



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 1/10/2023

File #: 23-10

To: Board of Supervisors

From: County Administrative Office

Agenda Section: Departmental

Vote Requirement: 4/5th

SUBJECT:

Funding for Displaced Residents Impacted by Earthquakes and Supplemental Budget (4/5 Vote Required)

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct staff to develop an Earthquake Recovery & Assistance Program to provide aid to displaced residents impacted by the Dec. 20, 2022 earthquake and subsequent aftershocks;
2. Approve the attached supplemental budget (Attachment 1) in the amount of \$1 million to be allocated to the Earthquake Assistance 2022 budget unit (3232-120-204); and
3. Provide additional direction as needed.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund

DISCUSSION:

On Tuesday, Dec. 20, 2022, a 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck Humboldt County. Since this earthquake, the county has experienced over 200 aftershocks, one of which being a 5.4 magnitude on New Year's Day. As Humboldt County continues to respond to and recover from the earthquakes, staff have had difficulty locating federal programs to provide affected and/or displaced residents with emergency sheltering, housing and other types of individual assistance related to the disaster. Therefore, this agenda item recommends your Board approve and authorize staff to create a locally funded Earthquake Recovery & Assistance Program to begin to address those gaps.

Damages

Damage assessments are ongoing in communities that experienced earthquake impacts. As of Jan. 2, more than 70 structures have been determined unsafe throughout the county due to earthquake-related damages.

Building inspectors from the County of Humboldt, local cities and fire departments, and the State of California have been deployed to assist the city of Rio Dell and surrounding communities with damage assessment.

- Since the Jan. 1 aftershock occurred, more damages have been reported, including additional red- and yellow-tagged residences. The majority of additional damages have been reported out of the City of Rio Dell. As of Jan. 2, there are approximately 70 red-tagged structures, and 114 yellow tagged. The estimated number of individuals displaced in Rio Dell is approximately 170 as of Jan. 2.

As of Jan. 3, 2023, 174 damage reports have been submitted to the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services, with personal income loss damage estimates totaling \$103,595 and estimated personal household financial losses are currently reported at \$1,040,460.

Business Impacts:

The Economic Development Division of the County Administrative Office is actively surveying local businesses impacted by the earthquake. The survey will be used to track, monitor, and quantify business losses in Humboldt County following the earthquake.

- Lost earnings for 967 individuals in the county’s workforce, and 39 temporary layoffs and 1 permanent layoff have been reported.

As of Jan. 3, 127 business have reported losses totaling \$1,454,714, including:

- \$479,574 in Sales/Revenue
- \$311,713 in Inventory/Merchandise
- \$633,427 in Structural Damages

Earthquake Recovery & Assistance Program

One primary route for displaced residents to receive federal funding for disaster-related losses like temporary housing and home repairs after an earthquake is through the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Individual and Households Program (IHP). However, in order for the program to be authorized, the earthquake must be declared as a federal disaster and staff have been informed that this earthquake likely will not receive this declaration as the reported damages do not meet federal per capita damage threshold amounts.

Staff have determined that the fastest way to provide this type of relief is for the county to develop a local program with the allocation of local funding. Reimbursement will be sought through the state whenever possible to maximize recovery support. This item is requesting that your Board direct staff to create a local program to provide the following types of services:

- Temporary sheltering accommodations
- Necessary home repairs for red- and yellow-tagged buildings

- Other types of assistance typically available through FEMA’s IHP.

Staff have identified local funding for this program, as detailed below. The State of California has been an extremely helpful partner throughout the emergency, and staff anticipate there will likely be funding available to reimburse many of the county’s expenses.

The Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund (LATCF)

The LATCF was established by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021. The act appropriated \$2 billion to the LATCF across fiscal years 2022 and 2023 to provide payments to eligible revenue sharing counties and eligible Tribal governments for use on any governmental purpose, except for a lobbying activity. Humboldt County was allocated \$1.598 million in each of those years, or \$3.196 million in total.

The purpose of the LATCF is to serve as a general revenue enhancement program. As outlined in the Guidance for the Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund (Attachment 2), recipients have broad discretion on uses of funds and may treat these funds in a similar manner to how they treat funds generated from their own local revenue. For instance, programs, services, and capital expenditures that are traditionally undertaken by a government are considered to fulfill a “governmental purpose.” However, as stated above and outline further in the Ineligible Use section of the guidance document, LATCF funds may not be used for lobbying activities.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The \$1 million for the proposed program is recommended to come from the LATCF and was not included in the Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2022-23. The LATCF is one-time funding and expenditures will be accounted for in the American Rescue Plan Act budget unit (3232-120).

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

This action supports your Board’s Strategic Framework by protecting vulnerable populations , providing community-appropriate levels of service.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

US Treasury, California Office of Emergency Services

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Board discretion

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Supplemental Budget
2. Guidance on Use of the LATCF

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: N/A

Meeting of: N/A

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