, email and send one (1) duplicate original Agreement, and a copy of the minute order to:
 DSS Contracts Unit
 C/O Nereida Zarate
 2125 S. Centerpointe Parkway, 3rd Floor
 Santa Maria, CA 93455
 Email: nzarate@countyofsb.org

Attachments:

1. Attachment 1 – Agreement – Santa Barbara Foundation – ATT Grant

Authored by:

Amy Krueger, Assistant Director, Adult and Children's Services
Nereida Zarate, Contracts Coordinator