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Ventura County Library

Nancy Schram, Director

September 14, 2021

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 Library Services and Technology Act Grant through the California State Library for a One-Year Mobile Career Center Pilot Project; Authorization to Accept the Library Services and Technology Act Grant Funds in the Amount of \$100,000; Authorize the Auditor-Controller to Process the Accounting Transactions Necessary to Adjust Appropriations and Unanticipated Revenue (Recommendation No. 3 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 Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grant through the California State Library for a one-year Mobile Career Center Pilot Project.
2. Authorization for the Library Director or designee to accept LSTA grant funds in the amount of \$100,000 and authorize the Library Director or designee to administer the grant, including authorization to execute necessary grant documents for grant implementation.
3. Authorize the Auditor-Controller to process the accounting transactions necessary to adjust the following appropriations and unanticipated revenue.

INCREASE Org 3610-3611 Fixed Assets – Software (4701)	\$10,000
INCREASE Org 3610-3611 Fixed Assets – Equipment (4601)	\$5,000
INCREASE Org 3610-3611 Intergovernmental Revenue	\$100,000
INCREASE Org 3610-3611 Salaries and Benefits	\$72,800
INCREASE Org 3610-3611 Services and Supplies	\$12,200

Reason for Ratification:

Library staff discovered they could apply for this LSTA grant funding for a Mobile Career Center Project too late to have time to come to your Board for approval prior to submitting

the application and then several weeks later found out the Library was awarded the grant funds. Additionally, Library staff was also waiting to find out if a CPUC grant submission had been awarded that would have supplemented this project and did not find out until recently that grant was not awarded.

Fiscal/Mandates Impact:

Mandatory: No
Source of Funding: LSTA Grant
Funding Match Required: None
Impact on Other Departments: Minor impact on Assessor, Auditor-Controller, and Tax Collector

Summary of Revenues and Costs		
	Fiscal Year 2021-22	Fiscal Year 2022-23
Revenue:	\$ 100,000	\$ 0
Costs:		
Direct	\$ 100,000	\$ 0
Indirect – Department	\$ 0	\$ 0
Indirect – County CAP	\$ 0	\$ 0
Total Costs	\$ 100,000	\$ 0
Net Costs	\$ 0	\$ 0

Current FY 2021-22 Budget Projections for Ventura County Library 3610				
	Adopted Budget	Adjusted Budget	Projected Budget	Estimated Savings/(Deficit)
Appropriations	\$12,542,079	\$12,542,079	\$12,542,079	-
Revenue	\$11,892,079	\$11,892,079	\$11,892,079	-
Net Cost	\$650,000	\$650,000	\$650,000	-

Background:

The Federal Communications Commission reported that at least “18 million people lacked access to broadband Internet at the end of 2018.” The Ventura County Library has addressed this need for access to the Internet in many ways including through publicly available computer labs in library branches, the loan of computers and Wi-Fi hotspots for remote use by members of the public, and free Wi-Fi access at all library branches. However, there is still an identified need in Ventura County to provide more access to the Internet and computers which has only been emphasized by the COVID-19 pandemic as people try to learn, work and seek jobs, government programs and health information online.

Discussion:

One of the most significant identified needs in Ventura County is to provide access to computers, the Internet, and digital literacy to people so they can apply for jobs and receive workforce and career support. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this need for technological access has grown significantly. During COVID-19, people have lost jobs and businesses. In 2020, staff at the Ventura County Library met with representatives from the Ventura County Workforce Development Board and America's Job Center of California (AJCC) to discuss a potential partnership to address these needs. Participants agreed that even before COVID-19 many low to moderate income (LMI) adults in the county did not have the ability to get to the libraries or AJCC for assistance due to lack of transportation and inflexible schedules. Digital illiteracy also served as a barrier to these services.

It was determined that bringing workforce services and computer and Internet access directly to LMI communities through an innovative Mobile Career Center would be a very effective way to reach more people with services already provided by AJCC and remove barriers to these much-needed services. This project would establish a Mobile Career Center on board the existing Ventura County Mobile Library that already regularly visits underserved, vulnerable and LMI communities throughout Ventura County. The Mobile Library already serves as a "Wi-Fi on Wheels" where people can connect their own devices to Wi-Fi inside or outside of the vehicle. But the Mobile Career Center project would add a collection of career related materials for loan on board the Mobile Library, a mobile pop-up classroom of computers for remote deployment to provide career and workforce instruction, and two part-time employees to provide instruction and coordinate the program.

Ventura County Library cards could be issued to participants in the Mobile Career Center classes so they would have access to the library's full print and digital collections, including the library's existing live online job coaching and resume writing program called Brainfuse JobNow that is offered both in Spanish and English. Personalized and local job coaching would be provided by remotely connecting adults to the Workforce Specialists trained by the local AJCC of Oxnard. Visitors would be able to connect virtually with these experts and receive individualized one-on-one help and referrals to more advanced services provided by AJCC. Project personnel would also provide a series of onsite digital literacy and career instruction classes. Many of the current services offered by and at the America's Job Centers of California location in the county would now be brought into the communities in more accessible and convenient locations.

The areas in Ventura County that generally have lower levels of education, low levels of average income, low median incomes, and low broadband adoption levels would be specifically targeted by this project, including the Upper Ojai Valley, the Santa Clara River Valley, and the Oxnard/Camarillo Plain. The mobile nature of the project means these areas can be more specifically targeted and services and access to technology can be

hyperlocal and onsite directly at specific housing developments, senior housing, farmworker worksites, food distribution program centers, and more.

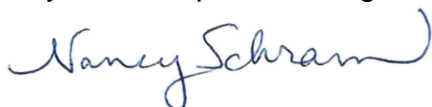
This innovative project will bring much needed access to technology directly to low-income and rural communities throughout the region and help close the Digital Divide. This project will leverage a strong collaboration between the Workforce Development Board of Ventura County, AJCC in Oxnard, and the Ventura County Library to implement a mobile option to reach more people. Bringing technology directly to underserved communities in Ventura County through a Mobile Career Center supports the county's objective to engage in countywide efforts to promote and strengthen the workforce development and demonstrates an innovative way to remove barriers to much needed technology and services. The one-year goal of this pilot project would be to establish a minimum of 408 hours of much needed access to the Internet and computers, along with career coaching and job assistance to a projected number of at least 3,100 people.

To implement a one-year pilot Mobile Career Center project, the Library submitted a grant application (Exhibit 1) and received an award letter (Exhibit 2) indicating they were awarded LSTA grant funds through the California State Library in the amount of \$100,000 to cover project costs that include the two hourly part-time Library Technician I positions (\$72,800), a storage and charging unit for laptop computers (\$5,000), a print collection of career support materials in English and Spanish for loan (\$5,000), virtual meeting software (\$10,000), workforce training consultants to train personnel (\$5,200), and marketing and outreach (\$2,000). The Library's existing hourly at-will Extra Help employee pool would be used to fill the two hourly part-time Library Technician I positions so no additional positions are being requested from your Board.

We are asking your Board for approval to accept this grant. After the one-year grant pilot program period, the project would be evaluated and specific outcomes measured, such as the number of people securing employment or increasing workforce skills, to determine the feasibility of continuing and supporting the program through the Library Budget or additional grant or other funding.

This board letter has been reviewed by the County Executive Office, the Auditor-Controller's Office and County Counsel.

If you have questions regarding this item, please contact Nancy Schram at 677-7158.



NANCY SCHRAM
Library Director

Attachments:

- Exhibit 1: LSTA Mobile Career Center Grant Application
- Exhibit 2: Grant Award Letter

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