



Board Agenda Item 54

DATE: October 31, 2017

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Delfino E. Neira, Director, Department of Social Services

SUBJECT: Retroactive Application and Agreement for Food and Nutrition Service Process and Technology Improvement Grant Funds

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Retroactively authorize the Department of Social Services' prior submittal of a grant application in the amount of \$1,987,938 to the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service for the 2017 Process and Technology Improvement Grant.**
- 2. Retroactively approve and authorize the Department of Social Services Director to execute Federal form FNS-529, Grant/Cooperative Agreement, with the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service for Process and Technology Improvement Grant funding, effective September 29, 2017 through September 30, 2020 (\$900,000).**

Approval of the recommended actions will authorize the retroactive submission of a competitive grant application to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) for Process and Technology Improvement Grant (PTIG) funding. The funding will allow the Department to make technology enhancements to improve the CalFresh client experience. FNS published the request for applications for Federal Fiscal Year 2017-18 on April 18, 2017. To meet the grant application deadline of June 19, 2017, the Department submitted the application on June 16, 2017, contingent upon your Board's approval. FNS sent approval of the funding on September 20, 2017 with a requirement for signature prior to September 29, 2017 to ensure the timely encumbrment of Federal funds.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Your Board could instruct the Department to withdraw their application for Federal grant funds. The Department would then need to identify alternative funding to implement planned technology enhancements.

RETROACTIVE AGREEMENT:

The second recommended action is retroactive to September 29, 2017 at the request of FNS.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in net County cost associated with the recommended actions. The authorized grant amount (\$900,000) will be used to offset existing employee salaries and benefits cost for labor associated with making the technology improvements and complying with grant reporting requirements. Sufficient appropriations and estimated revenues are included in the Department's Org 5610 FY 2017-18 Recommended Budget and will be included in future budget requests.

DISCUSSION:

On April 18, 2017, the USDA FNS released a Request for Applications for the Fiscal Year 2017 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Process and Technology Improvement Grants (PTIG). Up to \$5 million in grant funding was available to government entities, community-based organizations, private non-profits, public health organizations, and educational entities, with an anticipated 6 to 11 awards being made. FNS priorities for the 2017 grant cycle were (1) modernization and innovation of office operations, (2) improved customer service, and (3) increased efficiencies in case management. The proposal from the Department addressed all three priority areas.

The Department of Social Services identified the grant opportunity in May and began writing a proposal on May 15, 2017 in advance of the June 19, 2017 deadline. The Department's proposal requested \$1,987,938 to fund the CalFresh portion of a project estimated to require approximately \$5.5 million dollars. As the planned IT enhancements will benefit all clients, the requested grant funds reflected costs of the enhancements being shared proportionally across all Department programs. CalFresh efforts represent 38.4% of electronic data processing costs and 23.7% of all other generic operational costs.

The Department was ultimately awarded \$900,000 on September 20, 2017 and will make modest reductions to the scope of activities to fit the reduced budget. FNS required the funding be encumbered before the end of the then-current Federal Fiscal Year (September 30, 2017). As such, the Department was obligated to return a signed FNS-529 form prior to receiving your Board's approval - with the understanding by FNS that the agreement would be retroactively effective upon your Board's approval.

The focus of staff activity under the grant will be developing computer systems, including: a secure web-portal, an interactive voice response telephone system, and a consolidated administrative interface for multiple enterprise software applications. As a requirement for acceptance of funding, the Department is obligated to provide FNS with quarterly written progress updates.

OTHER REVIEWING AGENCIES:

As required by the grant application, the Department's proposal was provided to the California Department of Social Services CalFresh Branch and the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Grant Agreement with USDA Food and Nutrition Service

CAO ANALYST:

Ronald Alexander