

Request for Board Action Details

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In control: Board of Commissioners

On agenda: 5/3/2022 **Final action:** 5/3/2022

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

Sponsors: Public Health

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. Grant Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.pdf, 2. Resolution

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
5/3/2022	1	Board of Commissioners	approved	Pass

Sponsor: Public Health

Title

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

Recommendation

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.

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.

County Goals (Check those advanced by Action)

- Well-being Prosperity Opportunity Accountability

Racial Equity Impact

Public Health recognizes that sexual violence is supported by all forms of oppression. To address this, the goals, objectives and outcomes of SOS’s practices, structure and funding requests are centered to serve residents who are more likely to be marginalized in society. The funding of this grant supports four limited duration positions that provide trauma-informed, culturally competent services and assistance with embedding into SOS equitable policies and procedures that are trauma-informed, culturally competent services to underserved communities in Ramsey County who have experienced sexual violence and have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

Most primary victim survivors served by SOS are non-White. Racially and ethnically diverse communities experience sexual violence at higher rates than White populations as reflected in the National Crime Victimization Survey and data collected by SOS. The disproportionate rate of sexual violence in racially and ethnically diverse communities is compounded by existing racial health disparities such as higher rates of diabetes, hypertension, obesity, asthma, and heart disease. These health disparities are highest in immigrant and refugee populations in Minnesota, many of whom live in Ramsey County. With the high disparity of sexual violence in the Black communities, the SOS program also provides outreach to local clinics, community-based programs, and faith-based communities; these efforts are coordinated by the leadership of Public Health’s Black staff and program partners.

The SOS program recognizes the value of a culturally responsive approach and want to assist victims/survivors with a foundation of support. One of the ways is to always offer victim/survivors referrals to community culturally specific partner programs, including but not limited to: CLUES, ThinkSelf, MN Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Hmong American Partnership, Saint Paul Intervention Project, Tubman Family Alliance and U of M Community University Health Care Center.

SOS is determined to make sexual violence advocacy services accessible to victims/survivors with limited English proficiency as well as deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Four of six staff speak and write fluently in another language (Hmong, Spanish, Arabic) and several more volunteer advocates speak additional languages including Somali, Swahili, Mandarin, Cantonese, French, Portuguese and more. All employees and volunteers are trained on and access the Language Line as a tool to provide 24/7 translation services in over 240 languages.

In the last two years, SOS has engaged in multiple outreach activities with a diverse array of disciplines including multiple private and public schools, Public Health, Ramsey County Social Services, shelters for people experiencing homelessness, libraries, the National Guard, clinics and other community-based programs. In partnership with the Ramsey County Attorney’s Office, local law enforcement and medical providers, SOS helped train every new and current patrol officer in Ramsey County from all nine law enforcement agencies in 2019-2020. SOS is also a standing member of the Ramsey County Children’s Multidisciplinary Team, especially with cases where there is risk of sexual violence and exploitation, and the Ramsey County Adult Protection Multidisciplinary Team. Additionally, SOS supported the Minnesota Department of Human Services in developing statewide training for nursing homes and elderly care facilities in identifying signs of sexual violence, mitigating risks and supporting survivors.

Community Participation Level and Impact

SOS informs clients about and offers referrals to community culturally specific partner programs listed above.

SOS has led and supported various community outreach events and campaigns including Start by Believing, an annual SOS Walk to Honor Survivors and Sexual Violence Action Program with Saint Paul Public Schools. Additional methods of outreach and community involvement include an online evaluation of services for clients, an ASKSOS email for community members and stakeholders to easily connect with SOS staff, and when fiscally able, SOS provides focus groups to seek input from both victims and survivors but also community stakeholders. SOS has one staff member dedicated to outreach to provide awareness and education regarding sexual violence and SOS services. Additionally, the Sexual Assault Protocol Team is a partnership with over 90 people participating from over 30 agencies.

Inform Consult Involve Collaborate Empower

Fiscal Impact

The program costs will be covered by grant funding through the Minnesota Department of Public Safety in the amount of \$510,000.

County Manager Comments

No additional comments.

Last Previous Action

On August 3, 2021, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners approved the continuation of unclassified limited duration positions for the COVID-19 response as long as a 1) a business need exists to continue COVID response or recovery operations; 2) funding is available; and 3) not to exceed the end of 2022 (Resolution B2021-174).

Attachments

1. Grant Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety