STAFF REPORT

City Council Meeting Date: April 25, 2023

Subject: Strategic Partnership Grant Program Funding Recommendations

Staff Resources: Rachel Taylor, Economic Development Specialist

Action Requested: Adoption of a resolution approving recommendations for Strategic Partnership Grant Program awards, authorizing the City Manager to execute grant agreements, and to pursue an additional round of funding following the conclusion of the pilot grant agreements that are set to end on June 30, 2023:

Background:

- During the January 17, 2023 Equity and Engagement Committee (EEC) meeting, staff received confirmation to maintain the direction of the pilot grant program using Strategic Partnership Funds (SPF) to address the opportunity gap for low to moderate income school-aged youth.
- A $35,000 award minimum was established to maximize community benefit.
- Applications for the SPF Grant Program were accepted February 22- March 31, 2023.
- 23 applications from qualified agencies were received.
- On Thursday, April 13 the EEC Committee and Evaluation Panel heard presentations from applicant agencies to receive additional details about each of the grant proposals.
- The Evaluation Committee consisted of the following individuals:
    - Heather Curry, Budget Analyst-Finance Department, City of Asheville
    - Nicole Cush, Principal-School of Inquiry and Life Sciences at Asheville (SILSA)
    - JeWana Grier-McEachin, Executive Director, Asheville Buncombe Institute of Parity Achievement
    - Marcus Kirkman-Equity and Inclusion Consultant-Equity and Inclusion Department, City of Asheville
    - Alex Mitchiner-Workforce Programs Coordinator/CAYLA Program Director-Community and Economic Development Department, City of Asheville
    - Reggie Richardson-Executive Director-My Brothers House/Consultant
    - Alayna Schmidt-Equity and Inclusion Consultant-Equity and Inclusion Department, City of Asheville
    - Amy Weisner-Educator-Buncombe County Early and Middle College; Previously Buncombe County and Asheville City Schools
- On April 18, 2023 the EEC Committee reviewed recommendations from the Evaluation Committee and recommended funding six (6) agencies for a total grant award of $356,209.
- The EEC Committee's recommendations are included as part of the suggested City Council motion below.
- The intent of the grant program is to act on recommendations informed from the pilot program process and continue to provide funding while on-going improvements are made to the grant program.
- The program will be reviewed by the Equity and Engagement Committee with any additional improvements and recommendations implemented year-over-year while continuing to issue grant awards.

Council Goal(s):

- An Equitable and Diverse Community
- A Connected and Engaged Community

Committee(s):
- On April 18, 2023 the Equity and Engagement Committee reviewed the Evaluation Committee's recommendations and made funding recommendations for full City Council consideration.
- The Committee unanimously approved (3-0) the Evaluation Committee's recommendations and requested staff come back following the conclusion of the pilot agreements with another round of funding consideration later this calendar year.

Pro(s):
- Additional resources available in summer 2023 to help address the opportunity gap and provide programming for school-aged youth.
- Opportunity to test recommendations based on feedback from the grant pilot.
- Enhanced community impact with $35,000 minimum per grant award.

Con(s):
- Reporting and agreement from the pilot are not yet finalized, resulting in information gaps related to reporting, impacts/outcomes, and the total amount of funds available.

Fiscal Impact:
- A total of $577,500 will be available to support the Strategic Partnership Program in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24, including $335,500 unused from previous fiscal years and a $242,000 allocation currently planned in the FY 2023-24 budget.
- Should the City Council authorize funding the full $356,209 recommended as part of the Strategic Partnership Grant program, the Strategic Partnership Program will have a remaining balance of $221,291 that will be used for future grants.

Suggested Motion:
- Motion to approve the recommended allocations of the Strategic Partnership Grant Program funding awards as shown below and authorize the City Manager to execute the grant agreements with further direction to pursue an additional round of funding following the conclusion of the pilot grant agreements that are set to end on June 30, 2023:

Program	Agency	Recommended Funding
All Aboard! Community Literacy Training	Read to Succeed of Asheville/Buncombe	$40,000.00
To & Through College Access and Completion Initiative	OpenDoors Asheville	$126,209.00
HOPE 4 the Future Summer Program	Umoja Health, Wellness, & Justice Collective	$60,000.00
Providing the I/DD Community with Supports and Resources	The Arc of Buncombe County	$50,000.00
Project Lighten Up Summer Learning Academy	Getting Back to the Basics	$35,000.00
Black Wall Street Jr - Making Education Actionable in Asheville	Black Wall Street AVL	$45,000.00

Total Grant Award Recommendation	**$356,209**

Attachment(s)

- Resolution
- Presentation
- Applications
- City Website Grant Information
- Evaluation Committee Recommendations
- Evaluation Committee Scoring Matrix
- Strategic Partnership Application Comparison 2022 Pilot-2023 Applications

RESOLUTION NO. 23-_____

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE RECOMMENDATION OF ALLOCATIONS OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM FUNDING AWARDS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVISION AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE THE SPF GRANT AGREEMENTS AND THE AGREEMENT FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

WHEREAS, Feedback from the Equity and Engagement Committee, community members, and City of Asheville staff is being used to refine the scope of the Strategic Partnership Program to focus on addressing impacts of the opportunity gap by supporting low to moderate income school-aged youth in and out of the classroom; and

WHEREAS, the Strategic Partnership Program is funded through the City of Asheville's General Fund; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C.G.S. 160D-1311, the City is authorized to appropriate and expend funds for community development programs and activities, including programs concerning the education and welfare needs of persons of low and moderate income; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to test recommendations based on the pilot grant program, staff received direction from the Equity and Engagement Committee to continue the grant program; and

WHEREAS, an Evaluation Panel consisting of City staff, representatives from Asheville City and Buncombe County Schools, and community organizations led an evaluation and scoring process based on the demonstrated ability of each proposal to positively impact the opportunity gap for low to moderate income school-aged youth; and

WHEREAS, the application process, Evaluation Panel review, and feedback from the City Council Equity and Engagement Committee led to the recommendations for grant program funding as follows:

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Total Grant Award Recommendation		**$356,209**

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE THAT:

The recommended allocations for the Strategic Partnership Grant Program funding as outlined above are hereby approved and the City Manager is authorized to execute the SPF grant agreements and the agreement for technical assistance.

Read, approved and adopted this 25th day of April, 2023.

_____ _____

City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

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City Attorney