



City of Huntington Beach

File #: 23-249

MEETING DATE: 3/21/2023

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBMITTED TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

SUBMITTED BY: Al Zelinka, City Manager

VIA: Travis K. Hopkins, Assistant City Manager

PREPARED BY: Catherine Jun, Deputy City Manager

Subject:

Approve and accept \$1.5M from the State of California's Budget Act of 2022 for Be Well OC in Huntington Beach Mobile Crisis Response Program ("Be Well") operations; authorize the City Manager and/or Acting Chief Financial Officer to execute all funding documents; and approve the appropriation of funds received to Fund 1281

Statement of Issue:

The City was previously awarded \$1.5M from the State of California's Budget Act of 2022 to support Be Well operations. City Council must approve and appropriate these funds in order to draw down and expend them for their intended purpose.

Financial Impact:

\$1.5M of state funds will be appropriated to Fund 1281 for use towards the continued operations of Be Well.

Recommended Action:

- A) Approve and accept \$1.5M from the State of California's Budget Act of 2022 to support the operations of the Be Well OC in Huntington Beach Mobile Crisis Response Program; and,
- B) Authorize the City Manager or Acting Chief Financial Officer to execute all documents to receive and manage the aforementioned state funds; and
- C) Approve appropriations to Fund No. 1281 for use towards Be Well.

Alternative Action(s):

Do not approve the Recommended Actions, and direct staff accordingly.

Analysis:

Background

In August 2021, the City of Huntington Beach, in partnership with Be Well OC, launched Orange County's first mobile mental health response program, known as Be Well OC in Huntington Beach ("Be Well"). The program is a mobile response team, composed of two crisis counselors who drive to clients to provide in-community assessment and stabilization to those experiencing mental health, substance use, and other concerns that require a non-emergency response.

The Huntington Beach Police Department's dispatch center receives over 15,000 calls for service annually related to mental health crises. Be Well responds to individuals needing immediate support to manage mental health issues and provides case management to link them to ongoing services. These services help free up officers to focus on crime prevention, proactive law enforcement, and quality of life issues, while providing trained crisis counselors to respond to those in need.

In its first year of operations (August 2021 - July 2022), Be Well responded to 2,040 calls for service and 408 follow-up contacts. The team has responded to and/or de-escalated situations including mental health crises, substance abuse issues, proactive outreach to homeless individuals, welfare checks, and death notifications.

Funding

In Fiscal Year 2021-2022, the City Manager's Office submitted a funding request through Assemblymember Cottie Petrie-Norris' Office to support Be Well's continued operations. In June 2022, the City was awarded \$1.5M via the State of California's Budget Act of 2022, and in March 2023, the agency administering the funds (Department of Health Care Services) notified staff that the funds were ready for disbursement. If tonight's recommended action is approved, the City will be able to draw down these funds for Be Well operations next fiscal year.

Be Well operating costs are approximately \$1.2M per year. \$1.064M of the aforementioned \$1.5M awarded and an additional \$136,000 of federal funds received through Senator Feinstein's Office in 2022 would be budgeted towards Be Well operations in FY2023-24. The remaining state funds (\$436,000) will be budgeted for future years.

If the recommended action is approved, the City Manager or Acting Chief Financial Officer will execute a Vendor Self Certification Form (attachment 1) to receive these funds via the Department of Health Care Services. No further City actions are necessary to complete this drawdown and expenditure of funds.

Environmental Status:

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment do not constitute a project.

Strategic Plan Goal:

Non Applicable - Administrative Item

Attachment(s):

1. Budget Act of 2022 Legislative Priorities - Vendor Self Certification Form