

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
TUESDAY, MARCH 03, 2026**

MINUTE ORDER NO. 5

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZE ACCEPTANCE OF LABASPIRE PUBLIC HEALTH EQUITY AND READINESS OPPORTUNITY INITIATIVE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM FUNDING (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

On July 18, 2023 (3), the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) authorized the acceptance of the first LabAspire Public Health Equity and Readiness Opportunity Initiative Fellowship Program (LabAspire) Funding. Subsequently, on April 30, 2024 (8), the Board authorized the acceptance of additional LabAspire funding. On August 15, 2025, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) notified the County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency, Public Health Services, Public Health Laboratory (PHL) that it would receive an additional \$345,395 from the LabAspire Fellowship Award and \$678,246 from the Public Health Microbiologist (PHM) Training Award. These awards will continue to support workforce development pathways for the PHL and support its critical role in protecting the health of county residents and visitors. PHLs are directed by highly qualified laboratory directors that are board certified and hold a doctoral degree. Over the last several decades, the number of qualified laboratory directors has declined due to requirements, retirements, and attrition to the private sector. The LabAspire Fellowship Program award supports efforts to increase the number of qualified laboratory directors to support succession planning efforts in California. Similarly, salary support provided by the Public Health Microbiologist Training Award is intended to help train more PHMs to address the shortage of licensed PHMs in California.

Today's action requests the Board approve and authorize acceptance of approximately \$345,395 in funding for the period of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2027, to support education and training for LabAspire Fellows; \$678,246 for the period of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2027 to support education and training for PHM Trainees; and to authorize the execution of all required grant documents, upon receipt, including any annual extension, amendments or revisions that do not materially impact or alter the services or funding level and apply for additional funding opportunities, if available, to support the continuing education and training of the PHL workforce.

Today's action supports the County vision of a just, sustainable, and resilient future for all, specifically those communities and populations in San Diego County that have been historically left behind, as well as our ongoing commitment to the regional *Live Well San Diego* vision of healthy, safe, and thriving communities. This will be accomplished by ensuring the County will continue to support workforce education and training to increase the number of qualified individuals for essential positions of leadership and ensure our local health department continues to ably improve the health and well-being of county residents.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. Waive Board Policy B-29, Fees, Grants, Revenue Contracts - Department Responsibility for Cost Recovery, which requires prior approval of grant applications and full-cost recovery of grants.

2. Authorize the acceptance of \$1,023,641 from the California Department of Public Health, Center for Laboratory Sciences for the Public Health Equity and Readiness Opportunity LabAspire Fellowship Program, for the period of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2027, for laboratory workforce training, and authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to execute all required documents, upon receipt, including any annual extensions, amendments, and/or revisions thereto that do not materially impact or alter the services or funding level.
3. Authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to apply for additional funding opportunity announcements, if available, to support the continuing education and training of lab personnel.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

San Diego County has one of the busiest border crossings in the United States and is home to a diverse population including military and tribal communities. Reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have highlighted disparities among populations impacted by diseases such as HIV, viral Hepatitis, Sexually Transmitted Infection, tuberculosis, and COVID-19. Disparities in ethnicity have shown to be linked to behavioral risk factors, environmental exposures, social determinants of health, and access to accurate and timely testing. The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Public Health Laboratory works with other partners and stakeholders to analyze clinical and environmental samples to allow continued monitoring of health disparities and inequities across the county. By continuing to apply for and receive funding from sources such as the Public Health Equity and Readiness Opportunity LabAspire grant, the County PHL can offer additional education and workforce training activities to PHL staff to increase skills in testing the large variety of viruses, bacteria, and pathogens more likely to affect the most vulnerable communities in San Diego County.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Today's proposed action supports the County of San Diego (County) Sustainability Goal #4 to protect the health and well-being of everyone in the region. This will be accomplished by investing available funding in workforce training for key staff in the County Health and Human Services Agency, Public Health Services, Public Health Laboratory to help them develop enhanced leadership capabilities and overall laboratory function management including testing and identification of emerging pathogens. This will improve the overall health of communities and reduce the demand for associated care services. Furthermore, investing in workforce training will increase the number of qualified individuals for positions of leadership as laboratory directors or assistant laboratory directors, ensure continuity of operations, and help avoid gaps in services, especially during outbreaks and emergencies.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-27 Operational Plan in the Health and Human Services Agency. If approved, this request will result in costs of \$347,567 and revenue of \$340,049 in FY 2025-26 and costs of \$698,815 and revenue of \$683,592 in FY 2026-27. The funding sources are the Public Health Equity and Readiness Opportunity LabAspire Fellowship Program award and Public Health Microbiologist Training award from the California Department of Public Health. A waiver of Board Policy B-29 is requested because the funding does not offset all costs. These unrecovered costs are estimated to be \$7,518 for FY 2025-26, and \$15,223 for FY 2026-27, for a total of \$22,741 through FY 2026-27. The funding source for these costs will be existing Health Realignment. The public benefit for providing these services far outweighs the costs. There will be no change in net General Fund costs and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ACTION:

ON MOTION of Supervisor Montgomery Steppe, seconded by Supervisor Aguirre, the Board of Supervisors took action as recommended, on Consent.

AYES: Aguirre, Anderson, Lawson-Remer, Montgomery Steppe, Desmond

State of California)
County of San Diego) §

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



Signed
by Andrew Potter