



Legislation Text

File #: 24-0002, **Version:** 1

TO: Mayor Richard C. Irvin

FROM: Chris Ragona, Community Development Manager

DATE: January 9, 2024

SUBJECT:

A Resolution Approving the 2024 Quality of Life Grants in the Amount of \$1,017,000

PURPOSE:

To approve the 2024 Quality of Life Grants by resolution. This approval is necessary in order to award and process 2024 grants.

BACKGROUND:

The Quality of Life Grant (QOL) application process opened on August 25, 2023 and closed on September 22, 2023. For 2024, a total amount of \$1,017,000 Quality of Life funding is available. The Quality of Life Program is primarily funded through the City's gaming tax (approximately 88%) which comes directly from Hollywood Casino Aurora. The remainder of the 2024 QOL Program budget (approximately 12%) is funded through the City's Safety, Health, and Public Enhancement Fund (SHAPE).

City staff outreach efforts included notifications to prior and current QOL recipients and prospective first-time applicants. The following table outlines the City's outreach attempts:

Outreach Opportunity	Date
Pre-Application Announcement Email - Notice #1	8-11-2023
Community Resource Team Email Release	8-11-2023
Pre-Application Announcement Email - Notice #2	8-13-2023
Beacon Newspaper Advertisement	8-13-2023
Pre-Application Announcement Email - Notice #3	8-18-2023
Pre-Application Virtual Workshop	8-25-2023
Final Reminder Regarding Application Due Date	9-21-2023
Application Due Date	9-22-2023

Under each email notification, an estimated 520 representatives from non-profit agencies, elected officials, advisory boards, interested businesses, and residents of the City were provided with information regarding the City's Quality of Life and Community Development Block Grant

opportunities. The City also contacted other area grant providers via email to share the City's grant opportunities and published an advertisement and press release in The Beacon News. The non-mandatory pre-application virtual workshop was attended by approximately 75 representatives. The workshop was recorded and posted on the City's website together with the workshop's presentation slides.

The 2024 Quality of Life funding round closed on September 22, 2023 with 49 applications requesting a total of \$1.75 million dollars, which was in line with the number of applicants and funding requests submitted for last year's Quality of Life funding.

City staff members that made up the scoring review committee included Chris Ragona, Community Development Manager, Amy Munro, Redevelopment Coordinator, and Adam Grubbs, Management Assistant. Each member of the scoring committee reviewed various aspects of each application to focus on the following criteria:

- Completeness and quality of the application
- Budget including sources and uses
- Grant management experience
- Past performance
- Ability to operate or carry on project with a reduced amount of funds
- Performance metrics
- Duplication of services
- Ability to serve Aurora residents based on portion of funding request and total program budget

City staff also completed good standing checks with the City's Division of Revenue and Collections, State of Illinois, Internal Revenue Service, and federal debarment registry to confirm each applicant's funding eligibility. Numerous site visits were completed and additional research was conducted to confirm the accuracy of the applicants' described service areas and outcomes.

Lastly, the total number of youth and education applications received was the highest subgroup with 22 applications submitted. City staff reviewed each application to determine the location of services to be provided and the impacted schools. In total, 96% of City schools, or 46 schools, were included under the City's 2024 Quality of Life applications.

After a review of each application, City staff organized projects by the requested amount, funding availability, and funding proposal quality. A total of forty (40) applications are recommended for 2024 Quality of Life ("QOL"), and nine (9) applications are recommended for denial. A brief summary of each application received, the funding requested, recommendations for funding has been attached (Attachment A). Additional information including an agency background and detailed project proposal have also been included (Attachment B). Each funded agency, with the exception of sponsorships, will be required to submit quarterly reports and sign a contract in order to receive payments. Failure to submit quarterly reports or to demonstrate direct service to Aurora clients will result in a reduction or denial of payment requests.

DISCUSSION:

Similar to prior years, the 2024 QOL Grant program will continue to evolve. In addition to

performance outcome metrics, the submittal of success stories will remain a priority and will be required as part of the QOL grantee's 4th quarter progress report.

In 2024, site visits will remain a priority to complete basic monitoring and when feasible, a tour of the funded program sites and facilities. The results of set-up meetings, as well as quarterly progress reports will be further utilized to increase partnerships and to reduce the duplication of services.

The account numbers where funds have been requested for the 2024 budget are as follows:

215-1302-419.53-25: \$469,000
215-1302-419.50-50: \$10,000
215-1370-440.50-30: \$296,000
215-1360-450.53-26: \$119,000
255-3536-421.50-05: \$123,000

IMPACT STATEMENT:

The 2024 QOL Grants will support forty (40) activities. These funds will support a wide variety of agencies and fund programs such as youth services, senior services, job training, literacy services, museums, persons with special needs care, and other programs benefitting the residents of Aurora.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends adoption of this Resolution authorizing the funding of the 2024 Quality of Life Grants in the amount of \$1,017,000.

cc: Public Health, Safety and Transportation Committee



CITY OF AURORA, ILLINOIS

RESOLUTION NO. _____
DATE OF PASSAGE _____

A Resolution Approving the 2024 Quality of Life Grants in the amount of \$1,017,000

WHEREAS, the City of Aurora has a population of more than 25,000 persons and is, therefore, a home rule unit under subsection (a) of Section 6 of Article VII of the Illinois Constitution of 1970; and

WHEREAS, subject to said Section, a home rule unit may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs for the protection of the public health, safety, morals, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the City of Aurora's Quality of Life Grant program has supported dozens of local non-profits since 2008, and

WHEREAS, the Quality of Life Grant program has helped serve thousands of people, and

WHEREAS, the financial support of local non-profit partners is critical to continue to provide a wide range of programs and services, and

WHEREAS, the Quality of Life Committee has reviewed the 2024 QOL applications and made recommendations for funding for 2024, and

WHEREAS, funds are requested in the 2024 budget in the following accounts:

215-1302-419.53-25: \$469,000, 215-1302-419.50-50: \$10,000, 215-1370-440.50-30: \$296,000, 215-1360-450.53-26: \$119,000, 255-3536-421.50-05: \$123,000.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Aurora, Illinois, as follows: subject to the approval of this item in the 2024 budget, the 2024 Quality of Life Grants are approved and incorporated as part of the 2024 City of Aurora Annual Budget.