



DATE: January 11, 2018
TO: Planning Committee/Recycling Board
FROM: Tom Padia, Deputy Executive Director
BY: Meri Soll, Senior Program Manager
SUBJECT: Grants to Nonprofits Program – Year in Review

SUMMARY

The Recycling Board has awarded grants through the Grants to Nonprofits program (GNP) for over 22 years, totaling close to \$8.6 million dollars in funding. At the January 11, 2018 Recycling Board Meeting, staff will provide an update on the grant program.

DISCUSSION

The table below identifies budgeted grant funds available in FY 17/18.

| Grant Program | Funds Available |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| GRANT FOCUS AREAS | |
| Competitive and Reuse Grants | \$165,000 |
| Food Waste Prevention Grants* | \$ 40,000 |
| Charity Thrift Grants | \$ 15,000 |
| Mini Grants | \$ 10,000 |
| TOTAL | \$230,000 |

**Part of FY grant solicitation but will utilize Food Waste Prevention Grant funds not Grants to Non Profits funds).*

This fiscal year, the grants program will concentrate on the Agency’s guiding principles with an emphasis placed on supporting grants that focus on waste prevention, reuse and repair. Funds will still be available for projects that involve typical discard management activities but priority will be given to projects that meet the revised guiding principles.

This fiscal year we will increase the amount of funding available for reuse operating grants from \$15,000 to \$20,000 per grant. The increase is based on feedback from a recent Reuse and Repair Stakeholder roundtable the Agency hosted. Stakeholders shared that operating reuse and repair organizations in Alameda County has become increasingly difficult as rents and labor have skyrocketed over the past years. If we would like these types of services and organizations to continue to be available in Alameda County, then more support is needed.

Funding for the competitive grant focus area will be distributed commensurate with diversion and impact.

Mini grants (up to \$5k) and Charity Thrift Block Grants (up to \$15k) are offered on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are expended.

In the past, Community Outreach Grants to promote food scrap recycling have been offered through the GNP project; however funding for these outreach grants are now part of the Community Outreach project with a focus on food waste prevention.

Grant Application Review

Staff has developed and implemented a robust application review, which includes the following processes:

- Every application is reviewed internally by a minimum of two staff members, selected for their expertise in the grant focus area.
- Staff utilizes a two-page grant assessment form, completed for each applicant by every reviewer. This assessment form is a revised version of the Board approved project assessment tool, originally developed for the evaluation of Target projects, to better assess a grant applicant's request for funds.
- Staff conducts site tours for every new applicant to assess organizational capacity, project conception and implementation activities.
- As the grants program funding and priority areas have transformed over the years, language has been added to the RFP that addresses declining funding availability: *"Funds for this grant program are limited. Applicants who have been awarded reuse grants in past years should not presume award of funding for every year"*.

Grant to Non Profits (GNP) Administration

Competitive, reuse and food waste prevention grant funds are distributed on an annual cycle with an application deadline of March 2018. Outreach for applications for the focus areas identified above will be conducted as part of one solicitation. These focus areas offer the largest pot of funds available. Past experience has shown that deadlines for these types of grants are needed to procure qualified applications.

Funding for charity thrift and mini grants are available on a first come - first served basis until funds are expended. A nonprofit can only request funding from ONE grant program focus area with the exception of charity thrifts, who can apply for funding from the Charity Thrift Block Grant and one other grant program.

Grant approvals under \$50,000 are processed administratively; using the Executive Director's signing authority. All grants issued under the Executive Director's signing authority are listed in a summary provided at the next regularly scheduled Recycling Board meeting. Recommended grants greater than \$50,000 are brought to the Recycling Board for approval. In addition, recent grant recipients and their accomplishments are highlighted at meetings throughout the year to keep the Board informed.

Staff promotes the grants program in a variety of ways including press releases, outreach to member agencies, mailing to nonprofits in Alameda County, as well as direct outreach to potential recipients. In addition, the Agency regularly utilizes social media such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook to promote grant opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION

There is no recommendation at this time. This item is for information only.