



COUNTY OF NEVADA COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Board Agenda Memo

MEETING DATE: July 27, 2021

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Alison Lehman, County Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Resolution approving the Request for Applications (RFA) and award selection procedures for “Community Resiliency Grant” program and authorizing the Purchasing Division to advertise for qualified applications

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the Resolution.

FUNDING: The approval of the Request for Applications (RFA) has no dollar impact. Award recommendations will be brought to the Board in October. The grant awards will be funded with up to \$2 Million in Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars and will not impact the General Fund.

BACKGROUND: On March 10, 2020, the Nevada County Board of Supervisors passed and adopted Resolution 20-063, proclaiming a local emergency in Nevada County due to rapid spread of COVID-19. On March 19, 2020, the Governor of California issued a statewide Executive Order, N-33-20, which required Californians to remain at their home or place of residence, except as necessary to carry out essential activities. The COVID-19 pandemic has had continued impacts to the economic well-being of the local community and the County has continued to provide an on-going response to this pandemic locally.

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. ARPA included \$350 billion in State and Local Aid, which included \$65.1 billion in direct funding to counties. Based on US Treasury allocations, Nevada County has been allocated \$19,376,239 in funding.

The Board of Supervisors approved the acceptance of the county funding award on May 27, 2021 with Resolution 21-176. Funds in the amount of \$9,688,119.50 have been received, and it's anticipated that the remaining \$9,688,119.50 will be received on or around June 1, 2022. The deadline to obligate all funds is December 31, 2024. Nevada County will be required to report periodically how funds are used.

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. This includes four grants programs and one loan program as listed in the table below.

This staff report addresses the "Community Resiliency Grants" program, which has been allotted up to \$2 Million. The Board's actions will include two steps: 1) approving the application process on 7/27/21, and 2) approving the recommended awardees on 10/12/21. This timeline provides six and a half weeks for applicants to prepare and submit their applications.

"Community & Economic Resiliency" Programs	Amount:	Status:
Nevada County Relief Fund	\$250,000	BOS approved 7/13/21; microgrants to small businesses managed by Sierra Business Council
Community Resiliency Grants Program	Up to \$2,000,000	Seeking BOS approval 7/27/21 for RFA and 10/12/21 for Awardees
Resilience Loan Fund	\$250,000	Pending. For revolving loan fund to be managed by Sierra Business Council
Economic Recovery Funds (infrastructure)	Up to \$2,500,000	Pending. For eligible infrastructure projects (water, sewer, broadband)
Outdoor Recreation and Visitor Safety Funds	\$800,000 to \$1M	Pending. For improvements to major river crossings and trailheads impacted by increased visitation
Total:	\$5,800,000*	<i>*Allocations to remain flexible in order to best support Board objectives</i>

On June 22, 2021, the Board approved up to \$2 Million for a "Community Resiliency Grant Program" to provide macro-grants to support community-serving institutions and programs.

Subsequently, staff consulted with various stakeholders to draft the application criteria, guidelines, Request for Applications (RFA), and the award process detailed below.

Program Summary (from RFA):

The County seeks Requests for Applications (RFA) from eligible entities with programs and projects that respond to the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and are designed to increase **resiliency**, support **recovery**, and provide **relief**.

In some cases, applicants hit hard by the pandemic may need funds primarily for economic relief. But whenever possible, applicants should consider how they would use the funds to support recovery and increase resiliency, keeping in mind the oft-quoted proverb, "Give a person a fish, and you feed them for a day. Teach a person to fish, and you feed them for a lifetime." It's in this spirit that the County encourages applications for services, programs, and projects from our community-serving organizations and institutions that increase resiliency, build capacity, and leverage other resources.

Recognizing the pandemic's impacts on civic engagement, these grants are intended in part to support the community gathering places at the heart of our social and cultural life. These include, but are not limited to, our community centers, arts and cultural centers, granges, senior centers, veterans' centers, daycare centers, family resource centers, and recreational centers. These places are often where some of the most impacted and vulnerable community members such as children, at-risk youth, and seniors are served – many of whom have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic as well. (Applicants are not required to have a publicly accessible location but should demonstrate how they serve the community.)

The "Community Resiliency Grants" Program will provide one-time grants to eligible entities including nonprofit organizations, for-profit businesses, and special purpose districts.

The "Community Resiliency Grants" will be capped at \$100,000. Applicants should request a grant amount that reflects their overall organization size, capacity, and alignment with ARPA intent. The County reserves the right to recommend an amount less than the total requested.

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

Note that funds must be obligated (i.e. under contract) by 12/31/24 and funds must be expended with all work performed and completed by 12/31/26.

Awardees will be required to submit quarterly "Project and Expenditure Reports" until the funded project is complete.

An evaluation panel comprised of 5-7 people, representing County staff and members of the community, will review and score responses 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. The evaluation panel is advisory to the County Executive Officer, Alison Lehman, who will develop the final recommendation to the Nevada County Board of Supervisors in October 2021 for approval.

Eligible Entities:

The County encourages applications for services, programs, and projects from our community-serving organizations and institutions from the following sectors:

- **Nonprofits** (defined as 501c3 and 501c6 organizations in good standing with the County of Nevada, and in business since at least March 1, 2020)
- **Businesses** (in good standing with the County of Nevada, and in business since at least March 1, 2020) Note: In some cases, “startups” in business after March 1, 2020 may be eligible. Please refer to Treasury FAQ 2.20.
- **Special-purpose districts** (Special-purpose districts perform specific functions in the community, such as fire, water, sewer, parks and recreation, and education)

The County recognizes that some applicants may face barriers in accessing grant funding or may lack experience applying for grants. This may be the case for smaller, more rural, or all-volunteer entities. The County is partnering with the Sierra Business Council’s Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to offer technical assistance to potential applicants as they navigate the application process, and post-award process if successful. Please contact SBDC by emailing their team at info@sierrasbdc.com or leaving a message at (530) 582-5022.

Note: priority will be given to applicants who have not previously received federal loans or grants such as the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL), Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG), Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF), or were funded through the County’s CRF-funded “macro-grants” program for “anchor institutions” in fall 2020. Applicants who received other Federal assistance are eligible so long as expenses are not duplicated.)

Federal Guidelines:

All applicants must comply with the requirements of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) as defined by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

The “Community Resiliency Grants” are designed to follow the ARPA guidelines pertaining to the use of funds to “respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses, and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality.”

Per the guidelines, assessing whether a program or service “responds to” the COVID–19 public health emergency requires the recipient to, first, identify a need or negative impact of the COVID–19 public health emergency and, second, identify how the program, service, or other intervention addresses the identified need or impact.

While the COVID–19 public health emergency affected many aspects of American life, eligible uses under this category must be in response to the disease itself or the harmful consequences of the economic disruptions resulting from or exacerbated by the COVID–19 public health emergency. Responses must be related and reasonably proportional to the extent and type of harm experienced; uses that bear no relation or are grossly disproportionate to the type or extent of harm experienced would not be eligible uses.

Recommended action:

Therefore, staff recommends the Board: (i) adopt the attached Resolution approving the Request for Applications (RFA) for the “Community Resiliency Grants” program; (ii) authorize the Purchasing Division to advertise for qualified applications; and (iii) authorize the formation of an evaluation committee as outlined in the RFA to review the responsive applications, score each application per the criteria described in the RFA, and make recommendations to the County Executive Officer, Alison Lehman, who will develop the final recommendation to bring to the Nevada County Board of Supervisors in October 2021 for approval.

Item Initiated by: Caleb Dardick, Projects Administrator

Approved by: Alison Lehman, County Executive Officer