

Competitive Grant Programs

- Background for solicitation and funding of grant awards

The following are excerpts from the document approved by City Council on November 3, 2022, and serve as background for the staff recommendations of the grant awards within three competitive grant programs: North Greenwood Community Grant Program, Cultural Affairs Nonprofit Grant Program, and Education Grants or Partnerships Program. As a result of Council direction on November 3, modifications to Eligibility Criteria, Solicitation Process and Administration were made. These modifications are shown in underlined text.

The city of Clearwater has been allocated a total of \$22,483,893 under this program. On August 4, 2022, Clearwater City Council approved funding allocations for twelve proposed project types. The following provides an overview of startup funding for activities in the North Greenwood Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) area and four other project types for which funding solicitations will be made available to targeted groups or populations.

Startup Funding – North Greenwood Community Redevelopment Agency	\$5,000,000
- <u>Suballocation: North Greenwood Community Grant</u>	<u>\$1,400,000</u>

1. Overview/Description

These funds will help the North Greenwood Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) start its redevelopment efforts. Because the Community Redevelopment Agency's future funding is predicated on increasing the taxable value of the properties within the area, staff believes an initial investment in the neighborhood is appropriate to jumpstart these efforts. A centerpiece of the area is the North Ward School which the City has acquired and is ready to redevelop. Many other efforts are currently being planned in this area, which is generally defined as a roughly 1.31-square-mile area to the north and northeast of downtown.

On November 3, 2022, Council authorized a suballocation for the funding of projects and activities in the North Greenwood CRA area substantially as identified in the attachment provided by the Clearwater Urban Leadership Coalition the total of which was \$1,950,000. In consultation with the Clearwater Urban Leadership Coalition, staff removed from the competitive grant process 2 subcategories: \$500,000 for a Mini Mall (often referred to as a Container Village) and \$50,000 for Technology. It was determined both of these subcategories would be funded through a Request for Proposals or Invitation to Bid. Therefore, the North Greenwood Community Grant Program has a \$1,400,000 allocation available for applications received through the competitive grant process.

2. Eligibility Criteria

Projects and activities consistent with the goals and objectives of the North Greenwood CRA Plan.¹ Additional considerations include: 1) must serve North Greenwood residents, students who attend schools within North Greenwood area of Clearwater, or who work in the North Greenwood area; and 2) must demonstrate the capacity to expand or add services as well as a reasonable and realistic approach to expend the funds in the timely manner; and 3) must support activities, programs, and services to youth and adults impacted by pressing socio-economic challenges.

Additionally, applicants were notified that preference is to be given to 1) organizations located within the North Greenwood community; or organizations that can demonstrate a history of working successfully in North Greenwood; or organizations that can demonstrate established partnerships with North Greenwood stakeholders; and to proposals that have the potential to be a sustainable and/or a scalable model.

3. Solicitation Process

City staff, including members of Community Redevelopment Agency, Economic Development & Housing Department, and Planning & Development Department, and others which may be appropriate from time to time, will work with Clearwater Urban Leadership Coalition to identify, evaluate, competitively solicit, and fund projects and activities to support relief and recovery activities in the North Greenwood CRA area. Generally, the CRA is bounded by Sunset Point Road to the north; Kings Highway to the east; Palmetto Street, CSX Railway, and Jones Street to the south; and North Osceola Avenue, North Fort Harrison Avenue, and Clearwater Harbor to the west. Applications were accessed from the city's webpage (myclearwater.com/arpa). Applicant training workshops were held in North Greenwood Library and North Greenwood Recreation Center on January 11, 2023, and February 9, 2023, respectively.

4. Administration

The soliciting department will manage the project or activity and monitor for compliance until such time as the North Greenwood CRA executive director and board of trustees is established.

Non-Profit Funding (aka Cultural Affairs Nonprofit Grant Program)	\$1,000,000
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1. Overview/Description

Nonprofit organizations that provide services within Clearwater will have an opportunity to request grant funding for programs that focus on cultural affairs. These could include area markets, concert or theatre events, or other community social opportunities that are trying to become financially feasible or that need financial assistance getting back to pre-pandemic levels of effectiveness.

¹ Currently in draft form; Anticipated final approval is 1Q2023.

The city of Clearwater's Cultural Affairs Nonprofit (CAN) Grant Program is designed to assist nonprofit arts and cultural organizations in creating or stabilizing cultural affairs programs that generate a positive impact on the community. For the purposes of this program, arts and cultural disciplines include music, dance, theatre, creative writing, literature, architecture, painting, sculpture, folk arts, photography, crafts, media arts, visual arts, programs of museums and local arts organizations, and other such allied, major art forms. Funding will be used for a) ongoing program support, and b) specific cultural projects.

2. Eligibility Criteria

Ongoing Program Support

Designed to support the ongoing program activities of an organization that is realizing its stated mission and furthering the city's cultural objectives by conducting, creating, producing, presenting, staging, or sponsoring cultural exhibits, performances, educational programs, or events.

Ongoing Program Support grants are for organizations that are continuing existing programs despite the COVID-19 pandemic or wish to bring a program back to pre-pandemic levels of effectiveness.

Specific Cultural Projects

Applications in this category include construction projects, one-time events, or art installations that will not have ongoing supporting costs outside of routine maintenance and/or utility costs. These grants are for organizational programs that are focused on placemaking efforts aimed at reinvigorating a sense of community in Clearwater and driving the city's status as a destination for the arts. Organizations are not required to be based within the city of Clearwater, but the benefits of the program must be local as described further in the grant proposal application. All applicants must meet the eligibility requirements at the time of application.

3. Solicitation Process

Applications will be made available through Neighborly² cloud-based grant management system. Cultural Affairs Division of the Office of Innovation will promote the availability of funds through social media, direct mail and public notices, when applicable. Applications were accessed from the city's webpage (myclearwater.com/arpa). Applicant training workshops were held in North Greenwood Library and North Greenwood Recreation Center on January 11, 2023 and February 9, 2023, respectively.

² Neighborly by Benevate, Inc.

4. Administration

The Cultural Affairs Division within the Office of Innovation will administer and monitor for compliance.

Education Grants or Partnerships	\$750,000
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1. Overview/Description

These funds will be used to provide a grant to a nonprofit or government entity for programs that focus on educational opportunities targeting students who have fallen behind academically due to the pandemic.

2. Eligibility Criteria

The funds will support activities that address and mitigate learning loss through evidence-based programs. Qualified nonprofit organizations and stakeholders with experience in providing educational programs must serve Clearwater residents or students who attend schools within Clearwater city limits. The funds may be used to implement new programming or to expand existing programming. Allowable activities include:

- Afterschool and summer bridge programming
- High-Impact Tutoring
- Student readiness for successful transitions from pre-school to elementary school, elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to workforce or postsecondary education
- STEM enrichment programming

Awardees will be required to produce online follow-up reports describing how the grants funds were used, on a quarterly basis or until the funds have been completely expended.

3. Solicitation Process

Applications will be made available through the City Clerk Department through Neighborly, an online grant management program. The Department will promote the availability of funds via social media and public notice.

Distribution of funds will be determined individually for each grant award.

Eligible applications will be reviewed and scored by a panel of city employees. The panel meeting results are reported to the City Manager, who will make recommendations to City Council for approval. Applications were accessed from the city's webpage (myclearwater.com/arpa). Applicant training workshops were held in North Greenwood Library and North Greenwood Recreation Center on January 11, 2023 and February 9, 2023, respectively.

4. Administration

The City Clerk Department will administer and monitor for compliance.

About American Rescue Plan Act Funds

The ARPA allocation must be committed or contractually encumbered to projects and programs by the end of 2024. All money must be spent by December 31, 2026; any money unspent at that time must be returned to the federal government.

Allowable uses of the funds include:

- To respond to the pandemic or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses, and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality.
- For premium pay to eligible workers performing essential work during the pandemic.
- For the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue because of the pandemic.
- To make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.

The Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) program, a part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), is delivering \$350 billion to state, local, and Tribal governments across the country to support their response to and recovery from the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Excerpts from [MyCleawater.com/ARPA](https://www.mycleawater.com/ARPA) webpage:

[How are we spending ARPA Funds?](#)

The city of Clearwater has determined that allocated funding will be used for recovery of revenue loss, freeing up additional funds to provide program services and projects in 12 designated areas to offset the negative economic impacts realized as a result of the pandemic.

The city used its full allocation of ARPA monies for the provision of government services due to revenue loss. This reimbursement of revenue loss freed up funds for projects and programs. Following feedback from the community and the City Council, the city has proposed a total of 12 major service areas focused on aiding a strong and equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal of each service area will reinforce the City's Strategic Vision through mitigating the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, assisting families and businesses with program support, maintaining vital public services and infrastructure, and developing public investments that support long-term growth and opportunity.

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