

Information Item

Date: September 9, 2019

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Ben Rowe, Assistant City Manager
Patrice Y. Toney, Budget and Evaluation Director

Subject:
Community Agency Funding Process Update

Strategic Focus Area: Service Excellence

Strategic Objective: Ensure Service Delivery Efficiency and Effectiveness

Strategic Plan Action Item: No

Key Work Item: Yes



During the Fiscal Year 2019-20 Finance Committee Budget Workshops, staff was directed to look at methods that would enhance the existing community agency grant funding process.

A staff committee convened to discuss the existing process, recommendations mentioned by Council, best practices by other local governments (e.g. City of Raleigh), and strategies that can be immediately incorporated with limited additional resources.

Below are recommendations to enhance the community agency process this fiscal year.

1. Online Training Videos

The Budget and Evaluation Office will add videos or slideshow presentations of the kick-off training and technical workshop, to include: information on the request for proposal (RFP), various funding sources, how to access and complete an online application in Neighborly, funding timeline, frequently asked questions, and other information that will be helpful to an applicant. The video/slideshows will allow agencies to review the information presented at the training sessions at their own pace and will serve as a reference point if they have questions.

The Office of Performance and Accountability (OPA) will create an informational slideshow on how to develop outcome measures for their agency, which is a component of the grant application.

2. Enhance Web Presence

The City of Winston-Salem is launching a new website that will allow the community agency funding process information to have an enhanced presence on the website, improve online accessibility to community agency grantee information, and organize community grantee resources in a more user-friendly format.

3. Strategic Plan Alignment

The Office of Performance and Accountability (OPA) will align the currently funded community agencies with the top 16 Council priorities/strategies from the 2019 Strategic Plan Update. All community agencies are required to list how (and if) they are aligned with the City's strategic plan in a scored section of the application.

4. Enhance Marketing Strategies

The Budget and Evaluation Office will work with the Marketing and Communications Department to promote the kick-off of the community agency funding process and offer community education about the timeline, website resources, training sessions, and other information about the process.

5. Online Reporting

Currently funded community agencies will be able to enter their quarterly reports and requests for payment in the Neighborly system beginning in October of 2019. Each quarter, agencies will have to report on their progress toward their annual performance goals in the system. An annual report will be run from Neighborly on end-of-year performance goals/outcomes which will be included in the annual Community Agency Update to the Mayor, Mayor Pro-Tempore, and City Council.

CASE STUDY REVIEW

The City of Raleigh community agency funding process was reviewed as a best practice. They provide multiple grant opportunities for nonprofit entities, businesses, and neighborhood groups in the following categories:

- Arts Grant Program
- Community Enhancement Grant
- Human Services Agency Funding
- Other Outside Agency Grants (*Capital projects only. Maximum 3 years of continuous funding.*)
- Grants for Businesses
- Neighborhood Improvement Funds

Various departments are responsible for administering these grants. They have invested in approximately three full time equivalents that coordinate grant activities from the application process and oversee monitoring and reporting. Multiple departments such as Finance, Risk Management, Community Development, Human Relations, etc., have specific roles in the review, approval, and monitoring of applications. The level of monitoring largely depends on the type of grant and the department that oversees the contract, but it may include:

- Providing performance data on a bi-annual or quarterly basis
- Submitting interim and final written reports
- Adhering to federal reporting requirements
- Complying with site visits on a rotating basis for programmatic or financial purposes

Payment schedules also vary based on the type of grant. All payments are made as a reimbursement and must be requested in writing with justification of expenditures.