



Staff Report

File #: 23-0641

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

DATE: 08/16/2023
TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Community Services Department

SUBJECT:
FISCAL YEAR 2024 COMMUNITY BASED GRANT PROGRAM FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This staff report asks the City Council to review and approve the Community Based Organization Grant Program funding cycle award recommendations for Fiscal Year 2024. The Community Based Organization Grant Program utilizes funds from the American Rescue Plan Act to provide support to local non-profit organizations that suffered impacts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council review and approve the Community Based Organization Grant Program funding recommendations for Fiscal Year 2024 in the amount of \$166,667.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

In November 2021, the City Council allocated \$500,000 from the City's \$29.2 million allotment in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 COVID-19 pandemic relief funds to support local nonprofits. In February 2022, the City Council approved an annual allocation of \$166,666 over the next three fiscal years starting with Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 and ending in FY 2025 to create a new Community Based Organization Grant Program.

The Community Based Organization (CBO) Grant Program supports local non-profit organizations that suffered impacts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, utilizing the appropriated ARPA funds. Eligible nonprofits include those that offer services to Corona residents, which are aligned with the City's strategic plan but are not offered directly by the City of Corona. The CBO Grant Program is unique in that its structure is temporary, per the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding guidelines. The minimum funding award is set at \$2,500 and the maximum award is not-to-exceed \$25,000 per organization per funding cycle.

Following the City Council's approval of the CBO Grant Program in February 2022, City staff conducted initial outreach and performed a social media push in early March 2022. The outreach included notices emailed to the City's non-profit email distribution list of roughly 300 local organizations and current Historic Civic Center (HCC) tenants. Other outreach efforts included social media posts and a webpage with information about the CBO Grant Program.

Twenty-three CBO agencies submitted applications for the FY 2023 grant funding cycle, and 18 organizations were awarded funds. The total amount allotted in FY 2023 by the City Council was \$191,950 (Attachment 1). This amount exceeds the \$166,666 allocation because it includes the approved request from the Corona-Norco Settlement House for \$37,800 in grant funds. All but one agency collected their grant funds over the course of the year. The *Set the Captives Free Prison Ministry Program* was approved to receive \$4,000 in funding in FY 2023 and initially signed their grant terms and acknowledgments document; however, they did not submit or request any of their FY 2023 allotted funds. City staff were unable to connect with their representative after multiple contact attempts via phone and email.

Overall, the inaugural year of the CBO Grant Program was successful in supporting the City's eligible and approved local non-profit organizations that have suffered post-pandemic impacts.

ANALYSIS:

During the Spring of 2023, City staff conducted outreach via social media and various listservs for additional applicants for the FY 2024 CBO grant funding cycle in the amount of \$166,667. To encourage and garner more applicants, the initial deadline of May 18 was extended to June 15. Funding award parameters remained the same as directed by Council for FY 2023. During this new funding cycle, grant funding requests from organizations ranged from as low as \$5,000, to two applications that requested \$30,000 and \$59,715, which exceeded the maximum approved funding request of \$25,000.

The City received a total of 30 applications during the FY 2024 call for applications, with 17 of these applications submitted by a reoccurring CBO that received grant funds during the FY 2023 funding cycle, and 13 applications submitted by new organizations. Programs in FY 2024 vary greatly in purpose and scope, including: food distribution, improving galleries and teaching spaces, funding creative arts and dance programs, emergency aid for social services, and renovation and upgrades to gathering halls for veterans. A full description of programs can be found in Attachment 2.

Proposals were evaluated based on following criteria:

- The number of Corona residents or students served
- How the proposed programs aligned with the City of Corona's Strategic Plan and/or City Council priorities
- How well the program fit the current needs of the community

Any requests that were beyond the scope of the CBO and ARPA guidelines were not recommended for approval. Reasons for not recommending funding include, requesting funds to be utilized towards religious purposes, programs that did not align with the City's Strategic Plan or current needs, and programs that did not serve the broader Corona student or resident populations.

After reviewing the 30 applications, 27 were deemed as meeting the criteria and have been recommended for funding in FY 2024. The applications that were not recommended for funding include:

Agency Name	Program	FY 2024 Request
The CARE Project Inc.	<i>Holistic Wrap-Around Services for Survivors</i>	\$20,000
Junior League of Riverside	<i>Diaper Bank of the Inland Empire</i>	\$20,000
Peace Lutheran Church	<i>Community Services Coordinator</i>	\$25,000
Total		\$65,000

- The CARE Project, Inc. - Holistic Wrap-Around Services for Survivors: Their headquarters and services are based out in Riverside, CA, with partnerships and services predominantly serving those in the Riverside community. All in-person services and meetings are held at headquarters, which makes transportation difficult for residents in Corona.
- Junior League of Riverside - Diaper Bank of the Inland Empire: Diaper bank of the Inland Empire warehouse is located and based out of Riverside, CA, and primarily serves Riverside and Moreno Valley communities. Diaper distributions are held at this primary location, which makes transportation difficult for residents in Corona.
- Peace Lutheran Church - Community Services Coordinator: The funds utilized from the grant would be utilized towards staffing a position. It is budget relieving for the organization, but it does not directly impact general Corona residents.

FY 2024 Funding Recommendations

In an effort to ensure a wider reach of Corona residents and students benefit from CBO grant funds, staff recommends that the 10 new qualifying applicants receive 50% of their funding request, totaling \$106,867. The 17 recurring applicants who already received funding in FY 2023 are recommended to receive the remaining \$59,800 in grant funds, which will fund approximately 16% of each of these agencies requested amounts for FY 2024. Utilizing this funding methodology will allow all qualifying applicants, both new and recurring, an equitable chance to receive CBO grant funding. A full list of the applicants, programs, and recommended funding amounts for FY 2024 can be found in Attachment 3.

Per the ARPA funding allocation schedule, the City will have one more cycle of ARPA funding in FY 2025. The amount remaining for FY 2025 is dependent on the funding expended as agencies submit for reimbursement. As such, City staff will continue outreach with our local non-profit organizations throughout the year to ensure they are informed and well-positioned for future funding in FY 2025.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds were allocated in November 2021 and funding is available in the Community Based Organization Program, Operating & Maintenance Project No. 76770 within the

American Rescue Plan Act Fund 413. The Project has an available balance of \$316,608 after FY 2023 expenditures, which is sufficient for the recommended action per the Council approved ARPA funding allocation schedule to expend \$166,667 in FY 2024.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the commonsense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. The Community-Based Organization Grant Program provides funding to organizations to support their operations and will have no significant impact on the environment. Therefore, no environmental analysis is required.

PREPARED BY: VIOLA VAN, MANAGEMENT ANALYST II

REVIEWED BY: DONNA FINCH, INTERIM COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

Attachments:

1. FY23 Community Based Organizations (CBO) Grant Program Funding Awards
2. FY24 Community Based Organizations (CBO) Grant Program Applicant Descriptions
3. FY24 Community Based Organizations (CBO) Grant Program Funding Recommendations
4. Presentation