



Staff Report

File #: 24-0222

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

DATE: 04/03/2024

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Community Services Department

SUBJECT:

ACCEPTANCE OF \$185,238 IN GRANT FUNDING FROM THE CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY FOR THE ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAM AND FUTURE APPROPRIATIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This staff report asks the City Council to accept and appropriate the California Library Literacy Services grant for English as a Second Language Services. The total award for Fiscal Year 2025 beginning July 1, 2024, is \$91,850, and the award for Fiscal Year 2026 beginning July 1, 2025, is \$93,388.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council:

- a. Accept grant funding from the California State Library for the Corona Public Library's English as a Second Language program through the California Library Literacy Services Program in the amount of \$185,238.
- b. Authorize an appropriation in the amount of \$91,850 to the Community Services Department's operating budget and increase estimated revenue by the same amount in the Adult and Family Literacy Grant Fund 442 for Fiscal Year 2025.
- c. Authorize an appropriation in the amount of \$93,388 to the Community Services Department's operating budget and increase estimated revenue by the same amount in the Adult and Family Literacy Grant Fund 442 for Fiscal Year 2026.
- d. Authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to adjust the budget accordingly if Grantor distributes additional funds to grant participants.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

The Corona Public Library English as a Second Language (ESL) program aims to inclusively serve our diverse populations, most of whom speak English as a second language or foreign language and/or are identified as foreign-born. Adult learners may include, but are not limited to, immigrants, refugees and other residents in the neighboring cities who wish to improve their English proficiency.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the Corona Public Library was awarded \$81,648 from the California State Library for the ESL program. The Corona Public Library currently has a partnership with both the Corona-Norco Unified School District (CNUSD) Adult Education, and Norco College for ESL classes. Most of these classes are offered in the morning and evening, with no afternoon classes available. In partnership with the Corona Public Library, CNUSD offers an ESL class at the library, twice a week on Monday and Wednesday, from 10:00am to 1:00pm. This ESL class is offered through class instructions with an average of 20 students.

Some gaps in the program have been identified, such as the lack of afternoon ESL and Citizenship Preparation classes at the sites of CNUSD, the Corona Public Library, and Norco College. A requirement of at least 25 enrolled students by CNUSD makes it difficult for the Corona Public Library to open new classes on-site under the partnership agreement. Small-group instructions and one-on-one tutoring are not offered by either CNUSD or Norco College. In addition, language barriers, public transportation, and a college learning environment may be contributing factors that may discourage adult learners from attending classes at CNUSD and Norco College.

ANALYSIS:

A grant application was submitted to the California State Library for additional ESL funding to fill in various gaps in the program. The Corona Public Library was awarded \$91,850 for Fiscal Year 2025 and \$93,388 for Fiscal Year 2026 through this grant, which will allow the library to continue to offer weekday ESL classes in the afternoon, citizenship preparation in smaller classes in the afternoon and evening, and small group and one-on-one ESL and citizenship tutoring during the library's hours. All ESL classes will run as an open enrollment throughout the year to provide greater flexibility so a wide array of students from various backgrounds can register and attend the classes. Instructors and tutors may keep track of students' progress by using students' roles and goals, learners' portfolio, class assessments and homework, where applicable, instead of solely relying on California's standard curriculum and students' mandatory attendance that might not be inviting and welcoming to working but eligible adult learners.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Approval of the recommended actions will result in an appropriation and estimated revenue increase in the amount of \$91,850 to the Community Services Department's operating budget in the Adult and Family Literacy Grant Fund 442 for Fiscal Year 2025. Additionally, approval of the recommended actions will result in an appropriation and estimated revenue increase in the amount of \$93,388 to the Community Services Department's operating budget within the Adult and Family Literacy Grant Fund 442 for Fiscal Year 2026. These grant funds do not have a matching requirement. Grant funds must be fully expended in accordance with the City's approved budget by June 30, 2025, and June 30, 2026, respectively.

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 no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. This action is to accept a grant award from the California State Library, and there is no possibility that accepting this grant will have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, no environmental analysis is required.

PREPARED BY: KATHERINE BACKUS, MANAGEMENT ANALYST I

REVIEWED BY: DONNA FINCH, COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

Attachment:

1. Exhibit 1 - Grant Approval Letter