

MEETING DATE: September 8, 2022 **AGENDA ITEM:** I

TO: BSCC Chair and Members

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SUBJECT: Proposition 47 Grant Program: Evaluation of Program Participation and Analysis of Outreach to Underserved Communities. **Requesting Approval**

Summary

This agenda item proposes two projects to improve the Proposition 47 Grant Program:

- An outside, professional review and evaluation of the procedures for informing the field about the purpose and availability of Proposition 47 grant funding, with a focus on enhancing the number of qualified grant applicants across the state; and
- An analysis of the existing grantees' experiences in reaching underserved communities. Specifically, staff is interested in conducting semi-structured focus group interviews to examine strategies and procedures used by Proposition 47 grantees to successfully engage, recruit, and retain Latino participants.

Background

On November 4, 2014, California voters approved Proposition 47, which reduced from felonies to misdemeanors the penalties for certain non-serious and non-violent drug and property crimes. Proposition 47 was codified in Government Code sections 7599-7599.2 (Attachment I-1). Its purpose, as stated in the ballot initiative, is as follows:

The people enact the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act to ensure that prison spending is focused on violent and serious offenses, to maximize alternatives for nonserious, nonviolent crime, and to invest the savings generated from this act into prevention and support programs in K–12 schools, victim services, and mental health and drug treatment. (Criminal Sentences. Misdemeanor Penalties. Initiative Statute. California Proposition 47, Section 2 (2014).)

As stated in the proposition, the BSCC's responsibilities are to:

Administer a grant program to public agencies aimed at supporting mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, and diversion programs for people in the criminal justice system, with an emphasis on programs that reduce recidivism of people convicted of less serious crimes, such as those covered by this measure, and those who have substance abuse and mental health problems. (Gov. Code, § 7599.2 (a)(3).)

The Board began implementing the Proposition 47 Grant Program in October 2015 and held six regional meetings throughout California to gather public comment to inform the initial Proposition 47 Grant Program Request for Proposals. The Board has since made approximately \$340 million available in competitive RFPs in November 2016, January 2019, and February 2022¹.

To ensure Proposition 47 funding is having the desired impact, staff is proposing two projects to help inform the next RFP.

Evaluation of Program Participation

In the last round of Proposition 47 awards, there was a decline in new grant applicants and returning applicants. As such, staff recommends examining the implementation of the grant from the perspective of agencies that have received funding as well as prospective new grant applicants. An evaluation of what has worked well for grantees and what challenges were encountered would also be included.

This evaluation would include, but not be limited to, the following topics:

- The release of the Proposition 47 RFP and corresponding outreach process;
- The application process, including any technical assistance or targeted support provided to prospective grantees during the application process;
- The initiation of the grant for those awarded funding, including the overall contracting administrative processes and grantee orientation;
- The support, communication and oversight provided throughout the duration of the grant; and
- Completion procedures at the conclusion of the grant.

This information would be gathered through an RFP that solicits proposals from universities, research firms, and consultants to conduct an evaluation of the implementation of the Proposition 47 Grant Program, including recommendations for improving the process. The estimate cost for the evaluation will not exceed \$300,000.

Outreach to Underserved Communities

Staff also recommends conducting an evaluation on how grantees are serving certain underserved communities. Specifically, staff recommends conducting semi-structured focus group interviews to examine strategies and procedures used by Proposition 47 grantees to successfully engage, recruit, and retain Latino participants, pending the required research approval by an Internal Review Board (IRB). Attachment I-2 describes in more detail the rationale for the evaluation project and the procedure and protocols for conducting the semi-structured focus group interviews.

¹ Approximately \$103,651,000 was available in the 2016 RFP, \$96,434,500 in the 2019 RFP, and \$143,436,700 in the 2022 RFP.

These interviews will occur with:

- Staff from select Proposition 47 lead agencies (e.g., Project Director, Day-to-Day Contact);
- Staff employed by the partner Community Based Organizations (CBOs) who work directly with participants, managers at the partner CBOs; and
- Both Latino and non-Latino participants who have or are currently receiving mental health or substance-use disorder treatment through the Proposition 47 Grant Program.

Focus group interviews will be recorded and analyzed. Findings will be presented in multiple formats including:

- A brief, easy-to-read, technical assistance document or infographic providing effective strategies for recruiting, engaging, and retaining Latino participants, available on the BSCC website;
- Full research report describing study procedures, analyses, and findings, available on the BSCC website; and potentially
- a research presentation at a regional or national conference.

Prior to conducting the interviews, BSCC staff would obtain approval from an IRB to ensure the procedures and protocols of this project meet the U.S. Health and Human Services regulation requirements (45 C.F.R. part 46.) for the protection of human subjects in research.

Recommendation/Action Needed

Staff recommends that the Board:

- Approve a review and evaluation of the procedures for informing the field about the purpose and availability of Proposition 47 grant funding, with a focus on enhancing the number of qualified applicants across the state;
- Approve the drafting and submission of an IRB for approval to ensure procedures and protocols meet the U.S. Health and Human Services regulation requirements (45 C.F.R. part 46) for the protection of human subjects in research; and
- Approve an analysis of the existing grantees' experiences in reaching Latino participants in their grant programs, with a focus on reducing racial and ethnic disparities in the population of people receiving treatment and services in the Proposition 47 Grant program.

Attachments

I-1: Proposition 47

I-2: Evaluation Project Description