



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2020-0064, **Version:** 1

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**To:** Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

**Department or Agency Name(s):** Human Services

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Kellie Noe, 565-5849; Helen Simi, 565-4623

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supervisory District(s):** Countywide

### **Recommended Action:**

Adopt a Gold Resolution acknowledging and celebrating the 10-year anniversary of the Upstream Investments Initiative.

### **Executive Summary:**

Upstream Investments seeks to address inequities and other social determinants of health by shifting policies, funding and programming toward investments in evidence-informed prevention strategies.

In order to reduce “downstream” costs, Upstream Investments was launched to reduce social problems before they start. As an initiative of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, Upstream Investments provides support to community organizations and government agencies to strengthen the quality of programs and services, with the goal of preventing community problems through increasing educational accomplishment, positive physical and mental health, and economic wellness for all residents.

### **Discussion:**

The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors chartered the Upstream Investments Initiative in 2009 with the goal of understanding the antecedents of criminal behavior and reducing downstream criminal justice costs. However, research into Upstream Investments revealed that the factors leading to criminal behavior (and criminal justice costs) are also the factors leading to the need for many other social services, including child welfare support, substance abuse treatment, mental health care and public assistance. A different, more proactive approach to providing services was needed, not just within one county department, but across many county departments and community-based organizations. Existing contracting principles, funding, and performance measures did not necessarily reflect a commitment to early intervention or to outcomes-based practices, and funding often did not include evaluation of the program. In addition, there was no priority to fund local evidence-informed programs. The conclusion seemed obvious; rather than spending limited resources to repair difficult problems after they occur, the focus should be on targeting the factors that lead to those problems using evidence-informed programs and policies to prevent the problems from occurring in the first place, which ultimately reduces costs for local, state and federal government.

Upstream Investments has successfully supported effective prevention strategies by:

- Creating the Portfolio of Model Upstream Programs, which is a list of over 100 local programs that have met rigorous inclusion criteria and have committed to evidence and outcomes-based management;
- Implementing learning communities that focus on sharing data and improving population-level outcomes within key areas including housing, education, and community well-being;

- Applying a results-based accountability contracting framework across county departments;
- Training county departments and community-based organizations on best practices in program planning, evaluation and use of evidence and data for continuous quality improvement; and,
- Leading outreach to funders that encourages investment in effective, prevention-focused programs.

The Sonoma County Human Services Department staffs Upstream Investments and supports a cross-sector leadership body from local philanthropy, County departments, community-based organizations, school districts, businesses, and the Board of Supervisors.

Upstream Investments has resulted in wide-spread community commitment to prevention-focused interventions that increase equity and reduce monetary and societal costs for all residents, which is a real shift in the collective framework for addressing social problems. Sonoma County has significantly increased its investments in prevention and evidence-informed programs over the past 10 years. Upstream Investments was highlighted in a 2018 Pew Charitable Trusts article, *How Counties Can Use Evidence-Based Policymaking to Achieve Better Outcomes*. Currently, the Upstream Investments Policy Committee and staff are drafting a progress report to highlight accomplishments from the last 10 years. The report will also include an updated work plan for the Initiative moving forward. This report will be brought to the Board of Supervisors in a few months

#### **Prior Board Actions:**

- January 2016: The Upstream Investments Team made a report to the Board that included successes towards meeting recommendations in 5 broad categories: 1) Support organizational growth and program improvement; 2) Stimulate funder and business adoption of upstream investments; 3) Coordinate department outreach and integration of upstream principles; 4) Promote the value of shared data through local partnerships; and 5) Engage external stakeholders on the state and national level.
- November 2015: The Board of Supervisors approved a contract with Le France, dba Learning for Action (LFA), to conduct a formal evaluation of the progress and local impact of the Upstream Investments Policy initiative; approved updated by-laws to the Policy Committee.
- January 2013: The Board of Supervisors approved *The Upstream Investments Progress Report and next Steps for 2013* and *Indicators of Success 2012 Update*.
- November 2011: The Upstream Ad Hoc Board Committee made a progress report to the Board that described the Upstream Ad Hoc Board Committees' accomplishments. The Board approved ten next steps including convening the Upstream Investments Policy Committee for a two-year term (2012-2013) and appointing members to the Portfolio Review Committee for a one or two-year term (2012-2013).
- January 2011: The Upstream Ad Hoc Board Committee made a progress report to the Board. The Board approved the Upstream Logic Model and approved a pilot test of the Portfolio of Model Upstream Programs.
- January 2010: The Upstream Investments Team made a report to the Board that included seven recommendations to promote Upstream Investments in Sonoma County.
- July 2008: The Board of Supervisors chartered the Upstream Investments Project to understand the antecedents to criminal behavior and to identify upstream interventions that reduce downstream criminal justice costs.

### FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 19-20 Adopted	FY20-21 Projected	FY 21-22 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

### Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

None

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

### Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

### Attachments:

Resolution

### Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None