



CIVIC ARTS AND YOUTH COMMISSION JOINT MEETING AGENDA REPORT

October 11, 2023
Item 2

TITLE: REVIEW AND RECOMMEND PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2024/25 COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM

SUMMARY

At the May 10, 2023 Youth Commission meeting and the August 7, 2023 Civic Arts Commission meeting, commissioners discussed potential process improvements for the Fiscal Year 2024/25 Community Grant Program.

The Community Grant Program application and process was developed to serve both Civic Arts and Youth community-based local organizations. For changes to be made to the application or grant process, a recommendation from both the Civic Arts and Youth Commissions must be presented to and approved by the City Council.

Based on discussion from both the Youth Commission and Civic Arts Commission, staff is providing a recommendation for the Fiscal Year 2024/25 Community Grant program for commission review and recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

Review and recommend process improvements for the Fiscal Year 2024/25 Community Grant Program.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

There is no financial impact for this item.

BACKGROUND

The City of Pleasanton provides the Community Grant program for nonprofit organizations serving Pleasanton residents in the areas of arts, culture and youth. The mission of the program is to enhance the quality of life in Pleasanton. Eligible organizations are encouraged to apply for either the Civic Arts or Youth category, or in some cases groups could qualify and apply for both.

Annually, during the March meetings, the commissions provide a recommendation to fund Community Grant program applications in their respective categories. These recommendations are forwarded to City Council for approval annually in April.

During the Fiscal Year 2023/24 grant process, commissioners from both the Civic Arts and Youth Commissions requested future discussions on improvements to the Community Grant program to better attract applicants, ensure guideline compliance, and review application questions.

The Civic Arts and Youth Commission grant processes are similar in their purpose, applications and use of the ZoomGrants software. To that end, staff recommended a Joint Youth Commission and Civic Arts Commission meeting to be held in October 2023 to discuss and review the Fiscal Year 2024/25 program in detail, potentially discussing updates to the application, evaluation process, and compliance protocols.

Prior to the joint meeting, commissions were asked to discuss potential improvements and provide recommendations to staff. This information provided the basis for recommendations in this report.

DISCUSSION

Recommendations for consideration:

Mandatory Meeting Requirements

Currently, applicants are required to attend two meetings, the grant workshop held in December and the March commission meeting. Both commissions suggest that the December meeting is not necessary and may be a barrier to potential applicants.

Staff recommendation – Attendance at the March commission meeting will remain mandatory. This allows commissioners to receive presentations from new applicants and ask questions of all applicants (if needed) during the allocation discussion. Should an applicant not attend the March commission meeting, the commission may consider not allocating funds to the applicant.

In lieu of the December meeting, staff will create a video detailing grant requirements and deadlines and post to the City website. The video will be informational and optional for returning applicants and mandatory for new applicants.

Application Packet

The Civic Arts Commission provided feedback to separate the youth and civic arts categories into two application packets. This would allow each commission to make future recommendations individually to City Council. The Youth Commission did not provide a recommendation regarding the application packet.

Staff recommendation – Separate into two application packets. Much of the application information will remain the same. Funding requirements and limitations, grant timeline, and compliance protocols must remain consistent for the two grant categories.

Compliance Protocols -Midterm and Final Reports (Application packet – section 8)

Feedback from the Civic Arts Commission stated that the midterm report deadline was too early, not at the midterm, and may not be necessary at all. The Youth Commission's feedback was to keep both reports as they felt it is an important reporting requirement that provides updates on project progress to commissioners.

Staff recommendation – The midterm and final report remain required but the deadline for the midterm report be moved from November 15 to December 15. The final report deadline should remain July 15. Summary reports will be provided to the commissions in January/February (midterm report) and October/November (final report).

Furthermore, staff recommends the January/February review of project's status and the potential reallocation of funds be removed from the application packet. The Community Grant program guidelines state organizations have until June 30 to complete their project and submit invoices. As projects often take time to complete and occur throughout the grant period, the need to review or reallocate funds is not necessary. Commissioners will be provided with the midterm and final reports to assess progress and use these reports in the recommendation of funds for future grant cycles. In the last five years, neither commission has requested reallocated funding from an organization.

Application Questions

Application questions were reviewed by commissioners to ensure information gathered was appropriate for providing informed funding recommendations. The Community Grant application questions for Civic Arts and Youth are consistent to ensure equity in review and implementation. The Civic Arts Commission provided feedback to staff on revising application questions. The Youth Commission did not provide a recommendation on changes to the application questions. Staff reviewed application questions and made revisions based on commissioner feedback and interest in providing a more clear and concise application.

Staff recommendation – Commissioners review and recommend proposed application questions. Attachment 3 and 4 provide both current and proposed application questions for commissioner review.

Commission Evaluation and Scoring

Commissioners' pre-evaluation and scoring in Zoomgrants is an integral component to the overall funding process. Commissioners are asked to evaluate applicants based on criteria outlined in Section 7 of the application packet and provide an initial score and funding amount in Zoomgrants prior to the March funding meeting. These scores and funding amounts are used to provide a starting point for March meeting discussions. Commissioners discuss and make final decisions at the March meeting. To assist commissioners in this process, staff has provided Draft Scoring Sheet (Attachment 5) for commissioners to utilize during the scoring process.

Staff recommendation – Review and recommend the use of Attachment 5.

With a recommendation from the Youth Commission and Civic Arts Commission, staff will prepare an agenda report for City Council consideration at the November 7, 2023 meeting.

Submitted by:



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Attachments

1. Community Grant Application – Youth
2. Community Grant Application – Civic Arts
3. Community Grant Application Questions - Current (Zoomgrants)
4. Community Grant Application Questions – Proposed (Zoomgrants)
5. Draft Scoring Document