CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

Agenda Date:	March 18, 2024
Action Required:	No action is required.
Presenter:	Taylor Harvey-Ryan, Grants Program Manager
Staff Contacts:	Alexander Ikefuna, Director of Community Solutions Taylor Harvey-Ryan, Grants Program Manager Alan Peura
Title:	**City Grants Inventory**

Background

The Grants Inventory Report is a living document produced over the course of 2022 by the Office of Community Solutions. The Grants Program Manager met with various departments and offices within City of Charlottesville to learn how each department manages and administers grants, the number of grants they administer, as well as the status of each of these grants. The Grants Inventory Report serves as a "database" for all the City of Charlottesville's grants and serves as a starting point for developing policies and procedures for how grants will be applied for, managed, and administered today onward. Prior to the Grants Inventory Report there was not a single location for all grant documentation, nor a single methodology for how departments secured or administered grant funding. In addition, the Grants Inventory Report allowed the Office of Community Solutions to get a better understanding of each of the grants as well as allow the City to become compliant and better in alignment with the best practices of grants management. The Report is slated to be updated bi-annually and published internally for City staff. The Grants Inventory Report is updated regularly by the Office of Community Solutions to ensure we have the most up to date information available as departments make progress on grant projects and secure additional grant funding.

Discussion

The Grants Inventory Report is intended to provide an overview of all grants managed, administered, and implemented by the City of Charlottesville across all city offices, departments, and programs. The report will provide the most pertinent information and the status of grants received and currently administered by city government. The Grants Inventory Report is a working document that will be updated and distributed biannually (January and July) to reflect the current grants being administered by the city to support projects that align with the priorities of the City of Charlottesville.

This report provides an overview of each grant including the grant funder, total funds allocated, the period of performance for the grant, whether the grant is one-time or renewable, and a summary of the grant purpose/intent. Where applicable, there is also an "Areas of Opportunity" section that identifies planned improvements to a particular grant program or project. In subsequent Volumes the goal is to include additional detail to document the status of grant program work and future management plans.

The inaugural issue of the Grants Inventory Report reflected 95 grants totaling over $193 million in grant funds

across various departments and offices within the City of Charlottesville. Please note that the entirety of the $193 million is not available, as some of this funding has been spent on the projects the funds are associated with. The approximately $193 million is the total value of the grant awards utilizing the award balances the City was granted for the project.

The breakdown of the grants by department and office are as follows:

Public Works:

- 25 grants
- Total Allocation: $151,447,078

Public Utilities

- 7 grants
- Total Allocation: $8,330,279

Fire Department

- 3 grants
- Total Allocation $3,759,667

Parks and Recreation

- 9 grants
- Total Allocation: $4,417,511

Neighborhood Development Services

- 3 grants
- Total Allocation: $241,000

Human Services*

- 3 grants
- Total Allocation: $532,058

Emergency Management

- 3 grants
- Total Allocation: $502,783

Community Solutions*

- 19 grants
- Total Allocation: $18,642,586

Pass Through Grants*

- 14 grants

- Total Allocation: $5,030,773

Economic Development

- 1 grant
- Total Allocation: $150,000

*Please note Human Services, Office of Community Solutions, and Pass-through grants managed by the Office of Community Solutions include grant sources that are local funds provided to community organizations (HOPS, VCF, CAHF), or state and federal funding that is pass-through the city to other entities. These balances may reflect multiple years of funding as we work to ensure prior year funding is fully spent and closed.

During the Grants Inventory report many notable discoveries were made which have led to process and policy implementation. Notable findings are detailed below:

1. Misunderstanding of Grants

    a. When conducting the grants inventory report, many individuals expressed difficulty understanding grant language and requirements, specifically relating to what they can use the grant funds for, when and how to ask for a change in scope of work when projects change course, and how to close out grants. This lack of understanding has led grant projects to remain open and require additional reporting and document retention as they were not closed at the completion of the project. Additionally, a lack of understanding in what grant funds can be utilized on has resulted in either an underspending or overspending of grant funds.

2. Lack of continuity of grant work in departments

    a. Similar to the rest of the nation, Charlottesville has experienced staff turnover. This staff turnover has resulted in some grants being "lost" or "forgotten" because a staff person is no longer there. This has traditionally occurred when one staff applies for a grant, leaves their employment before the award is made, and then once the award is made, there is no one to receive the award notice and continue the work of the grant, which results in the City missing out on grant funds. Or an individual leaves the position during the time of the grant. However, no one is aware of what the grant is for or what is required of the grant, and it leaves our funders in a bind as they attempt to locate someone else in the city that can manage the grant causing significant delays in the grant work.

3. Lack of formal collaboration between departments

    a. Many departments work with each other informally. However, more formal partnerships are needed for many grant opportunities to ensure there is not a duplication of work and that the timeline aligns for work completion. In addition, anecdotally, some departments may want to apply for the same grant and in the past have done, which increases the competition for the grant. If there is a grant opportunity that can support a multitude of projects, it is best practice that departments work together to not compete against one another for the same opportunity.

4. Difficulty tracking match, letters of support, MOUs

    a. Many departments have used their budgets as match for grants, but there is not a similar tracking process for each department to know what funds are being used as match for a grant. In addition, many departments are approached for Letters of Support or to sign onto MOUs. However, one letter of support or MOU signature is sufficient for the entirety of the City of Charlottesville government.

5. Lack of transparency of grants between departments and community partners

   a. Lastly, lack of transparency of what grants each department manages and the grants that we serve as a party to for our community partners has led to duplicative efforts on grant work.

In turn the Office of Community Solutions has implemented three Standard Operating Procedures which include Grants Administration, Letters of Support, and Memorandums of Understanding. These processes has allowed the City to streamline how we review grants sources, apply for funding, and ultimately track our grant activity.

Additionally, the Office of Community Solutions is preparing to implement a monitoring and compliance tool that will integral in ensuring our grants funds are being utilized in compliance with any stated regulations and guidelines and that we and our partners are being good stewards of the funds.

Lastly, through this process the Office of Community Solutions has learned the value of collecting and maintaining up to date data on our grants to avoid out of compliance notices from funders, as projects are being completed in a timely manner.

Alignment with City Council's Vision and Strategic Plan
The Grants Inventory Report aligns with the 2023 Council Strategic Plan Framework/Strategic Outcome Areas – Partnerships as the city partners with federal and state funding agencies to source funds to address community issues in alignment with City Council priorities.

Community Engagement
N/A

Budgetary Impact
N/A

Recommendation
N/A

Alternatives
N/A

Attachments
1. Grants Inventory Report Volume 1 2024 City Council March 2024 (1)