



**COUNTY OF NEVADA
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

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

MEETING DATE: June 28, 2022

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Trisha Tillotson, CDA Director

SUBJECT: Resolution approving the Grant Award Agreement with Bicyclists of Nevada County (BONC) in the amount of \$13,724 for the Outdoor Visitor Safety Fund grant funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and 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 Bicyclists of Nevada County in the amount of \$13,724 will be funded through the Outdoor Recreation and Visitor Safety Funds (see table below) 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. An amendment to the 2022/2023 Recreation budget is presented under file ID SR 22-0786.

USE OF FUNDS:

This agreement will fund Bicyclists of Nevada County 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 an outdoor recreation site 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, funding of this proposal will help address the public health, safety, and quality of life concerns outlined above while enhancing the visitor experience for all trail users in the popular Harmony Ridge area. The proposal scope includes signage for the existing trailhead parking area near the Harmony Ridge Market (i.e., Five Mile House), the planned Parliament trailhead parking area, and required equipment to construct approximately 8 miles of new trail and conduct ongoing maintenance on

existing trails. The construction of navigational, safety, and trail rule signage will help create a safer and more enjoyable experience for visitors. At least three of the trails will be safe to use for adaptive bikes/trikes designed for users with disabilities. The two large signs at each trailhead parking area will include a map that provides navigational and use information including the difficulty and length of trails in the area along with permitted users and directions of travel on individual trails. Trailhead signs will also remind users of right-of-way rules for sharing multi-use and multi-direction trails. Safety signs will be bilingual or pictographic and will be placed at trailheads and at road crossings. Additional signage dispersed throughout the approximately 25-mile trail system will allow for more accurate navigation for trail users and emergency responders and improve safety for all users by indicating appropriate user group and/or direction of travel restrictions, trail features and hazards and other site-specific information. All system signs will have GPS coordinates for EMS location of injured persons. Signed document indicating USFS permission to install signage on their land was provided. The proposal also includes the purchase of a specialized tools and equipment to facilitate signage installation and trail maintenance and construction activities in remote locations throughout the network. These tools will elevate efforts by BONC’s dedicated volunteer trail crews to both maintain existing trails and construct new ones for years to come. The public safety and user experience improvements created by improved signage and maintenance will help to maintain and expand the economic opportunities for Nevada County related to outdoor recreation in the Harmony Ridge area. Development and support of mountain bike trail networks in particular has been shown to have a significant economic benefit. As the above cited study shows, visitors who come to mountain bike also patronize local businesses, purchasing meals, gas, lodging, and groceries, etc.

BACKGROUND: The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (“ARPA”) (H.R. 1319) is a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus package passed by Congress and signed by President Joseph Biden on March 11, 2021 in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic challenges.

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 Recreation and 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.

“Community & Economic Resiliency” Programs	ARPA Amount:	Status:
Nevada County Relief Fund	\$250,000	BOS approved 7/13/21; microgrants to small businesses managed by Sierra Business Council. Complete.
Community Resiliency Grants Program	Up to \$2 million allotted	BOS approved Awards 11/9/21. BOS approved \$1,991,884 in Round One; one contract could not move forward so a second RFP was released, augmented with other unexpended ARPA funds to total \$140,000. Awards for second round were approved at the 5/24 board meeting.
Resilience Loan Fund	\$250,000	Pending. For revolving loan fund to be managed by Sierra Business Council.
Economic Recovery Funds (infrastructure)	Up to \$2,300,000	Pending. For eligible infrastructure projects (water, sewer, broadband).

Outdoor Recreation and Visitor Safety Funds	\$450,000 (Update: Augmented with \$400,000 General Fund Economic Infrastructure Assignment dollars to total \$850,000; originally proposed \$800,000-\$1 million).	For improvements to major river crossings and trailheads impacted by increased visitation. The Outdoor Visitor Safety Fund RFP was released on March 10, 2022, with concept proposals due on March 31, 2022 and final proposals for those invited, on May 4, 2022. This is one of six proposed awards are being brought to the board on June 28, 2022, totaling \$361, 965, along with the three targeted trail ambassador grant agreements which total \$43,205, will equal \$405,170 of the total.
Identified Recreation Priorities: Recreation and Resiliency Master Plan, Recreation Administration, Public Safety and Communications, River Parking Study	\$550,000 (Update: Specific recreation priorities, augmented with \$200,000 General Fund Economic Infrastructure Assignment dollars.	Priorities aligned with Board objectives were proposed at the 2022 Board Workshop along with the new objective which was adopted at the February 8, 2022 Board Meeting.
Total:	\$5.8 million* ARPA/\$600,00 general fund	<i>*Allocations to remain flexible to best support Board objectives</i>

At its January 2022 retreat, the Board identified a new objective for 2022: “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” and later ratified at their regular meeting on February 8. The Board also supported six related specific 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 Safety Cohort in Western Nevada County, and the Convene, Champion and Catalyze in Eastern Nevada County.

The Board also provided direction updating the preliminary plan above to identify \$450,000 in ARPA funding and \$400,000 in General Fund Economic Development Infrastructure Assignment funding for a total of \$850,000 in the Outdoor Visitor Safety Fund.

Program Summary: The County solicited Requests for Applications (RFA) released March 10, 2022, 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.

Largely 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 3 Nevada County staff and 2 community members to assess alignment with the Outdoor Visitor Safety Fund intent, and with ARPA guidelines. The County received 19 concept proposals from 10 different organizations, and 13 proposals from 9 different organizations were invited to move forward.

In step two, applicants were invited to submit a full project application(s). The County received 6 full applications from 5 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 RFP and compliance of proposed use of awarded funds with Federal guidance regarding eligible uses of ARPA funds. All six applications were recommended for full funding requested.

The evaluation panel was advisory to the County Executive Officer, Alison Lehman, who approved the final recommendation. 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, Friday Memo, County recreation website and related media, and other email mailing lists including the South Yuba River Safety Cohort and the Convene, Champion, Catalyze list servs; these two collaboratives have been addressing impacts of visitation on the western and eastern sides of Nevada County, respectively.

Awards Process and Timeline: The application process opened March 10, 2022; a pre-application conference was held March 16; concept proposals were due on March 31; and full applications were due on May 4.

Recommendations for funding: The CEO is recommending a total of 6 awards to 5 eligible entities totaling \$361,965.

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 September 2022.

Funds may cover costs from March 3, 2021 through December 31, 2024. ARPA funds may be used to assist businesses and nonprofits for economic harms experienced prior to March 3, 2021, 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) web page.

Recommended action:

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

Item Initiated by: Ariel Lovett, Project Administrator

Approved by: Trisha Tillotson, Community Development Agency Director