
Sponsor: Public Health

Meeting Date: 5/3/2022

Title: Grant Award from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety for American Rescue Plan Act Survivor Support and Prevention Services

File Number: 2022-241

Background and Rationale:

Public Health's Sexual Offense Services (SOS) program provides victims of sexual violence 24/7 crisis advocacy, ongoing individual advocacy, counseling and support, community awareness, information and education. SOS services have been provided in Ramsey County since 1976 and SOS provides services to approximately 1,100 victims of sexual violence, annually. These services include:

- Crisis intervention 24/7/365 through SOS crisis phone services.
- Short-term emotional support.
- Assistance in securing emergency services such as shelter, food, childcare, clothing and other necessities.
- Transportation as necessary and appropriate.
- Information and referral regarding criminal justice process, victim's rights, other victim service referrals including counseling options, Legal Advocacy for Victim service immigration services and other community organizations services.
- Assistance and accompaniment in obtaining emergency medical procedures 24/7/365 and any additional follow up information and referral.
- Assistance to survivors including any criminal justice system services including accompaniment during criminal justice events including law enforcement investigations, notification regarding criminal justice events and with victim impact statement needs.
- Assistance to survivors during civil, and/or family court activities and other legal matters.
- Assistance to survivors in filing victim compensation claims.
- Assistance to survivors in accessing human/social/family services.
- Assistance with interpretation, translation and culturally appropriate materials.
- Assistance with emergency shelter and housing services including transitional and relocation assistance.
- Follow up with victim survivors after initial contact and post any criminal justice events.

Public Health applied for a grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) survivor support and prevention services. This grant supports victim survivors served by Public Health's SOS program directly impacted by COVID-19. Ramsey County's population has experienced a significant impact due to COVID-19. This financial impact has adversely affected victim survivors of sexual violence. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, increased service delivery to victim survivors, including addressing financially impacted low-income and other disadvantaged communities, has been required. Public Health was awarded this grant, in the amount of \$510,000, for the period of upon execution through March 31, 2023.

This grant includes funding for direct financial support and meeting emerging or unmet needs. The intended services include providing clients gift cards for direct cash and food assistance, housing

assistance and additional needs as identified by the community. The funding will also help ensure that services and programs are inclusive and provided through a racial and healthy equity lens. This grant will provide opportunities to expand services aimed at victim/survivors from Black/African American, African Born, Asian-Pacific Islander and Latino communities residing in traditionally underserved communities. This will be achieved by:

- Increasing capacity of SOS staff to meet the unmet needs of underserved victim/survivors.
- Expanding culturally responsive services (advocacy, referrals) to meet the needs of underserved victim/survivors.
- Creating strong, mutually beneficial collaborations with culturally specific community-based organizations (CBOs).
- Increasing financial stability of underserved victim/survivors adversely affected by COVID-19.

To accomplish this work, Public Health will use four previously approved limited duration positions throughout the term of the grant: three Sexual Violence Advocates and one Planner to guide and monitor the community support and community building needed both internally and externally to assist with the steps to healing and recovery from both COVID-19 and sexual violence. Limited duration positions that support COVID-19 related work currently expire at the end of 2022. Human Resources department will be bringing a request to the board in the fall of 2022 to extend the duration of those positions through 2023.

SOS has organizational experience bringing together underserved groups through the Sexual Assault Protocol Team (SAPT), a collaborative of professionals across multiple disciplines with a mission to coordinate and implement an interagency response to sexual assault victims which promotes consistency, respect, and cultural competency. SAPT has over 100 active members representing over 45 agencies including law enforcement jurisdictions, colleges and universities, hospitals and community clinics, state-wide agencies, and community agencies. SOS will leverage this 20+year collaboration to increase the cultural competency response to sexual violence through partnerships with culturally relevant CBOs and their participation in SAPT to make long term and sustainable impact on policies and practices.

The organizational experience of Public Health will also lead to the effectiveness of the proposed activities. Public Health has extensive experience engaging residents disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 including Black/African American, African Born, Asian-Pacific Islander and Latino populations. SOS will continue leveraging community relationships to ensure impacted communities will receive the necessary support and services and connect them with culturally specific services.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Ratify the submittal of the grant application to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs, Crime Victim Services in the amount of \$510,000 for American Rescue Plan Act survivor support and prevention services.
2. Accept a grant award from and approve a grant agreement with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs, Crime Victim Services for American Rescue Plan Act survivor support and prevention services for the period of execution through March 31, 2023, in the amount of \$510,000.
3. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the grant agreement.
4. Authorize the County Manager to enter into agreements and execute amendments to agreements in accordance with the county's procurement policies and procedures, provided the amounts are within the limits of the grant funding.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner McGuire, seconded by Commissioner Reinhardt.
Motion passed.

Aye: - 5: Carter, McDonough, McGuire, Ortega, and Reinhardt

Absent: - 2: Frethem, and MatasCastillo

By: 
Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board