



Staff Report

File #: 24-0463

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

DATE: 06/05/2024

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Community Services Department

SUBJECT:
FISCAL YEAR 2025 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 2025. The Community Based Organization Grant Program utilizes American Rescue Plan Act funds to support local non-profit organizations that suffered impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This round of the Community Based Organization Grant Program is the last year of the three-year program.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council review and approve the Community Based Organization Grant Program funding recommendations for Fiscal Year 2025 in the amount of \$152,289.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

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

The 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 non-profits include those that offer services to Corona residents, and their proposed programs 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 ARPA funding guidelines. The minimum funding award is \$2,500, and the maximum award is not to exceed \$25,000 per organization per funding cycle.

A total of 23 applications were received from various organizations 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. This amount exceeded the \$166,666 allocation because it included the Council-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. Ultimately, for FY 2023, \$187,950 was reimbursed to local organizations through the CBO Grant Program.

For the FY 2024 grant funding cycle, the City received a total of 30 applications during the FY 2024 call for applications. Of these, 17 were from organizations that had received grant funds during the FY 2023 funding cycle, and 13 were from new organizations. After a thorough review, 27 applications met the criteria and were recommended for funding in FY 2024. Ultimately, 27 organizations were approved for funding, and the total combined funding amount was \$166,667. However, one organization, Corona-Norco United Way, was authorized to receive \$4,000 in funding but did not submit or request any of its FY 2024 allotted funds. City staff were unable to connect with their representative after multiple contact attempts. Additionally, a few other organizations submitted reimbursement receipts for amounts less than their requested amounts. Also, it appears that due to an apparent clerical error, one organization, Inland Vineyard Christian Fellowship, was overpaid by \$35.31. Of the \$166,667 allocated, only \$159,761.46 was reimbursed to local organizations through the CBO Grant Program.

Between the FY 2023 and FY 2024 grant funding cycles, a total of \$347,711 has been reimbursed to local community organizations. As such, a balance of \$152,289 is currently available for the third and final grant funding cycle in FY 2025.

ANALYSIS:

The FY 2025 CBO grant funding cycle application was released on March 12, 2024. City staff conducted initial outreach and performed a social media push in early March 2024. The outreach included notices emailed to the City's non-profit email distribution list of local organizations and current Historic Civic Centre (HCC) tenants. Other outreach efforts included social media posts and a webpage with information about the CBO Grant Program.

To encourage and garner more applicants, the initial April 11, 2024 deadline was extended to April 25, 2024. Funding award parameters remained the same as directed by the Council for FY 2023 and FY 2024. During this new funding cycle, grant funding requests from organizations ranged from as low as \$3,500 to two applications that requested \$26,000 and \$74,350, which exceeded the maximum approved funding request of \$25,000. Ultimately, 25 local organizations submitted applications, and the total combined requested amount for the FY 2025 grant funding cycle was \$517,400.

Proposals were evaluated based on the 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

Upon examining the 25 applications, all the applications were deemed as meeting the criteria and have been recommended for funding in FY 2025. Three applications were new organizations to the grant program, while the remaining 22 organizations were former applicants who received funding through this CBO grant program. A list of all 25 organizations and a summary of their proposed programs are attached in Exhibit 1.

FY 2025 Funding Recommendations

In an effort to ensure a wider reach of Corona residents and students benefit from CBO grant funds, staff recommends that the three new qualifying applicants receive 50% of their funding request (or 50% of the maximum allowable amount - \$25,000), totaling \$27,500. The 22 recurring applicants who already received funding in FY 2023 and/or FY 2024 are recommended to receive the remaining \$124,789 in grant funds, which will fund approximately 30.285% of each of these organizations’ requested amounts for FY 2025. Utilizing this funding methodology will allow all qualifying applicants, both new and recurring, an equitable chance to receive CBO grant funding. A complete list of the applicants, programs, and recommended funding amounts for FY 2025 can be found in Exhibit 2.

Per the ARPA funding allocation schedule, this cycle of ARPA funding in FY 2025 will be the last funding cycle. As such, all the remaining funds for this program have been recommended to be allocated.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

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. After FY 2023 and FY 2024 expenditures, this grant program has an available balance of \$152,289, which is sufficient for the recommended action per the Council-approved ARPA funding allocation schedule to expend \$152,289 in FY 2025.

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: ANDREW KIM, CITY MANAGEMENT FELLOW

REVIEWED BY: DONNA FINCH, COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

Attachments:

1. Exhibit 1 - FY 2025 Community Based Organizations (CBO) Grant Program Applicant Descriptions
2. Exhibit 2 - FY 2025 Community Based Organizations (CBO) Grant Program Funding Recommendations
3. Exhibit 3 - Presentation