



Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of Neighborhood and Community Relations

Date: March 23, 2015

To: The Honorable Cam Gordon, Chair of the Health, Environment and Community Engagement Committee

Referral to: Ways and Means Committee

Subject: **Community Innovation Fund**

Recommendation: Approve the guidelines for the Community Innovation Fund and amend the 2015 General Appropriation Resolution by increasing the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department (NCR) Special Revenue Fund 01800 8450-200 by \$300,000.00 from existing fund balance.

Previous Directives: On August 8, 2008, the City Council received and filed the "Framework for the Future," the final report of the City Council's NRP Work Group. This report recommended the creation of a Community Innovation Fund to provide grant funding to neighborhood groups to encourage innovations for City-defined priorities.

Department Information

Prepared by: Howard Blin, Community Engagement Manager
Bob Cooper, Senior NRP/Citizen Participation Specialist

Approved by:
David Rubedor, Neighborhood and Community Relations Director _____

Spencer Cronk, City Coordinator _____

Presenters in Committee: Howard Blin, David Zaffran

Summary:

The Community Innovation Fund (CIF) will provide funding to neighborhood organizations for projects that address City goals. Unlike the Community Participation Program, which allocates funding to neighborhoods on a formula basis, the CIF would allocate funding on a competitive basis.

The first round of the program is proposed for 2015 through 2016 and allocate up to \$300,000. The maximum award for any project would be \$30,000. Funding applications are to be reviewed by the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission with recommendations for funding coming before the Health, Environment and Community Engagement Committee.

Financial Impact

- Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget
Dept Name: Neighborhood and Community Relations
Fund Name: Special Revenue Fund 01800 8450-200
Amount: \$300,000.00
- This action is within the department's Business Plan

Background

The Community Innovation Fund (CIF) was first proposed in the 2008 Framework for the Future which was developed by the City Council's NRP Working Group. The CIF was proposed to fund neighborhood-based solutions to City priorities. This is in contrast to the Community Participation Program (then called the Neighborhood Investment Fund), a formula funding program which funds neighborhood-identified priorities. The following is an excerpt from the Framework for the Future.

The Community Innovation Fund:

Grant Funding to Encourage Innovations for City-Identified Priorities

A Community Innovation Fund will be established as a companion fund to the Neighborhood Investment Fund. The innovation fund will provide grants to officially designated neighborhood organizations to seek out innovative and locally-relevant approaches to City-identified goals or problems.

- *The City Council and Mayor will set priorities for this fund on a biannual basis. The Neighborhood and Community Advisory Board will then work with the Council and Mayor to ensure that the design of grants is accessible and relevant to localized programming.*

- *Guidelines for these grants should place a high priority on proposals that reflect collaboration between two or more neighborhood organizations or between neighborhood organizations and other community-based organizations.*
- *The Advisory Board will review proposals and recommend grant awards to the City Council and Mayor.*

Program Development

At the February 24th meeting, the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission recommended approval of the guidelines for the program. The guidelines were developed by the Commission and staff and followed an extensive review process in 2014 with members of neighborhood organizations that included:

- Prior to developing the draft guidelines for the program, nine listening sessions were held throughout the city. At these meetings staff and Commission members heard ideas for the program from members of neighborhood organizations.
- Providing the draft guidelines to all neighborhood organizations with a 45 day period for review. Comments received were incorporated into the guidelines.
- Review of the guidelines at several meetings of the Commission and its committees.

Program Guidelines

The proposed CIF guidelines are attached. All recognized neighborhood organizations in the city are eligible to apply.

The guidelines call for applicants to address any of the goals and strategic directions adopted by the City Council in 2014. As noted, individual grants are limited to \$30,000. This follows the comments from neighborhood organizations which generally favored funding a larger number of smaller projects as opposed to fewer projects with a higher level of funding.

In evaluating applications, a key consideration will be the level of collaboration involved in a project. This could be collaboration between two or more neighborhoods or between a neighborhood and community organizations. In addition, projects will be evaluated on the basis the degree of innovation involved in addressing City goals.

Schedule

If approved by the City Council, the schedule for the program is as follows:

April 13 th	Application Period Opens
June 5 th	Applications Due
June 8 th – 18 th	CIF Committee of NCEC Reviews Applications
June 23 rd	NCEC Acts on Committee Recommendations for CIF Funding
July 13 th	Funding Recommendations Presented to HECE