



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Councilmember Esparza

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** June 15th, 2021

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Approved: *Maya Esparza*

Date: 6/15/2021

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**SUBJECT: MAYOR'S JUNE BUDGET MESSAGE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022.**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Direct the City Manager to increase funding for the Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together (BEST) Grant Program by \$514,330 to cover the funding gap needed for improved oversight and accountability.

## **BACKGROUND**

Established in 1991, the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF) and BEST funded programs served as the original program that reimagined public safety and community policing. This program represents a broad coalition of residents, government agencies, community and faith-based organizations, schools, and law enforcement coming together to prevent, intervene in and suppress gang activity in the community by viewing gang violence through a public health lens.

Throughout our discussions on Reimagining Public Safety, we understand that increasing enforcement by the San Jose Police Department will not translate to our low-income communities of color overcoming decades of systematic oppression. While San Jose Police Department serves a critical role, we must look to programs that uplifts our gang-impacted communities through positive activities, education, mentorship, intervention, and opportunity.

The BEST funded programs previously served as a national model for what has now become Reimagining Public Safety. While our low-income communities of color have borne the brunt of the pandemic with more COVID-19 cases and deaths, another crisis of increased gang activity and violence has swept through these same communities. We have seen firsthand the devastating results of limited positive activities for our children in gang-impacted areas. For these children,

families, and communities, access to the services provided by the BEST program can be literally be the difference between life and death.

As gang activity and violence continued to increase throughout the pandemic, I, along with several of my colleagues, looked to the MGPTF and our BEST providers for intervention leading to a review of the entire program. From these discussions, an apparent need for additional staffing and a Client Management System was identified for improved oversight and accountability, as stated in MBA #3. This funding would support an additional Senior Analyst, Community Coordinator, Analyst I/II, and a Client Management System.

<b>Personal Services</b>		
<b>Classification</b>	<b>FTE</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Senior Analyst	1.0	\$172,632
Community Coordinator	1.0	\$140,204
Analyst I/II	1.0	\$151,494
<b>Personal Services Subtotal</b>		<b>\$464,330</b>
<b>Non-Personal</b>		
Client Management System		\$50,000
<b>Non-Personal Subtotal</b>		<b>\$50,000</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>\$514,330</b>

During the NSE Committee discussions and ongoing discussions with our BEST providers, increased consistency and clarity in our program evaluation as well as better coordination with partners is needed to standardize our program delivery throughout the City. These additional positions will ensure a standard of service is met, while building capacity for the BEST program as we continue our discussions about Reimagining Public Safety.

Our City’s Roadmap for FY 2021-2022 emphasizes our Enterprise Priority for Safe, Vibrant, and Inclusive Neighborhoods, which includes our police reforms workplan, Equity Strategy Development, and Neighborhood Services Access Strategy. There is simply no way that we can effectively complete this work without prioritizing the MGPTF and BEST. We have communities and families that are scared, that are living in fear, and more families will have their lives torn apart by violence if we do not act now. For some of these families, there will be no recovery.

Given the critical role that the MGPTF and BEST programs play in addressing rising violence and promoting strong, healthy, and safe communities in the areas where the need is highest, and are the same areas that have endured the worst impacts of the pandemic, funding for these programs should receive top consideration under our Community and Economic Recovery Plan under the American Rescue Plan.

