



COUNTY OF VENTURA HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

Melissa Livingston
Director

November 10, 2020

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

Jennie Pittman
Deputy Director
Administrative Services

Marissa Mach
Deputy Director
Adult & Family Services

Judy Webber
Deputy Director
Children & Family Services

Curtis Updike
Deputy Director
Community Services
Department

Subject: Approval of the Use of \$3.65 Million in Federal Coronavirus Relief Fund Moneys to Support the Farmworker Household Assistance Program; Authorization for the Human Services Agency Director, or Designee, to Accept Additional Grant Funding from the Ventura County Community Foundation and to Sign Related Grant Documents; Revision of the Program Design for the Farmworker Household Assistance Program to Provide for Grants in the Amount of \$1,000 per Eligible Household; and Authorization for the Auditor-Controller to Process the Necessary Budgetary Transactions. (RECOMMENDATION #4 REQUIRES 4/5THS VOTE.)

Recommendations:

1. Approve use and authorize the transfer of \$3,650,000 in federal Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) moneys for the Farmworker Household Assistance Program (FHAP).
2. Authorize the Human Services Agency (HSA) Director, or designee, to accept an additional \$150,000 in grant funding from the Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCF) in a total amount up to \$400,000 to support the FHAP and to sign any related grant agreements, subject to County Counsel and County Executive Office review and approval.
3. Revise the program design for the FHAP as approved on September 1, 2020, to provide for grants in the amount of \$1,000 per eligible household.
4. Authorize the Auditor-Controller to process the accounting transactions necessary to revise appropriations and revenue as follows (requires 4/5ths vote):

Human Services Agency-Direct Recipient Aid for Pandemics and Disasters – Division 3420

INCREASE	HSA 3420-3428	Other Charges	\$3,900,000
INCREASE	HSA 3420-3428	Intergovernmental Revenue	\$3,650,000
INCREASE	HSA 3420-3428	Miscellaneous Revenue	\$ 250,000

Fiscal/Mandates Impact:

Mandatory: No
Source of Funding: VCCF and Coronavirus Relief Fund
Funding Match: None
Impact on other Departments: None

Summary of Revenue and Total Costs:

	<u>FY2020-21</u>	<u>FY 2021-22</u>
Revenue:		
Direct	\$3,900,000	\$0
Total Revenue	\$3,900,000	\$0
Costs:		
Direct	\$3,900,000	\$0
Indirect Costs	Minimal	Minimal
Total Costs	\$3,900,000	\$0
Net County Cost	\$0	\$0

Current FY 2020-21 Budget Projection for Direct Recipient Aid for Pandemics and Disasters – BU 3428				
	Recommended Budget	Adjusted Budget	Projected Budget	Estimated Savings/(Deficit)
Appropriations	\$11,400,000	\$11,400,000	\$11,400,000	\$0
Revenue	\$11,400,000	\$11,400,000	\$11,400,000	\$0
Net Cost	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Discussion:

After assessing COVID-19 impacts, a group of agricultural employers, farmworker advocates, and community-based organizations created the Farmworker Household Assistance Fund to help support the urgent needs of the farmworker community adversely affected by the pandemic.

Farmworkers are recognized as essential workers within the food supply chain who have continued to work in large numbers throughout the pandemic, even as many have experienced reductions in hours due to decreased demand for certain crops used primarily by restaurants. Other farmworkers have needed to reduce their hours in order to care for

school-age children, and still others have incurred unexpected expenses due to the need to self-isolate. Further, many in the farmworker community are not eligible for federal assistance such as enhanced pandemic unemployment benefits and stimulus payments.

Because of this concern, the agri-business community approached the County to facilitate a financial assistance program for this vulnerable population. On September 1, 2020, your Board approved the framework and design for a new assistance program, funded by a combination of donor and public dollars, to support farmworkers struggling to maintain their households due to pandemic-related hardships. Your Board authorized HSA to accept \$250,000 in grant supported funds from VCCF, to accept \$250,000 in matching County General Fund moneys, and to begin accepting FHAP applications during an initial application period of September 1 – September 30, 2020.

As of November 5, 2020, the Farmworker Household Assistance Fund held by VCCF, 100 percent of which is designated for FHAP grants, contained \$147,700. Additionally, since that time County staff has confirmed the availability of the CRF as a funding source for this program. Because of this opportunity, staff is recommending funding all eligible applications for this program with funding from the CRF. The Department of Treasury's CRF guidance affords the opportunity to provide this type of assistance to individuals and families directly impacted by the pandemic. There are no pre-existing federal, state or local programs designed or budgeted to meet the need the FHAP program is targeted to fill. The CRF provides this unique opportunity to address this need.

We recognize the opportunity to address the needs of other individuals significantly impacted by the pandemic. We are continuing efforts to analyze and develop additional programs that will assist others in similar situations such as domestic and grounds workers employed in private homes, those in food service, retail, hospitality, child care, indoor gyms, entertainment and other service industries heavily affected by the pandemic.

Once the FHAP application period opened and outreach was conducted, need for the program among the farmworker community proved to be exceedingly high, resulting in more than 4,000 FHAP applications; VCCF now anticipates raising \$400,000 in private funding to help meet the demand. The vast majority of FHAP applicants (85%) earned below 50% of the area median income for the period January through June 2020; nearly all FHAP applicants (96%) earned below 50% of the area median income for three or more months of that six-month period. The vast majority of applications (89%) were received from farmworker households residing in Oxnard; 10% of applications were received from farmworker households residing in Santa Paula, Port Hueneme, Fillmore and Ventura. Farmworkers who speak Spanish and/or Mixteco as their primary language were heavily represented among applicants.

While all applications are currently undergoing review to ensure that eligibility criteria are met, it is anticipated that nearly all households will be determined eligible.

We request that your Board approve the use of \$3,650,000 in CRF moneys to supplement private funds. We also ask that your Board authorize the HSA Director, or designee, to

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accept an additional \$150,000 in a total amount up to \$400,000 in VCCF donations to support the FHAP. To ensure that the greatest number of eligible households in the farmworker community can be served, we request that your Board approve an FHAP assistance award amount of \$1,000 per eligible household. Finally, we request that your Board authorize the Auditor-Controller's Office to process the necessary accounting transactions detailed in recommendation #4.

These requests are consistent with County Strategic Plan Focus Area #4: Community Well-Being, Strategic Goal #2: Ensure that individuals and families are provided timely and efficient assistance to meet/sustain basic needs, and transition quickly into pathways of productivity and self-sufficiency.

The County Executive Office, the Auditor-Controller's Office and County Counsel have reviewed this letter. If you have any questions, please contact me at 805-477-5301 or Scott Powers, Senior Deputy County Executive Officer, at 805-677-8761.



Melissa Livingston
Director