



NORA VARGAS
CHAIRWOMAN
SUPERVISOR, FIRST DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA ITEM

DATE: **October 8, 2024**

17

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR THE MIGRANT TRANSITION DAY CENTER AND A-72 WAIVER (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

The County of San Diego is a welcoming county to asylum-seeking migrants and refugees fleeing persecution in their home countries. Over the past seven years, the United States–Mexico border has seen increases in asylum seeking migrants from humanitarian crises around the globe. Federal law allows people from other countries to seek asylum in the United States if they fear persecution at home.

San Diego is home to diverse communities, including significant populations of Somali, Iraqi, and Vietnamese refugees. Oftentimes, San Diego is simply a waypoint for migrants on a longer journey into other areas of the United States. Recently, our region has been impacted by the humanitarian migrant crisis at our international border. As a County we have been addressing the increase in street releases by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (“CBP”) by, among other things, working together with local community-based organizations (“CBOs”) to ensure asylum seekers reach their destination.

On February 6, 2024 (11), the Board of Supervisors directed the Interim Chief Administrative Officer (ICAO) to work with the region’s fiscal agent for the federal Shelter and Services Program (SSP), and if needed, the federal government, to return to the Board within 30 days with options to maximize the use of this funding stream to meet regional needs, including mitigating street releases. Additionally, staff was directed to develop a concept paper and advocacy plan for long-term, state and federally funded migrant transfer sites and respite shelters operated by local community-based organizations, supplemented by philanthropic and private sector funds.

In response to this direction, on February 27, 2024 (13), staff returned to the Board with a report titled "Concept Paper and Advocacy Plan for a Long-Term Migrant Transfer Site and Respite

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Shelter." The Board authorized the acceptance of the report and directed the CAO to update the Concept Paper as needed. Additionally, the Board added support for a Long-Term Migrant Transfer Site and Respite Shelter to the County's 2024 Legislative Program and authorized the CAO to apply for any grant funds that provide advance funding for migrant sheltering and services.

On April 30, 2024 (34), the Board directed the Interim CAO to begin implementing the vision for a long-term migrant transfer site and respite shelter, as outlined in the Board's approved Concept Paper. Staff returned on May 21, 2024, (27), when the Board authorized the acceptance of FY 2024 FEMA Shelter and Services Program-A (SSP-A) grant funding and authorized the Department of Purchasing and Contracting to issue a competitive solicitation for a Migrant Transition Day Center. This item is being late docketed due to the time-sensitivity of the federal grant-funded procurement process. The direction on community engagement is necessary to specify the Board's intent on the provision of migrant services in a timely and collaborative manner.

Today's actions direct the CAO or designee to engage with the other regional SSP funding recipients and local CBOs to coordinate services to assist migrants under the SSP grant and report back to the Board on the status of this engagement 60 days after the conclusion of the procurement process.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)
CHAIRWOMAN NORA VARGAS**

1. Waive Board Policy A-72 Agenda and Related Process, Section 2.k.ii, which establishes required timelines for review when preparing a Board Letter.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer, after the conclusion of the procurement process for Migrant Transition Day Center, to conduct engagement with the other regional recipients of SSP funding and other local community-based organizations in alignment with contract requirements.
3. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to report back to the Board within 60 days after the conclusion of the procurement process, with an update on community engagement in the operation of the Migrant Transition Day Center.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

All San Diego residents deserve the opportunity to live in a dignified manner in communities that provide them a safe and supportive environment. The County and its partner organizations can assist in this effort by supporting the organizations on the ground that are helping asylum seeking migrants arriving in our region with supportive services that will meet the humanitarian and social needs of this population.

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SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Through these collaborative efforts between the County and the local community-based organizations that have the expertise and ability to assist asylum seeking migrants, and identifying funding opportunities, we can ensure our region has the necessary resources to assist this population during a humanitarian crisis. The recommended actions would allow the County to optimize resource utilization by streamlining the effectiveness of our response efforts, ensuring the continuous availability of critical services for affected communities. This approach will enhance our ability to efficiently coordinate resources and maintain the sustainability of essential programs and support services.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no fiscal impacts associated with these recommendations at this time. There will be no change in General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

San Diego county is a binational, multilingual, and multicultural region, and immigrants and refugees are an integral part of the fabric of our community. The immigrant and refugee community are a huge part of the economic engine that keeps the economy strong and brings rich cultural diversity to the region. Although immigration policy and enforcement are a responsibility of our federal government, the County, State, and partner agencies have continued to welcome an increasing number of asylum-seeking migrants into our region, a pattern that will continue given our location as a permanent border community.

In September of 2023, street releases of migrants were occurring at transit stops in our communities as the capacity at the shelters had been reached. In our commitment to provide support during this humanitarian crisis, on October 10, 2023 (14), the Board approved reallocating \$3.0 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to make these funds available to support our local partners in their work with asylum seeking migrants and mitigate street releases. This action improved the ability to manage asylum seeking migrant relocations efficiently. These funds were designated to provide essential services to individuals processed by Customs and Border Protection (CBP), such as translation assistance, geographic information, transportation services, access to equipment and Wi-Fi to contact U.S. sponsors, temporary overnight shelter if needed, and other services to facilitate their onward travel to their destination in the U.S. This assistance enabled asylum seeking migrants entering the United States to reunite with their U.S. sponsors. On December 5, 2023 (30) the Board approved an additional \$3.0 million. From September of

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2023 through January of 2024, approximately 80,000 individuals were supported by these efforts, with over 99% leaving San Diego to make their way to their destination within the U.S.

On February 6, 2024 (11), the Board of Supervisors directed the Interim Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to work with the region's fiscal agent for the federal Shelter and Services Program (SSP), and if needed, the federal government, to return to the Board within 30 days with options to maximize the use of this funding stream to meet regional needs, including mitigating street releases. Additionally, staff was directed to develop a concept paper and advocacy plan for long-term, state and federally funded migrant transfer sites and respite shelters operated by local community-based organizations, supplemented by philanthropic and private sector funds.

In response to this direction, on February 27, 2024 (13), staff returned to the Board with a report titled "Concept Paper and Advocacy Plan for a Long-Term Migrant Transfer Site and Respite Shelter." The Board authorized the acceptance of the report and directed the CAO to update the Concept Paper as needed. Additionally, the Board added support for a Long-Term Migrant Transfer Site and Respite Shelter to the County's 2024 Legislative Program and authorized the CAO to apply for any grant funds that provide advance funding for migrant sheltering and services.

On April 30, 2024 (34), the Board directed staff to begin implementing the vision for a long-term migrant transfer site and respite shelter, as outlined in the Board's approved Concept Paper. Staff was also instructed to return on May 21, 2024, with a request to appropriate General Fund Reserve funds, pending availability and necessity, and to apply for grant funds for migrant sheltering services without requiring upfront funding. These actions aimed to ensure the swift implementation of the Board's vision to provide a humane resource for migrants passing through the San Diego region.

On May 21, 2024, (27) the Board authorized acceptance of FY 2024 FEMA Shelter and Services Program-A (SSP-A) grant funding, authorized the Department of Purchasing and Contracting to issue a competitive solicitation for a Migrant Transition Day Center, and waive Board Policy B-29. The procurement was informed by an Industry Day that was held on May 7, 2024, and attended by over 40 individuals and representatives from 23 different organizations. Input from attendees, in addition to eight organizations who submitted via email and BuyNet, included recommendations for operationalizing a trauma-informed and culturally and linguistically responsive Migrant Transition Day Center. Insights shared focused on leveraging resources, avoiding duplication, and leading practices for providing essential services to migrants while prioritizing onward travel. Below is a summary of input received:

- 1) Provide multi-lingual, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive services by:
 - Ensuring essential services are provided in a culturally responsive and trauma-informed way (i.e., providing food that meets the dietary needs of diverse group of migrants); and

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- Providing equitable access to information for migrants in their native language to avoid delays in facilitating onward travel.
- 2) Create a sustainable model that builds upon existing infrastructure and provides essential services for migrants by:
- Leveraging non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who have the expertise to operate migrant shelters and those who have experience serving asylum seekers and other immigration populations through a trauma informed lens;
 - Ensuring hygiene supplies, food, clothing, and other necessities as needed are available for onward travel and leveraging resources for migrants, like legal, health and mental health services; and
 - Communicating, collaborating, and coordinating with existing shelter infrastructure and service providers, including Federal, State, and local government agencies, such as the Department of Homeland Security and Customs and Border Patrol, Airport Authority, Transportation Security Administration, Metropolitan Transit System, NGOs, and philanthropic organizations, for a coordinated regional response and to ensure vulnerable populations can be referred and sheltered as needed and not duplicate services.
- 3) Prioritize onward travel in service delivery model by:
- Ensuring an efficient and short intake process, to maximize time to coordinate onward travel and reduce unnecessary resource expenditures when possible;
 - Prioritizing onward travel and movement to destination, limiting hotels and motels for vulnerable populations, and connecting those that may need to stay longer to local NGOs or churches that can assist to meet a temporary need;
 - Triaging transportation to travel hubs (centralized location), including airport, train, and bus stations; and
 - Placing resources at travel hubs, including airports, to assist with travel and navigation to final destination (e.g., staff, phones, Wi-Fi, packed meals).

In response to the Board direction, the County issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) 967 for the Migrant Transition Day Center. Since the initiation of the procurement began, another round of Federal SSP funding was also awarded to local CBOs. In order to ensure the maximum benefit to our region, it is essential that we coordinate with the other local recipients of these federal funds as well as community-based organizations providing services that support this work.

Today's actions direct the CAO or designee to engage with the other regional SSP funding recipients and local CBOs to coordinate services to assist migrants under the SSP grant and report back to the Board on the status of this engagement 60 days after the conclusion of the procurement process.

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed actions support the Community (Partnership and Safety) and Sustainability (Economy) Initiatives in the County of San Diego 2024-2029 Strategic Plan by working with regional partners to implement a Migrant Transition Day Center to support migrants released in San Diego County.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nora E. Vargas".

NORA VARGAS
Supervisor, First District

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A