



Date: November 6, 2023

To: Wanda S. Page, City Manager
Through: Bertha T. Winbush, Deputy City Manager
From: Victoria W. Samayoa, ARPA Grants Manager
Subject: American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Project – Transformative Justice Program

Executive Summary

On November 3, 2021, Forward Justice, Inc., submitted proposal “Transformative Justice Program” requesting \$2,000,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to provide resources to educational and training opportunities for health and wellness, community advocacy, civic activism/involvement, culture and arts, and self/community healing in spaces that are safe, welcoming, and free from harm for underrepresented communities and formerly incarcerated people in Durham. On May 18, 2022, City Council approved \$1,000,000 funding for this entity. Staff has reviewed the revised proposal and recommends funding.

Motion

To authorize the City Manager to execute an ARPA subrecipient grant agreement with Forward Justice, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000.

Background

The original proposal from Forward Justice, Inc. requested \$2,000,000 from the ARPA funds under the core category of Public Health. Forward Justice’s “Transformative Justice Program” seeks to base programming on central understanding and needs to invest in the healing and wellness of underrepresented communities, such that programming will offer ongoing and rotating classes and trainings.

Issues and Analysis

Since 2016, Forward Justice, a 501(c)(3) organization, collaborates with partnerships to support the advancement of racial, social, and economic justice and will work with SpiritHouse, Inc., also a 501 (c)(3), to perform the scope of work for this program.

Forward Justice has served as a strategic partner for other nonprofit organizations, coalitions, and networks for a more just, equitable, and free United States South. Forward Justice will work to prioritize the care and healing for underserved communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-10 to provide interdisciplinary, culturally rooted, comprehensive resources and leverage long-term self-sufficiency capacities for under-resourced and historically excluded Durham residents and formerly incarcerated people.

The programming areas of focus include: 1) Transformative Justice education and training, 2) Health & Wellness access and education, and 3) Arts and Culture activities and programming:

- Community Education: Harm Free Zone restorative & transformative justice training, community advocacy, and policy education towards collective action.
 - Goal – Train community members to learn alternative methods of accountability, care, and connectedness.
- Health & Wellness Access: Health workout classes, meditation, reflective yoga, and counseling.
 - Goal – Expose and provide community members to alternative holistic health practices that allow participants to cultivate wellness practices.
- Arts & Culture: Artist residencies and cultural events.
 - Goal - Conduct trauma-informed arts events and residencies to allow for community engagement through art mediums.

Programming will be available to residents of underserved communities with low to moderate income households at 80% of Average Median Income (AMI) and below with no cost to residents. Programming will be in collaboration and partnership with clinical social workers to perform preventing violence and behavioral care.

Forward Justice, Inc. will measure the progress and success by the following metrics:

- Participants needs assessments;
- Number of members impacted by the programming;
- Number of additional members, increased knowledge, and exposure as the program progresses;
- Pre- and post- surveys from participants across the programs;
- Intake and exit surveys with participants to build from public health metrics including how participants understand their community togetherness, how they understand conflict, level of community responsibility and accountability, how participants understand their wellness, and identify wellness;
- Additional metrics will be developed in consultation with university research evaluation partners;
- Number of events provided by the programming; and
- Documenting the training, arts, and culture residency events through video and photo documentation to capture the process and the story of the community.

Alternatives

The City Council can choose not to accept the staff recommendation.

Financial Impact

\$1,000,000 is available for this purpose from the funding source of the ARPA federal funds. The City of Durham received \$51,881,733 in two distributions; the first distribution was received on June 1, 2021, in the amount of \$25,940,866.50; the remaining amount was received May 2022. The City will have until December 2024 to obligate the funds. Recipients have until December 2026 to spend the funds.

Equal Business Opportunity Summary

Due to the nature of this agenda item, a review by the Finance Department was not required.

Contractor Workforce Diversity & Hiring Practices

Due to the nature of this agenda item, obtaining Contractor Workforce Diversity & Hiring Practices information would not be applicable.

Attachments

Forward Justice, Inc. Subrecipient Grant Agreement