

NCEC Committee of the Whole

Staff Report

TO: Members of NCEC Committee of the Whole
From: Howard Blin, Community Engagement Manager
Date: September 10, 2014,
Subject: **Comments on CIF Guidelines**

Action Requested

Recommend adoption of the Community Innovation Fund Guidelines to the NCEC

Comments of Draft Guidelines

The Committee of the Whole has developing the Community Innovation Fund (CIF) since late 2013. Earlier this year the NCEC and staff held a series of nine listening sessions to hear ideas for the program from representatives of neighborhood organizations. The comments received are summarized in an April memorandum from staff which is attached to the September agenda.

On May 27th the NCEC authorized distribution of the draft CIF guidelines for purposes of public review. The 60 day review period closed on August 18th. We received comments from four neighborhood organizations. These comments are listed below with staff responses.

Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood Association

1. *Language should be incorporated to clarify that projects should not elevate the rights of one group to supersede the rights of another group; additionally projects should be mindful and not harm what is already functioning well.*

Response:

2. *Given the stated goal to provide "ample entertainment opportunities", clarify how the grant can be used for entertainment*

Response: The funding source for the CIF is the Consolidated TIF District. These funds are generally restricted from being used purchasing for food or entertainment. The stated goals for the program are derived from the City goals adopted by the City Council in early 2014. To avoid confusion, the references to entertainment in the second goal have been deleted.

3. The guidelines should include an application template.

Response: An application template will be included in the final guidelines. As discussed previously, a two-step application process will be used. The first step will require only a short description of the project. From these initial applications, several finalists will be invited to submit a more detailed application.

4. Recommend that grants be allowed up to \$30,000 (or possibly \$50,000.)

Response: The maximum grant amount will be recommended by the NCEC.

5. The guidelines should include a reporting template.

Response: A reporting template will be included.

6. Guidelines should indicate the earliest date that applications can be made and submission deadline, along with date of when winners will be announced.

Response: A schedule for grant applications and funding decisions will be included.

Beltrami Neighborhood Council

The Beltrami Neighborhood Council has reviewed the CIF draft guidelines and supports a \$30,000 grant. There was some discussion about if \$30,000 is enough to complete a project. We assume that other funding can be combined with the CIF in a project budget. Is this correct?

Response: The maximum grant amount will be recommended by the NCEC. Beltrami was notified that CIF grants could be combined with other funding for projects.

Corcoran Neighborhood Organization

Corcoran posed a question about the requirement that funding would only be provided for projects in which a neighborhood organization partner on a project with another neighborhood or a community organization. This is similar to a requirement the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs has in place for its Neighborhood Partnerships Initiative grant program. As CURA has had some mixed results with this requirement, it was suggested that staff for feedback on the guidelines from CURA.

Response: NCR staff has briefly discussed the guidelines with a representative of CURA and will have more in-depth discussions prior to the Committee of the Whole meeting.

East Calhoun Community Organization

Guidelines should include examples of possible projects that the city funding would hope to promote.

Response: Examples of projects will be included.