



Board Agenda Item 2.1

DATE: May 12, 2020

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Vice-Chairman Brandau and Supervisor Pacheco

SUBJECT: Authorizing funding from Federal CARES Act for a small business grant program

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Make a finding that it is in the best interest of the County to suspend the competitive bidding process consistent with Administrative Policy No. 34 for unusual or extraordinary circumstances given time constraints resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- 2. Authorize funding for the Fresno County “Helping Underserved Businesses” (HUB) Grant Program using Federal CARES Act funding in an amount to be determined by your Board up to \$5 million.**
- 3. Authorize CAO to enter into agreements with Access Plus Capital and Fresno County Economic Development Corporation for the administration of the Fresno County HUB grant program for up to \$5 million.**

Approval of the recommended action will allow the County of Fresno to spend up to \$5 million of its Federal CARES Act allocation on the Fresno County HUB Grant Program, creating a grant program for small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The County Administrative Officer would be authorized to enter into any necessary agreements with Access Plus Capital and Fresno County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) for the administration of the grant program.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

The Board of Supervisors could choose not to approve this action and instead use the money for another program eligible under the federal CARES Act legislation.

SUSPENSION OF COMPETITION/SOLE SOURCE CONTRACT:

It is requested that the County waive the competitive bidding process under Administrative Policy No. 34 under “unusual or extraordinary circumstances” exception, as time is of the essence to deliver the Federal CARES Act funding to the underserved businesses via the Fresno County Grant Program to help these businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic. EDC and Access Plus Capital are suited, equipped, and authorized to quickly perform the tasks and activities for Fresno County as provided above. The Internal Services Department - Purchasing concurs with the Department's request to suspend the competitive bidding process.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. All funding for this program will be

paid for through the County of Fresno's approximately \$82 million in CARES Act funding. County of Fresno business owners can file an application for eligibility for up to \$5,000 in grant funding to assist in their return to operation costs as the economy reopens.

DISCUSSION:

On April 22, 2020 Fresno County received approximately \$82,000,000 from the Federal CARES Act, whose funds are authorized to reimburse a broad range of expenses related to COVID-19 response including expenditures related to the provision of grants to small businesses to reimburse the costs of business interruption caused by required closures.

In participation with the Fresno County EDC, the Fresno County "Helping Underserved Businesses" Grant Program is proposed to provide small grant awards to local small businesses who have been impacted by COVID-19 and related Shelter-In-Place orders. Under the program, businesses could apply for up to \$5,000 to support their business to pay employee salaries, rent, utilities or essential supplies.

The program would be administered by Access Plus Capital, which has the unique experience in assisting businesses with similar programs. Applicants would be required to meet certain qualifications and obligations in order to qualify. Fresno County EDC and 2-1-1 will help promote the program and assist businesses with their applications. The total grant pool will be divided equally between the five Supervisorial Districts. After a 14-day application window, grants would be awarded through an impartial lottery system.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

HUB Program Guidelines and Application
Suspension of Competition

CAO ANALYST:

Ron Alexander