

REPORT TO SUBCOMMITTEE

SUBJECT

Review the Community Events and Neighborhood Grant Program Eligibility Guidelines

BACKGROUND

Each year, the City of Sunnyvale allocates funding to support community events and neighborhood groups through two programs: the Community Events Grant Program (CEGP) and the Neighborhood Grant Program (NGP) based on funding recommendations from the Community Event and Neighborhood Grant Distribution Subcommittee (Subcommittee).

The Subcommittee consists of three members of the City Council charged with conducting an annual grant review process that includes: 1) setting a meeting schedule; 2) reviewing the efficiency of the annual grants allocation process and making recommendations for any changes to the full Council as needed; and 3) serving as the official grant review committee.

During the FY 2017/18 grant application review meeting on April 28, 2017, the Subcommittee recommended evaluating and clarifying the program eligibility guidelines for both programs prior to the FY 2018/19 grant process. Draft meeting minutes from that Subcommittee meeting are included as Attachment 1. On June 20, 2017 at the City Council meeting, councilmembers also acknowledged the importance of evaluating the eligibility guidelines.

The purpose of this report is to provide the Subcommittee with a summary of the current program eligibility guidelines and to seek recommendations to further clarify what groups and organizations are eligible and the type of events or projects to which they can apply and receive grant funds. Should the Subcommittee wish to propose changes to the existing grant eligibility guidelines, a report from the Subcommittee would be scheduled for City Council consideration on October 17, 2017.

EXISTING POLICY

Council Policy 7.2.1, Community Engagement - Goals and Policies
Council Policy 7.2.18, Special Events

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The action being considered does not constitute a "project" with the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378 (b) (4) in that it is a fiscal activity that does not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potential significant impact on the environment.

DISCUSSION

Below is an overview of the FY 2017/18 eligibility guidelines for the two grant programs.

Community Events Grant Program (CEGP)

Applications for the CEGP must be submitted by a non-profit or not-for-profit organization. Religious organizations are eligible to apply; however, the funds may not be used for a religious purpose including for the promotion of any sect, church, creed, or sectarian organization, nor to conduct any religious service or ceremony.

Events eligible to receive grant funding must:

- be held within Sunnyvale City limits,
- be of a citywide nature and be free and open to the public,
- demonstrate an ability to draw a crowd of at least 500 people,
- occur during the fiscal year calendar that the grant was awarded, and
- not be a fundraiser event.

See Attachment 2 for complete program eligibility guidelines for the CEGP.

Neighborhood Grant Program (NGP)

Applications for the NGP must be submitted by representatives of a neighborhood group. Preference is given to neighborhood associations, mobile home associations, and neighborhood groups that are interested in becoming a neighborhood association.

Events and projects eligible to receive grant funding must:

- Be neighborhood-focused, initiated and supported by residents living in the neighborhood and focus on one or more of the following areas:
 1. Increasing communication among neighbors;
 2. Building bridges between cultural groups
 3. Improving the physical condition of the neighborhood; or
 4. Enhancing neighborhood pride and identity.
- Not be political in nature, including but not limited to, the support of a proposed initiative, ballot measure or candidate.

See Attachment 3 for complete program eligibility guidelines for the NGP.

FY 2017/18 Grant Review Process and Funding Decisions

For FY 2017/18, the recommended budget for distribution through the grants process was \$10,250 for the CEGP and \$6,278 for the NGP.

The Sunnyvale Downtown Association (SDA) was the only organization that applied for the CEGP, submitting applications for four of their signature events. Council accepted the Subcommittee's recommendation to combine the four grant applications into a single grant agreement and award

\$10,250 to SDA to be used for eligible expenses identified within the four events at their discretion.

Thirteen applications were submitted for the NGP - nine from neighborhood groups, two from Sunnyvale homeowner's associations (HOA) and two from advocacy groups. The Council approved the Subcommittee's recommendation to approve grants in the amount of \$6,278 to fund all nine neighborhood groups and to allocate \$900 from the Council Service Level Set Aside Fund to fund the two HOA's. The two advocacy groups were removed from consideration based on the Subcommittee's interpretation of the program eligibility guidelines.

During the FY 2017/18 grant review process, the Subcommittee recommended that the program eligibility guidelines be re-evaluated to clarify and provide direction to staff on the following:

- Eligibility of homeowner associations to receive grant funding, acknowledging that these homeowners pay property taxes and other resident taxes equal to other residents and that dues for homeowners associations are generally limited to repairs, maintenance, and common area services. At issue is whether homeowner associations should be eligible to receive grant funds and if so, how the City distinguish between those projects deemed appropriate for grant funding and those projects that could potentially be funded by a particular homeowner's association fee structure or whether these residents are being deprived equal access to tax funded programs for which they pay toward.
- Should the program allow for projects or events that span multiple neighborhoods? The current guidelines limit projects to a single neighborhood and a review of policy relative to collaborative efforts could be considered.
- Should proposals that seek to build community through advocacy be eligible for funding? During the FY16/17 grants process, a proposal was submitted that sought funding to organize the neighborhood about the issue of airport noise. The Subcommittee expressed concerns about funding projects with the potential to segment the community on a particular policy issue. In the end, the Subcommittee did not fund the project, but did suggest that the issue be re-evaluated for future cycles.

Staff will be working with the City Attorney's office with respect to the issues related to the eligibility of homeowner associations with the goal of providing guidance to the Subcommittee at their meeting. In addition to the items noted above, it is recommended that the Subcommittee review all provisions of the grant program guidelines to identify any additional areas for revision.

Should the Subcommittee wish to propose changes, a report from the Subcommittee would be scheduled for City Council consideration on October 17, 2017.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact is anticipated with the proposed review of eligibility criteria as the amount of available funding will be addressed separately during the normal budget process.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made through posting of the Subcommittee agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board, on the City's website, and the availability of the agenda and report in the Office of the

City Clerk.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Continue with the grant eligibility guidelines as currently written.
2. Recommend changes to the guidelines and bring to the full City Council for consideration.
3. Take other action as determined by Subcommittee.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff makes no recommendation.

Prepared by: Alisha Rodrigues, Community Services Coordinator II

Reviewed by: Daniel Wax, Superintendent of Community Services

Reviewed by: Cynthia E. Bojorquez, Director of Library and Community Services

Reviewed by: Walter C. Rossmann, Assistant City Manager

Approved by: Deanna J. Santana, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Minutes of April 28, 2017 Subcommittee Meeting
2. CEGP Eligibility Guidelines
3. NGP Eligibility Guidelines