



Contra
Costa
County

To: Board of Supervisors
From: Alison McKee, County Librarian
Date: March 23, 2021

Subject: California State Library Grant Funds

RECOMMENDATION(S):

APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the County Librarian, or designee, to apply for and accept four scholarships from the California State Library in the aggregate amount of \$4,380 to provide qualified adult learners in Contra Costa County with an accredited online high school diploma and career training opportunity for the period July 1, 2021 through December 31, 2022.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Library Fund match of \$4,380

BACKGROUND:

Career Online High School (COHS) is a nationally accredited educational program created by Smart Horizons and offered by Gale, a division of Cengage Learning. Currently, 59 libraries in California are using Career Online High School, including, in the East Bay: Alameda County Library, Hayward Public Library, Richmond Public Library, and San Leandro Library.

COHS gives students the opportunity to earn concurrently both a high school diploma and

☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☒ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY
ADMINISTRATOR

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD
COMMITTEE

Action of Board On: **03/23/2021** ☒ APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED ☐ OTHER

Clerks Notes:

VOTE OF SUPERVISORS

AYE: John Gioia, District I Supervisor
Candace Andersen, District II Supervisor
Diane Burgis, District III Supervisor
Karen Mitchoff, District IV Supervisor
Federal D. Glover, District V Supervisor

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on the date shown.

ATTESTED: March 23, 2021

Monica Nino, County Administrator and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: Laura Cassell, Deputy

Contact: Walt Beveridge
925-608-7730

cc:

credentialed career certificate online. The goal is to bring non-traditional and/or adult learners back into the educational system and prepare them for jobs in growing sectors of the local economy. Students graduate with the tools they need to take the next step in their careers or advanced education.

BACKGROUND: (CONT'D)

The Library is required to purchase four matching Career Online High School scholarships from Gale Cengage to qualify for the four scholarships offered by the California State Library. Each scholarship is valued at \$1,095—for a total of \$4,380—and will be paid for from the Library Fund.

The Contra Costa County Library will provide access to COHS at their local library branch via a centralized team consisting of David Greene, Librarian Specialist for Adult Services, and Catherine Oliver, Volunteer Coordinator, who will monitor the program from the Library Administration building.

Based on outcomes from Contra Costa County's own experience as well as libraries currently participating in the program, the Career Online High School educational approach appears to have a significantly more positive effect on both the participants and the community at large than was estimated would occur for these adult learners through a traditional GED program. The California State Library is encouraging local communities to partner with them to make an investment in this program because research shows the following:

- Persons with high school diplomas earn an average of \$1,400 per month more than persons with GEDs;
- 73% of students who received a high school diploma went on to complete at least some post-secondary education, while less than half (43%) of GED certificate recipients reached the same goal;
- Of high school diploma holders, 33% earned a bachelor's degree or higher, while less than five percent of students who received a GED certificate earned this level of education;
- Unemployment among those without a high school degree is approximately 12%; and
- High school dropouts experience a poverty rate of almost 31% for adults between the ages of 18-24.

COHS can have a positive impact on the local economy. Because students can also obtain a career credential in addition to a diploma, the program is anticipated to introduce more skilled graduates to the local workforce.

Prospective students wishing to be considered for admittance to the program must complete an online self-assessment and a two-week prerequisite course designed by COHS to determine if they will be successful. Students are then required to be interviewed by the Adult Services Librarian Specialist and Volunteer Coordinator to determine their overall capability to complete the program. Those persons that complete both steps in the application process will be eligible to enroll in the program. Based on the best practices and experiences of the Library, which participated in the program in FY 2016-17, the Library plans to enroll the first eight students on a "first come, first served" basis. To make sure that all eight scholarships are used, the Library also plans to create a waiting list on a first come, first served basis, to allow for admittance from this wait-list should community interest build to the point where the Library may seek to expand the number of scholarships offered.

CONSEQUENCE OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

If the proposal is not approved, the Library will not be able to offer and provide access to Career Online High School to qualified county residents/adult learners.