



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 9, 2021

**County Executive Office presents \$2.55 billion balanced preliminary budget for FY 2021-2022
Including service enhancements in public health, mental health, safety, diversity, and capital
improvements**

Ventura, CA – The County Executive Office presented a \$2.55 billion balanced Preliminary Budget for FY 2021-2022 at Tuesday’s Board of Supervisors Meeting. “A balanced budget means that we can continue to provide critical core services such as health, social and safety services, street and road maintenance and enhance key areas of public health and mental health services with a continued commitment of services for individuals facing homelessness,” said County Executive Officer Mike Powers. “I appreciate the hard work of our Board of Supervisors and County team in the strategic management of public funds. This careful stewardship has resulted in strong reserves enabling the County to move quickly in response to the pandemic, such as feeding vulnerable older adults and housing those facing homelessness and testing. This extensive community support during the pandemic has been in addition to enhanced funding of critical services.”

The budget includes expanding public health services, new positions in mental health diversion programs in both the District Attorney and Public Defender Offices, increased staffing and services funding in the Farmworker Resource Program, new positions to support diversity, equity, inclusion, and community engagement efforts among others. The budget also increases business fee waivers ranging from 50 to 100 percent, totaling an estimated \$3.5 million in support of further pandemic economic recovery.

Recognizing the great need for expanded mental health services and that this is a top priority for the Board, the budget recommends a General Fund contribution to fund staffing for seven remaining inpatient psychiatric beds at the Ventura County Medical Center Inpatient Psychiatric Unit. The increased funding will enable the County to add four additional chairs to the Crisis Stabilization Unit.

For the second year in a row, the proposed budget benefited from reduced pension costs due to the accelerated payment of unfunded pension obligations resulting in a funded ratio of close to 90 percent.

The preliminary budget also invests in providing shelter for those in need, supporting foster youth and adult protective services, support for increased substance use services, the transition of the state Division of Juvenile Justice closure that shifts responsibility for young adults up to age 25 to county youth facilities among other areas of public safety and wellness.

The County continues to invest in infrastructure, including significant upgrades to the County’s Fire Stations and the purchase of the Family Justice Center to provide services to victims of crimes.



COUNTY of VENTURA

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Key budget highlights include a total County appropriation of \$2.55 billion, up \$100.8 million or 4.1% from the prior year. General Fund General Purpose Revenues include \$464.8 million, up \$17.2 million or 3.9% from the prior year.

The proposed preliminary budget comes after the County's \$373 million COVID-19 Spending Plan through June 30, 2021, which was carefully budgeted to ensure that the maximum amount was invested in services for the community rather than for ongoing regular County operations. (See attached announcement – County of Ventura COVID spending plan totals \$373M)

For the first time in many years, 24 departments and agencies gave budget presentations to the Board of Supervisors, totaling some 14 hours of information provided over the last six public meetings, culminating in the presentation of the preliminary budget on June 8.

The County is focused on long-term financial viability and will continue to integrate the use of multi-year forecasts as a guide to maintain balanced budgets. "The Board of Supervisor's commitment to the comprehensive long-term fiscal plan helps to maintain the County's strong financial position. Consistent application of these budget principles has minimized the impact during economic downturns and avoided the need for significant budget cuts during times when these services are needed most," said Chief Financial Officer Kaye Mand.

Final Budget Hearings are scheduled to begin on Monday, June 21, at 1:30 p.m., with a public hearing session to follow at 6:00 p.m. that evening.



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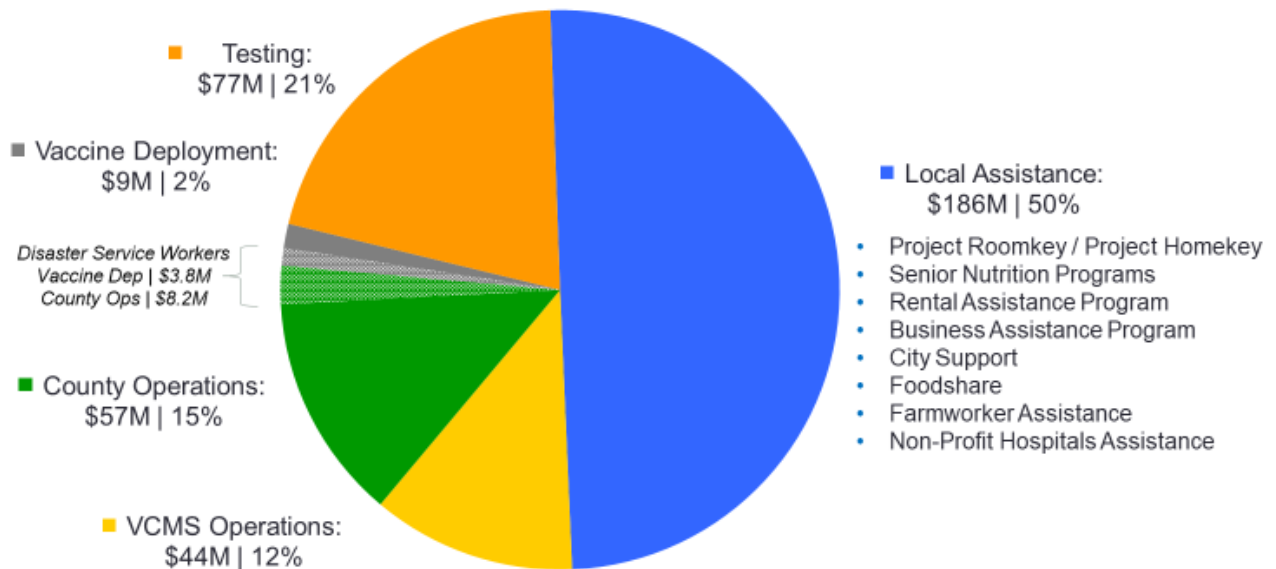
June 3, 2021

County's COVID spending plan totals \$373 million in support

Ventura, CA – “The pandemic impacted just about every part of our community and economy,” said County Executive Officer Mike Powers. “We budgeted and allocated funds in order to address multiple community health, social and economic impacts as well as basic needs.” The County’s COVID-19 Spending Plan encompasses costs incurred by the County from March 2020 through June 30, 2021. The plan is comprised of actual costs to-date and estimated costs through the end of June 2021 reported out now as the County reaches the end of the fiscal year.



COVID SPENDING PLAN thru June 30, 2021: \$373M



The \$373 million Spending Plan includes costs for local assistance, testing, vaccine deployment and operations to support the community. These costs are funded by several sources including the Federal Emergency Management Administration, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, and the Older Americans Act. The plan does not include the anticipated funding for the American Rescue Plan.



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The focus has been to support those in need quickly and efficiently. Community members were struggling to pay their rent, so a rental assistance program was launched. \$11.4 million went to cover 3 months for households in need. \$3.5 million was provided for farmworkers for household assistance. The County's positive financial position allowed for reserves to be used to quickly obtain hotels providing shelter for nearly 600 community members. COVID isolation support was also made available for any community member in need. \$40 million has been provided to restaurants helping to keep them open while also serving more than 6 million meals to vulnerable homebound adults. \$3.4 million supported expanded Food Share pop up sites for community members in need.

The County supported struggling businesses with three rounds of business assistance grants with \$60 million in support to 6,000 businesses. The County also launched a business ambassador program to help businesses navigate COVID-19 compliance. The Resource Management Agency and the Ventura County Fire District also waived fees for businesses experiencing hardships. Business Ambassadors visited more than 16,000 businesses.

The County took an all hands-on deck approach to coordinate response including the reallocation of 980 disaster services workers to do whatever was needed for the community including high volume testing and vaccine roll out. More than 1.5 million tests have been performed and more than 842,000 doses of the COVID-19 have been administered to date.

"It's important for the community to know how these public funds were managed. They went back to the community during a time when it has been needed most," added Powers.