City of Asheville Staff Report

City Council Meeting Date: *September 8, 2026*

Staff Resources: *Promise Boseman, Workforce Development Coordinator, and Rachel Taylor, Economic Development Division Manager, Housing and Economic Development Department*

Action Requested: *Approval of a resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute the agreement with the Asheville City Schools Foundation (ACSF) for the disbursement of college scholarship funds to graduating seniors from the City of Asheville Youth Leadership Academy (CAYLA).*

Background:

- The City of Asheville Youth Leadership Academy (CAYLA) is a program for high school students that focuses on career exploration, leadership development, and the acquisition of 21st-century job skills. CAYLA provides young people with work experience in Asheville, helping them develop their future careers.
- Established in 2007, the CAYLA program has been sustained by financial support from both Buncombe County and the City of Asheville.
- Although the ACSF agreement has operated under a five-year term for the past five years, it will transition to a one-year contract moving forward to better streamline the process.
- The CAYLA program also provides each graduating student with a $2,000 scholarship to support their continuing education at their higher learning institution of choice. These scholarships are disbursed by the ACSF.
- The City has agreed to commit $54,500 to support the scholarship program that will provide CAYLA graduates with a $2,000 scholarship.
- Asheville City Schools Foundation has been a key partner in providing scholarship payments and support for the CAYLA program since 2016.
- As an essential partner in this initiative, Buncombe County provides financial support for the CAYLA program through a separate agreement. Currently, the county provides a total of $65,000 towards the scholarship program.
- The funding received from Buncombe County is transferred to the Asheville City Schools Foundation via this agreement.
- Executing this yearly agreement enables the Asheville City Schools Foundation to maintain its administrative role in the management and allocation of scholarship funds for these students.

Vendor Outreach:

- N/A

Council Vision 2036 Focus Area(s):

- Thriving Local Economy

Council Priority Recovery Area(s):

- N/A

Committee(s):

- N/A

Fiscal Impact:

- Under the terms of this agreement, the City will provide a $2,000 scholarship for each qualifying senior, accompanied by a 5% administrative fee payable to the Foundation. These expenditures are accounted for within the approved FY 2026-27 Operating Budget.

Suggested Motion:

- Motion to authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement with the Asheville City Schools Foundation, facilitating the allocation of $2,000 scholarship awards to qualifying graduates alongside a 5% administrative fee for the Foundation, not exceeding a total of $54,500.

Attachment(s):

- Resolution

City of Asheville Resolution Number 26-___

Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Asheville City Schools Foundation to facilitate the allocation of scholarship awards to qualifying graduates alongside a 5% administrative fee for the Foundation

Whereas, the City of Asheville Youth Leadership Academy (CAYLA) is an academy supported and maintained by the City of Asheville; and

Whereas, the mission of CAYLA is to increase the City's and community's professional workforce by exposing youth from low-wealth households to the various public service careers available in the Asheville area; and

Whereas, since its inception in FY 2007-08 when the City began the CAYLA program the City Council has passed resolutions directing the City Manager to enter into agreements with the Asheville City Schools Foundation to administer the CAYLA program; and

Whereas, City Council Resolution 22-182 authorizes the City Manager to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Asheville City Schools Foundation to administer the annual disbursement of CAYLA scholarships to colleges at which CAYLA graduates are enrolled following the successful completion of the CAYLA program; and

Whereas, CAYLA has been nationally recognized by the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. In 2011, CAYLA was honored with the North Carolina Governor's Award for Volunteer Service. CAYLA is an integral part of the City's "Grow Our Own" initiative, as envisioned by the Asheville City Council. The City is committed to giving Asheville's young people the opportunity to stay and work in Asheville, as well as to have valuable work experiences that will advance their future careers wherever they go. The program is also supported in part by Buncombe County; and

Whereas, the City has agreed to commit $54,500 in FY 26-27 to support of the creation of a scholarship program (Program) that will provide CAYLA graduates with a $2,000 scholarship award and supports the continued funding of this program; and

Whereas, the Sponsor desires to partner with the City by providing administrative services to the City, in connection with the Program, which will award each of the eligible City of Asheville CAYLA students with a $2,000 scholarship award;

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Asheville that:

The City Manager is hereby authorized to execute an agreement with Asheville City Schools Foundation to accept financial support for the CAYLA program up to $54,500 for FY27 of the program.

Read, approved and adopted this 8th day of September, 2026.

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Esther E. Manheimer, Mayor

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Brad Branham, City Attorney

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Magdalen Burleson, City Clerk