



December 19, 2023

Board of Supervisors  
County of Ventura  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

**Subject:** Ratification of the Ventura County Library Director's Submission of an Application for a Building Forward Grant through the California State Library for the E.P. Foster Library; Authorization of the Ventura County Library Director to Accept the Building Forward Grant Funds in the Amount of \$8,726,671, and to Sign the Grant Agreement, Certification of Compliance and Other Necessary Grant Documents for Grant Implementation Pending Approval by Auditor-Controller and County Counsel; Adoption of a Resolution Authorizing the Grant Application, Acceptance, and Execution of the Grant Funds from the State of California Budget Act of 2023 (SB 101); Approve Use of \$3,613,330 from the Library's Assigned Education Fund for the Grant Required Local Match (Recommendation No.5 Requires 4/5ths Vote).

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that your Board:

1. Ratify the Ventura County Library Director's submission of an application for a Building Forward Grant through the California State Library for the E.P. Foster Library.
2. Authorize the Ventura County Library Director to accept the Building Forward Grant funds in the amount of \$8,726,671 sign the Building Forward Grant Agreement, sign the Certification of Compliance and sign other necessary grant documents for grant implementation pending approval by Auditor-Controller and County Counsel.
3. Adoption of a Resolution (Exhibit 1) authorizing the grant application, acceptance, and execution of the grant funds from the State of California Budget Act of 2023 (SB 101).
4. Approve the use of \$3,613,330 from the Library's Assigned Education Fund for a portion of the grant required local match.
5. Authorize the Auditor-Controller to process the accounting transactions necessary to adjust the following appropriations and unanticipated revenue. (Requires 4/5ths Vote)

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INCREASE	Org 3610-3611	Intergovernmental Revenue	\$8,726,671
INCREASE	Org 3610-3611	Building and Improvements (4111)	\$8,726,671
DECREASE	Fund S060	Fund Balance Assigned Education	\$3,613,330
INCREASE	Org 3610-3611	Services and Supplies	\$3,613,330
INCREASE	Org 3610-3611	Other Financing Sources	\$750,000
INCREASE	Org 3610-3611	Services and Supplies	\$750,000
DECREASE	CEO 1060	Building and Improvements (4111)	\$750,000
INCREASE	CEO 1060	Other Financing Uses	\$750,000

**Fiscal/Mandates Impact:**

Mandatory:

No

Source of Funding:

California State Library Grant; City of Ventura; CEO Capital Projects; VCLS Assigned Education Fund

Funding Match Required:

Yes, 50% of grant award

Impact on Other Departments:

Minor impact on Assessor, Auditor-Controller, CEO and Tax Collector.

**Summary of Revenues and Costs**

	<b><u>FY2023-24</u></b>	<b><u>FY2024-25</u></b>
Revenue:	\$11,658,336	\$ 0
Costs:		
Direct	\$13,090,001	\$ 0
Indirect – Department	\$ 0	\$ 0
Indirect – County CAP	\$ 0	\$ 0
Total Costs	\$13,090,001	\$ 0
Net Costs	\$ 1,431,665	\$ 0

**Current FY 2023-24 Adopted Budget for Ventura County Library 3610**

	Adopted Budget	Adjusted Budget	Projected Budget	Estimated Savings/(Deficit)
Appropriations	\$ 12,359,158	\$ 12,810,561	\$ 12,810,561	\$ 0
Revenue	\$ 11,559,158	\$ 11,559,158	\$ 11,559,158	\$ 0
Net Cost	\$ 800,000	\$ 1,251,403	\$ 1,251,403	\$ 0

**Reason for Ratification:**

Ventura County Library System (VCLS) staff received notification of the Round Two of the

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Building Forward Grant from the State in late March 2023 with only a few weeks to submit the application by May 2023. In consultation with the County Executive Office (CEO), staff from VCLS planned to return to your Board for ratification upon notification of any grant award.

### **Background:**

In May 2023, VCLS submitted a Building Forward Library Facility Improvement grant application for the E.P. Foster Library project. This project will renovate the E.P. Foster Library with lifesaving upgrades so that it can safely and effectively provide modern-day library services. This historic building needs major work, including installation of air conditioning, plumbing and electrical upgrades, ADA/accessibility upgrades, and upgrades to meet current building and safety codes and standards. The building has no air conditioning and cannot serve as a cooling shelter during heat emergencies. Critical upgrades are required throughout the building first and foremost, while upgrading the infrastructure could also contribute to sustainability, efficiencies, and repurposed spaces to better meet modern day library needs.

### **Strategic Plan:**

This project directly supports the County of Ventura strategic goal to provide robust infrastructure, facilities, technology, and land-use policies to enable vibrant and sustainable communities.

### **Discussion:**

The E.P. Foster Library consists of two buildings totaling about 31,000 sq. ft., one built in 1921 and the other built in 1959. The older back building built in 1921 currently serves as a storage area for VCLS but was originally built to serve as the Ventura City Hall and Library. Due to the lack of a sufficient HVAC system the E.P. Foster Library cannot serve as a cooling shelter during heat wave emergencies and must close altogether due to the environment inside the building. There have been multiple flooding events in recent years due to inferior plumbing, causing risk to equipment and collections and forcing the closure of the library for repairs. As a two-story building built on a hillside, access from the adjacent parking lot is almost impossible for someone in a wheelchair or with mobility impairments. At the front of the building, ADA parking spaces were eliminated since the street has been permanently closed to vehicular traffic because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Projects to upgrade the E.P. Foster Library have been discussed for many years. In April 1999, a deferred maintenance agreement was established between the City of Ventura and the County of Ventura. At that time, the city did some minor cosmetic renovations and removed asbestos and lead paint at the cost of \$2 million. Also at that time, the city acquired the title to the building, which was previously owned by the county, and began leasing it back to the Ventura County Library for 99 years at a rate of \$1.00 annually. Around 2015, an estimate of approximately \$1.1 million was received to install a new HVAC system, but VCLS couldn't identify funding to move forward. Another estimate for HVAC installation was secured in 2019 and was estimated to be double the 2015 estimate. In 2022, a high-level assessment in partnership with the General Services Agency was done of the front 1959 building that is approximately 19,000 sq. ft. This assessment identified almost \$5 million in repair work needed. This facility is a key downtown landmark and generations of community members grew up within the stacks and love this library.

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The Friends of the Library and library users have been vocal regarding improvements that need to be made.

The Building Forward grant award requires a 50% match, or \$4,363,329 of the \$8,726,671 grant award. The funding plan for this local match anticipates and includes funds from the following sources; \$750,000 in federal funds secured for this project by the City of Ventura; \$750,000 in County American Rescue Plan Act funds previously approved by your Board on October 11, 2022 agenda item No.48; \$1,431,665 from the Library's reserves or Assigned Education Fund; and \$1,431,665 from the City of Ventura. The total project budget is estimated at \$13,090,001.

While the funding plan detailed above identifies \$1,431,665 coming from Library reserves, the recommendation before your Board today requests use of \$3,613,330 in Library reserves. This recommendation includes an additional \$2,181,665 in Library reserves as an interim placeholder for the anticipated funding from the City (\$750,000 federal funds and \$1,431,665 city commitment). Once additional agreements with the City have been finalized Library and CEO staff plan to return to your Board at a later date with recommendations to approve and accept those funds from the City which would provide the funding back to the Library. The current balance in the Library's Assigned Education Fund reserves is \$6,524,001 of which approximately \$1.4M is planned for other projects in addition to the E.P. Foster Library project.

This board letter has been reviewed by the County Executive Office, the County Counsel Office, and the Auditor-Controller's Office. If you have questions regarding this item, please call Nancy Schram at 677-7158.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Schram". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nancy" and last name "Schram" clearly distinguishable.

NANCY SCHRAM  
Library Director

**Attachments:**

Exhibit 1: Resolution – Building Forward grant – E.P. Foster Library