



Legislation Text

File #: 18-0416, Version: 1

Sheriff's Office recommending the Board:

- 1) Approve a program that would allow the Sheriff's Office to use General Fund monies to purchase meals, lodging, transportation, and other necessary items for homeless individuals for the purpose of reunifying them with their families; and
- 2) Find that such expenditures provide a valuable public benefit by improving outcomes for homeless individuals and reducing their dependence on public services. (Est. Time: 10 Min.)

FUNDING: General Fund.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Sheriff's Office (SO) recommends the Board approve the program that would allow the Sheriff's Office to use General Fund monies to purchase food, lodging, transportation, and other necessary items for reunifying homeless individuals with their families.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

Reunifying homeless individuals is one of the main objectives of the Sheriff's Office Homeless Outreach Team (HOT). HOT began operations in May of 2017 assisting homeless individuals in El Dorado County find more permanent solutions for housing.

From working out in the field, HOT has found that a good number of homeless individuals have family throughout the US but have no resources to reunify with them.

The SO believes that the best outcome for many these individuals they work with would be reunification with their families, so long as a connection can be made and appropriate plans can be coordinated. The SO ~~and~~ is requesting the approval to use general fund budget monies to assist in the reunification process.

It is anticipated most purchases will be for bus/train tickets and commercial flights. HOT does not expect to use more than \$2,500 in FY17/18 but believes this will be a very effective way to house certain homeless individuals under the right circumstances. HOT will not assist the move of a homeless person just to move them to another County where the individual is just going to be homeless somewhere else. Understanding homelessness is increasing throughout the State, the intent is to assist the homeless individual with a permanent solution for their well being, reducing local expenditures to local systems, all while also improving quality of life for the public, community.

Certain criteria must be met for an individual to be given travel assistance. The criteria HOT will use to justify the use of funds for reunification purchases are:

- The reunification should improve the quality of life for the homeless individual requesting assistance.
- The intended destination must be a stable home environment with the potential for employment. The possibility of employment will not be required, but will be a consideration.
- HOT will make efforts to verify that the destination is viable and the person(s) the homeless individual will be moving in with is legitimate. This can be done via phone and verified with the use of law enforcement data systems. In some cases, HOT may use a local

law enforcement agency to visit the intended destination. That agency will be requested to verify that the home is stable and occupants are consenting.

- HOT will ensure that they work with the appropriate agency if the homeless individual that is planning to be reunified with their family is on probation or parole in order make arrangements with the consenting authority.
- If a parent or parents are moving with children, HOT will assure the children have a school to attend and that they have been accepted to attend said school prior to a travel purchase.
- If the homeless individual is moving with an animal, further checks will be done by HOT to assure the intended destination will allow animals prior to a travel purchase.
- If a single parent is requesting to move with a child or children, HOT will assure they have the lawful right to move the child or children out of the area.
- HOT will always seek out the most reasonable form of travel depending on the destination. Some destinations will require air travel. Regardless of the form of travel, HOT will seek out times and dates with the most reasonable rates.
- HOT will check with the District Attorney's Office to assure the homeless individual requesting assistance does not have pending criminal cases prior to a travel purchase.

ALTERNATIVES

The Board could choose not to approve this program.

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

N/A The Board could choose not to approve this program.

CAO RECOMMENDATION

[This section is completed by the CAO's Office.] The Chief Administrative Office recommends approval of this item.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no impact to Net County Cost. Funds required for the first year are anticipated to be \$2,500 and are available in the Sheriff's Office FY17/18 budget. Future amounts will be determined and budgeted for in future fiscal years based on the success of this program.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Public Safety

CONTACT

Undersheriff Randy Peshon