



Sophie Hahn
City Council District 5

CONSENT CALENDAR
March 8, 2022

To: Honorable Members of the City Council

From: Councilmembers Sophie Hahn and Ben Bartlett (Co-Authors),
Councilmember Kate Harrison (Co-Sponsor)

Subject: Budget Referral: Grant Writing Services

RECOMMENDATION

Refer \$300,000 to the FY 2022-2023 budget process to expand the City's capacity to seek and obtain grants and launch funded projects by hiring or contracting for writing and RFP/grant/program administration support.

BACKGROUND

Berkeley is an innovative City, pursuing ambitious programs and initiatives with the vigor and vision of a much larger jurisdiction. Innovation requires a significant investment of City resources and staff time. In addition, Berkeley has aging infrastructure and longstanding initiatives that require additional funding to achieve success. To support these efforts and increase revenues, the City has access to Federal, State, County, Regional, and, in some instances, private funds.

Currently, grant-writing and application responsibilities are distributed across City departments, which independently seek new grant opportunities and submit applications. While the City does receive many awards, the application process can be time consuming for Staff, who are stretched more thinly than ever due to pandemic response and staffing shortages. At the same time, with the current Federal administration's massive new investments, State of California surpluses, and significant philanthropic initiatives by private foundations, unprecedented monies are being made available to address a wide variety of needs in our community.

In addition to grant writing, extra support can be deployed to assist with the preparation of RFPs related to grant-funded and other initiatives, and with reports and other grant and program-related requirements, to expedite implementation and administration of new projects for which funds have been received and/or allocated by the City Council.

[On October 3, 2017, Council approved a referral for the City Manager to](#) issue a request for information (RFI) to explore grant writing services from specialized municipal grant-writing firms, and report back to Council. On [May 14, 2019 the City Manager reported back to Council](#) the results of the City's RFI process. On July 27, 2021, [the City Council directed the City Manager to move forward to establish needs and select a firm or firms to supplement the City's grant writing capacity](#), and provide a budget referral in time to be considered for the November 2021 AAO update, such that a new firm or firms could be in place by January of 2022.

To date, no additional support for grant writing and grant/program launch and administration has been obtained. This item refers to the upcoming budget process funds to obtain grant writing and program launch/administration support via the hiring of an individual with grant-writing, RFP, and grant/program administration expertise, or the hiring of one or more outside consultants specializing in this work.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Budget request for \$300,000, to enable the City to move forward to address these longstanding needs. Expenses to be offset by the value of additional grants successfully awarded.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

As our Nation and State recover from the COVID-19 crisis, there are a record number of grants available to cities from Federal, State, County, Regional, and private sources. An unexpected surplus in the California budget has resulted in further unprecedented opportunities to obtain funding for a wide range of City of Berkeley priorities. To access these rapidly-developing, highly competitive funds, Berkeley should supplement its ability to write timely, successful grants by bringing in professional grant writing services. Once funds have been obtained, Berkeley could also benefit from help with preparation of RFPs, reports, and other grant/program administration, to ensure funded programs can be launched expeditiously.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

None.

CONTACT PERSON

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