



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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First District

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Second District

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Third District

MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

DATE: December 10, 2024

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TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

AUTHORIZE AGREEMENT FOR MIGRANT SUPPORT SERVICES AND THE ABILITY TO UNDERTAKE STEPS TO EXPEND FUNDS RELATED TO FEMA SHELTER AND SERVICES PROGRAM (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

On November 4, 2024, the County of San Diego (County), Health and Human Services Agency, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) was awarded a funding allocation from the California Department of Social Services, Office of Equity (CDSS OOE) through California Senate Bill 109, to supplement migrant support services. In order to enhance the work already being delivered by organizations who provide services to this population, OIRA is seeking authorization to enter into an agreement with Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego (CCDSD), who will collaborate with other non-governmental organizations currently engaged in delivering services to asylum seeking migrants and utilize this funding for onward travel and support services to assist them in reaching their final destination. Today's action is aligned with previous Board direction on February 6, 2024 (11), February 27, 2024 (13), April 30, 2024 (34), and May 21, 2024 (27) to provide services to support this population. This action continues to support asylum-seeking migrants with a specific focus on supporting their onward travel in the most immediate way possible to assist them in reaching their final destination.

Today's action requests the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) authorize an agreement with CCDSD for onward travel and support services to asylum seeking migrants. Additionally, today's action further advances the County vision of a just, sustainable, and resilient future for all, with a special focus on communities and populations in San Diego County that have been historically under-resourced, particularly the immigrant and refugee communities. This aligns with our ongoing commitment to the regional *Live Well San Diego* vision of healthy, safe, and thriving communities by supporting programs that remove barriers to employment and resources, thereby supporting regional economic inclusion and equity.

This requested item must be placed on the December 10th agenda to expeditiously authorize an agreement with CCDSD to get available and timely resources out into the community swiftly to address the anticipated surge in asylum-seeking migrants in December and increased travel costs associated with onward travel over the holiday season.

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RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, subject to successful negotiations, to execute a grant agreement of up to \$2,000,000 with Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego, and to amend the agreement as necessary, to provide onward travel and support services to asylum seeking migrants released in San Diego County by the Department of Homeland Security.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

San Diego is a thriving binational region, home to the San Ysidro Port of Entry and the largest land border crossing in the western hemisphere, migrants seeking asylum are coming to the United States in search of a better life for themselves and their families. The number of migrants released from the Department of Homeland Security into San Diego County has fluctuated over the years with a peak in 2024 averaging about 550 migrants per day. At that time, the County of San Diego (County) implemented a humanitarian response to assist those migrants with supportive services with the goal of onward travel and to prevent street releases. The County can continue to support this effort by funding organizations that provide migrant support services, including onward travel assistance, for asylum-seeking migrants arriving in our region.

The County Health and Human Services Agency, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs solicited input from various non-governmental organizations who have been providing critical aid and services to migrants in the region, on how to best capitalize on funding allocated to the County. This collaborative approach highlights the County’s commitment to equity by directly engaging the community to address the challenges faced by migrants passing through San Diego County, many of whom are fleeing violence, political persecution, and trauma. Community feedback informed the development of funding recommendations, enabling enhanced support to meet the evolving needs of migrants and assist them in reaching their final destinations.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Today’s action supports the County of San Diego (County) Sustainability Goal #1 of engaging the community in meaningful ways, Sustainability Goal #2 of providing just and equitable access to services and resources, and Sustainability Goal #4 of protecting the health and well-being of those in the region. The County Health and Human Services Agency, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, involves diverse populations in service planning and implementation to ensure that programs are inclusive and responsive to their unique needs. Today’s action would also support an initiative to assist asylum-seeking migrants released from the Department of Homeland Security with onward travel and resources to support a path to self-sufficiency, reducing risks of homelessness. This action will foster community resilience and equity across the region and support organizations already working with this population.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-26 Operational Plan for the Health and Human Services Agency (HHS). If approved, this request will result in one-time costs and revenue of \$2,000,000 in FY 2024-25 which will be absorbed within the existing appropriations in HHS. The funding source is a one-time funding allocation from the California Department of

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Social Services, Office of Equity. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The San Diego region has experienced a significant number of migrant and asylum seeker arrivals as they continue onto their final destination. At any given time, there have been 300-600 asylum-seeking migrants released daily in San Diego County from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Following San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) approval on May 21, 2024 (27), the County of San Diego (County) issued a procurement for a Migrant Transition Day Center (MTDC), funded by the FEMA Shelter and Services Program (SSP). The MTDC aimed to provide trauma-informed and culturally responsive support services to asylum seekers released from DHS custody, assisting in preventing street releases and coordinating onward travel.

Despite best faith efforts and negotiations with two offerors, the County procurement for the MTDC did not result in an executed contract. Given the uncertainty of the SSP funding at this time, the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) will be working with Office of Economic Development and Governmental Affairs and may return to the Board in early 2025, seeking further direction for those funds, if still available.

In addition, a community engagement session was held on December 4, 2024, as directed by the Board on October 8, 2024 (17), to provide updates and gather feedback from other regional recipients of SSP funding and local community-based organizations on this effort. A total of 54 participants representing 32 organizations attended the community engagement session. Organizations spanned across non-governmental organizations (NGOs), higher education, faith-based, and State government. Participants emphasized the importance of building strong partnerships and engaging partners of all scales across sectors to leverage collective knowledge, complement resources, and maximize impact.

California Senate Bill 109

On July 24, 2024, the California Department of Social Services, Office of Equity (CDSS OOE) notified the County of a \$2.0 million funding allocation through California Senate Bill 109 to supplement migrant support services, with the official allocation being received on November 4, 2024. In order to enhance the work already being delivered by organizations who provide services to this population, OIRA is seeking authorization for the County to enter into an agreement with Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego (CCDSD), who will convene and collaborate with other NGOs currently engaged in providing services to asylum-seeking migrants who are released by the DHS and utilize this funding for onward travel.

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Feedback received during the Industry Day on May 7, 2024, which focused on supportive services for asylum-seeking migrants released by DHS into San Diego, highlighted recommendations that align with CCDSO's existing services, with onward travel identified as a top priority. The feedback received from over 40 individuals and representatives from 23 different organizations included recommendations on utilizing existing infrastructure and NGOs who have the expertise in serving asylum seekers, to provide multi-lingual, trauma-informed and culturally responsive services prioritizing onward travel.

As one of the largest and most experienced NGOs in the San Diego region working with immigrants and refugees, including serving as one of the four Refugee Resettlement Agencies in San Diego County, CCDSO is uniquely positioned to convene, collaborate and distribute these State funds, utilizing their existing Federal and State immigrant and refugee transition support services, onward travel programs and strong partnerships with other local NGOs who support immigrants and refugees. CCDSO's deep understanding of migrants' unique needs and their commitment to addressing these challenges make them a trusted leader in providing essential support to vulnerable populations.

If approved by the Board, CCDSO will convene a meeting with other local NGOs and establish agreements to fund onward travel assistance. CCDSO will also utilize this funding to support its own onward travel efforts. This collaborative approach will enhance support for asylum-seeking migrants and strengthen the capacity of organizations addressing the evolving needs of this population. Today's action is aligned with previous Board direction on February 6, 2024 (11), February 27, 2024 (13), April 30, 2024 (34), and May 21, 2024 (27) to provide services to support this population. This action continues to support asylum-seeking migrants with a specific focus on supporting their onward travel in the most immediate way possible to assist them in reaching their final destination.

Today's action requests the Board authorize an agreement with CCDSO for migrant transition support services for onward travel.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's action supports the County of San Diego 2024-2029 Strategic Plan initiatives of Sustainability (Resiliency), Equity (Health and Economic Opportunities), and Community (Engagement), and the regional *Live Well San Diego* vision of healthy, safe, and thriving communities. This is accomplished by creating initiatives that reduce and eliminate poverty and promote the value of equity in health and housing, regardless of legal or immigration status.

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Respectfully submitted,



FOR

EBONY N. SHELTON
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)
N/A