



**COUNTY OF NEVADA
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

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**NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Board Agenda Memo**

MEETING DATE: August 8, 2023

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Trisha Tillotson, Community Development Agency Director

SUBJECT: Resolution approving the Grant Award Agreement with South Yuba River Citizens League in the amount of \$16,700 for the “Outdoor Visitor Safety Fund” grant funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and General Fund dollars from the approved FY23-24 budget authorizing the Chair of the Board of Supervisors to execute grant agreement with awardee.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the resolution.

FUNDING: This “Outdoor Visitor Safety Fund Grant” award to contract award to South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) in the amount of \$16,700 will be funded through the Outdoor Visitor Safety Funds which is funded through Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars and General Fund Economic Infrastructure Assignment dollars. This specific project will be 100% funded by ARPA. There are no General Fund dollars used for this agreement.

USE OF FUNDS:

This agreement will fund SYRCL for the following general purpose: To respond to the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic with a project that will increase resiliency and promote health and safety at highly impacted outdoor recreation destinations. Nevada County experienced a significant increase in visitation to outdoor recreation destinations during the pandemic. This project will address unmet need(s) at outdoor recreation sites to promote community health and safety, economic development, and resilience; and furthers the ARPA priority of “2.22: Strong Healthy Communities: Neighborhood Features that Promote Health and Safety”.

Specifically, the 2023 SYRCL “River Ambassadors Program” will:

- Station River Captains and Volunteer Ambassadors at Bridgeport and Highway 49 and river crossings every weekend (plus the Fridays and Mondays of holiday weekends); and
- Hire 3 River Captains (including one with Spanish-speaking skills) and recruit and additional 50-75 volunteers to expand coverage at Purdon and Edwards’ Crossings (pending necessary permissions and requirements); and

- Equip crossings with visitor safety and trash collection supplies; and
- Create bi-lingual messaging and materials to deliver safety and river stewardship information to as many visitors as possible.

BACKGROUND:

On April 27, 2021, staff brought a preliminary ARPA Expenditure Plan to the Board for direction. The plan included a recommendation to allocate 30% of ARPA funds (\$5.8M) to “Community & Economic Resiliency” projects, with the caveat that Allocations to remain flexible to best support Board objectives. This included one loan program and four grant programs, one of which is the Outdoor Visitor Safety fund. The preliminary plan was further refined after discussions at the 2022 Board Workshops added Recreation as an objective, ratified at the February 8 BOS regular meeting; which included additional funding (general fund) augmenting the ARPA funds for recreation with a subsequent Recreation budget unit established within the Community Development Agency. Recreation remains a Board Objective in 2023: “To promote sustainable recreation in partnership with community providers and other jurisdictions to enhance recreational access, support public health and safety, realize economic opportunities, and preserve natural resource assets” with six related initiatives, including to “Identify and implement strategies to promote health and safety at river crossings, lakes, trailheads, and other high-use or high-risk areas.” This initiative has been informed by the work of the South Yuba River Public Safety Cohort in Western Nevada County, and the Convene, Champion and Catalyze in Eastern Nevada County.

The Outdoor Visitor Safety Fund is comprised of \$450,000 in ARPA Funds and \$400,000 General Fund Economic Infrastructure Assignment dollars. A first round of Outdoor Visitor Safety Fund awards was granted on June 28, 2022 totaling \$415,570. Current remaining funds total \$34,430 in ARPA and \$400,000 in General Funds in the Recreation budget unit 0101-70102-325-1000-521520.

Program Summary: The County solicited Requests for Applications (RFA) for Outdoor Visitor Safety Fund Round 2 funding, released February 8, 2023, from eligible entities with programs and projects that respond to the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic with high impact projects or programs.

The “Outdoor Visitor Safety Fund Grant” Program provides one-time grants to eligible entities including nonprofit organizations, for-profit businesses, and special purpose districts. State and Federal agencies may be eligible depending on available general fund monies.

Partially funded with ARPA dollars, proposals were required to respond to the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic with projects/proposals that will increase resiliency and promote health and safety at highly impacted outdoor recreation destinations. Nevada County experienced a significant increase in visitation to outdoor recreation destinations during the pandemic. Proposals should offer priority solutions to address unmet needs at outdoor recreation sites that promote community health and safety, economic development, environmental sustainability, climate change adaptation, and resilience.

The “Outdoor Visitor Safety Fund Grants” were capped at \$200,000. Applicants were instructed to request a grant amount that reflects what is needed for the proposed project and were strongly encouraged to leverage other resources. The County reserved the right to recommend an amount less than the total requested.

The County implemented a two-step evaluation process. In step one, applicants were invited to submit a brief concept proposal describing the project. Concept proposals were scored by an evaluation panel comprised of 4 Nevada County staff and 3 community members to assess alignment with the Outdoor

Visitor Safety Fund intent, and with ARPA guidelines. The County received 20 concept proposals from 18 different organizations, and 12 proposals from 11 different organizations were invited to move forward.

In step two, applicants were invited to submit a full project application(s). The County received 11 full applications from 9 different entities. The same evaluation panel reviewed and scored full project applications to select the top ranked entities based on the evaluation criteria published in the RFA and compliance of proposed use of awarded funds with Federal guidance regarding eligible uses of ARPA funds. Eight of the applications were recommended for funding, as designated. The resulting agreements are brought for consideration of the Nevada County Board of Supervisors for approval.

Criteria and Scoring: The evaluation panel relied on the criteria listed in the RFA to evaluate full proposals, which requested applicants to describe:

1. Applicant entity;
2. COVID Impacts—The community need addressed, and the impacts of COVID-19;
3. Project Description—how the project directly responds to the negative economic impacts of the pandemic;
4. Community Benefit—how their project will provide ongoing community benefits with impactful, measurable outcomes;
5. Leveraging partnerships and resources—how they will leverage additional partnerships, funding, and other resources as part of their proposal;
6. Management capacity and measurable outcomes—demonstrate their capacity to manage, implement, measure and report on the grant; and
7. Budget and Financials.

Evaluation criteria for concept proposals was similar; specifically, community needs/opportunity challenge addressed; project description; leveraging resources and partnerships; measurable outcomes; and COVID-19 connection.

Notification: The RFA was published on the County Purchasing webpage, weekly County newsletter, County recreation webpage and related media, and through meeting outreach and other email mailing lists including the Nevada County Recreation Coalition, South Yuba River Public Safety Cohort and the Convene, Champion, Catalyze list servs; these three collaboratives have been addressing recreation needs and impacts of visitation on the western and eastern sides of Nevada County, respectively.

Awards Process and Timeline: The application process opened February 8, 2023; a pre-application conference was held February 22; concept proposals were due on March 15; and full applications were due on April 28.

Recommendations for funding: The Panel is recommending a total of 8 awards to 7 eligible entities totaling \$388,480.

Award agreement and reporting requirements: This individual Grant Award Recipient Agreement was developed with the Grant Award Recipient and reviewed with the Auditor-Controller to ensure Grant Award Recipient is in good standing with the County.

Grant Award Recipient will enter in the attached “Grant Award Recipient Agreement” with the County. Grant Award Recipient will use the ARPA monies to cover only those eligible costs identified in the RFA and necessary for the COVID-19 public health emergency in accordance with federal guidance. Grant Award Recipient shall be responsible for reimbursement to County of any grant funding provided under this agreement that are determined by federal or state officials to be unauthorized expenditures.

Grant recipients will provide quarterly reports beginning in January 2024.

Funds may cover costs through December 31, 2024 and in this program the County is requiring that funds must be spent by 12/31/24. Awardees will be required to submit quarterly “Project and Expenditure Reports” until the funded project is complete.

To promote transparency, quarterly reports will be posted on the County of Nevada’s American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and recreation web pages.

Recommended action:

Therefore, staff recommends the Board adopt the attached Resolution approving the Grant Award Agreement with SYRCL and authorizing the Chair of the Board of Supervisors to execute grant agreement with the Grant Award Recipient.

Item Initiated by: Erika Seward, Senior Administrative Analyst

Approved by: Trisha Tillotson, Community Development Agency Director