



COUNCIL AGENDA:

FILE:

ITEM: 3.4

Memorandum

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Sylvia Arenas

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: February 25, 2020

Approved

Date

2/25/2020

SUBJECT: APPROVALS OF DIGITAL INCLUSION GRANT AWARDS

RECOMMENDATION

Approve staff recommendations to award a total of \$1 million in Digital Inclusion grants to the twenty-three organizations and:

1. Expand outreach for the next grant cycle to local stakeholders, including neighborhood associations and organizations, through multilingual community meetings to ensure cultural and linguistic competency for the grant application process and grant-funded program improvement monitoring.
2. Prioritize Digital Inclusion Partnerships in areas based on highest need including the 95122 zip code.
3. Add the Digital Inclusion Fund and Digital Inclusion Partnership to the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee Workplan to report on grantee methodology, performance evaluations, and neighborhood feedback.

BACKGROUND

Thank you to the staff for a thoughtful RFP process that engaged Community Based Organizations (CBO) with well-established track records of providing digital inclusion programs as well as emerging CBOs. The City conducted three grant workshops, four community forums, and audience specific forums. However, these public outreach efforts were disseminated digitally and lacked availability in threshold languages for digitally underserved and monolingual communities, neighborhood associations, and residents to ensure a fair and accessible application period. Therefore, we must expand future public outreach efforts for the second round of grants to also include multilingual community engagement.

In 2018, the City Council established the Digital Inclusion Fund and the Digital Inclusion Partnership to create a sustainable fund source to close the digital divide for underserved residents in the City of San José, including the 95122 zip code which has the highest rates of poverty, gang hotspots, and substantiated child abuse cases. Separately, the City also approved

the expansion of Community Wi-Fi to Overfelt High School in the East Side Union High School District (ESUHSD) to provide our students and surrounding residents with access to reliable, high-speed internet. However, the effort of expanding Community Wi-Fi to digitally underserved residents would be lost without access to digital mobile devices. Although none of the twenty-three CBOs awarded Digital Inclusion Fund grants are located near Overfelt High School in District 8, many proposed serving East San José and the ESUHSD. We must leverage our resources and make sure that digitally underserved neighborhoods are served in the Digital Inclusion Partnership to ensure that neither of the two separate efforts are lost due to lack of digital mobile devices or lack of internet access.

The Digital Inclusion Advisory Board is comprised of eighteen board members including Angel Rios, Deputy City Manager and Jill Bourne, Library Director, San José Public Library who also report to the Neighborhood Services and Education (NSE) Committee. The scope of work of the Digital Inclusion Fund and Digital Inclusion Partnership compliments the ongoing work that is presented to the NSE Committee to serve, foster, and strengthen community by providing access to lifelong learning and preserving healthy neighborhoods. Therefore, adding the Digital Inclusion Fund and Digital Inclusion Partnership to the NSE Committee Workplan would ensure that the efforts to close the digital divide reports back to a committee that not only evaluates innovation projects based on optimizing resources and improving service delivery but also neighborhood services and education.

BROWN ACT

The signers of this memorandum have not had, and will not have, any private conversation with any other member of the City Council, or that member's staff concerning any action discussed in the memorandum, and that each signer's staff members have not had, and have been instructed not to have, any such conversation with any other member of the City Council or that member's staff.