




Conor Baldwin
Chief Financial Officer

Brendan Flynn
ARPA Finance Manager

MEMORANDUM

TO: Thomas A. Golden, Jr., City Manager 

FROM: Brendan Flynn, ARPA Finance Manager

CC: Conor Baldwin, Chief Financial Officer

DATE: November 20, 2023

SUBJECT: MOTION RESPONSE – 3/28/2023 - C. Nuon / C. Yem - Req. City Mgr.
Provide City Council With A Report Reviewing The Process By Which ARPA Funding Proposals Were Reviewed And Prioritized; Further, Request City Mgr. Provide City Council With A List Of All Submitted Proposals, Including Information As To Which Proposals Were Sent By Lowell Residents And Women-Owned Enterprises.

BACKGROUND

Between February and September, the City of Lowell launched seven (7) ARPA grant funded opportunities to the public. These grant programs were targeted towards a variety of interests across the City including small businesses and restaurants, local non-profits, the arts, and cultural organizations.

Applicants were required to be either: 1) be a business or agency operating entity within the City of Lowell, or 2) a business or agency that operates in such a way that the impact of their grant efforts (programs/services) would directly benefit the residents of Lowell. The collective award pool between the seven (7) grants totaled \$4,550,000, and are broken out into the following opportunities, which were ‘hosted’ by three different departments:

Economic Development Office:

- Storefront Façade Improvement Grant (\$500,000)
- Economic Resilience Grant (\$750,000)

Cultural Affairs and Special Events

- Public Art Project Grants (\$300,000)
- Non-Profit Festivals & Events Grant (\$200,000)
- Cultural Organization Recovery Grants (\$300,000)

ARPA Finance Team

- Facilities Renovation and Rehabilitation Grant (\$2,000,000)
- ARPA Ad-Hoc Programs and Services Grant (\$500,000)



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Applicants were required to submit a proposal to the City that described their project or program in detail, how it related to the specific ARPA grant opportunity, the anticipated outcome, a proposed budget, and some basic financial information about their organization. Application review committees were established for each separate grant program by the ‘hosting’ department. Some committees consisted solely of City employees, while others had City employees and members from the community who had experience/expertise with the grant opportunity. Each grant program had their own scoring rubric, which was also specific for each grant, and provided a way to fairly evaluate applications from the same pool. Finally, for an application to be considered for funding, the program/project being proposed **MUST** be aligned with the grant that was applied for AND be eligible under the US Treasury’s Final Rule.

All grant recipients, and their monetary awards, were established by each individual review committee (and in consultation with the City Manager) and were based in part by the overall impact of the applicants’ proposed project or program. To note, we did not track which applicants were Minority Owned or Women Owned Enterprises, so that specific data is not available.

While many of the awards for these grants have been announced, and the results have been presented to the Council, below is a list of the recipients for each grant program that have announced their results.

Economic Development Office Grant Programs

Storefront Improvement Grant Program – The City has received 44 applications this far. Ten (10) applications have been approved (listed below), with an additional 17 applications currently being vetted.

- AG Hardware: ADA Compliant Storefront - \$30,000
- Around the World Travel: New Signage - \$2,500
- Sophia’s Greek Pantry North: New Awning & New Signage - \$4,000
- Simply Khmer: ADA Compliant Storefront, New Signage & Mural - \$25,000
- New Star MA (Koto Restaurant): ADA Compliant Storefront & New Signage - \$20,000
- The Green Place: New Signage - \$3,000
- Gallery Z: New Signage - \$2,500
- Everything Greek: New Signage - \$2,500
- Four Sisters Owl Diner: Façade Repairs & Energy Efficient Windows - \$10,000
- IV Seasons Restaurant: New Awnings - \$4,000



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Economic Resilience Grant Program (80 Applicants/ 25 Recipients)

- The Old Court Restaurant - \$70,000
- El Potro Restaurant - \$70,000
- Top Donut - \$70,000
- Fork Included - \$60,000
- Cobblestones Restaurant - \$50,000
- Saigon Sandwich House - \$50,000
- Eggroll Café - \$45,000
- NolanNova LLC - \$40,000
- Sweet Lydia's - \$35,000
- Tafeta Music - \$35,000
- Small Steps Daycare - \$30,000
- IV Season Restaurant - \$25,000
- Worthen House Café - \$23,000
- Warp & Weft Restaurant- \$19,000
- Blue Taleh Restaurant - \$19,000
- Lala Books - \$16,000
- Queen Adeline - \$15,000
- MJ Clothing - \$15,000
- J King Barbershop - \$12,000
- TOMO360 LLC - \$10,000
- Teal Hair & Makeup Studio - \$10,000
- Market Street Market - \$10,000
- Curation 250 - \$8,000
- Brew'd Awakenings Coffehaus - \$8,000
- Pizzuti Studios Photography - \$5,000

Cultural Affairs & Special Events Grant Programs

Public Art Grant Program (10 Applicants/ 7 Recipients)

- Action Acre: New North Common Mural - \$45,466
- ArtUp Lowell: Public Art and Culture Trail - \$100,000
- CNAG: Welcome to Centralville Sign - \$40,275.40
- Jay Hungate: WaterDragon Sculpture - \$2,695
- Kit Collins: Let's Dance Lowell Neighborhood Murals - \$32,000
- My Beautiful Mind mural and canvas painting - \$50,000
- Ryan Horton: Kinetic Prism Sculpture - \$11,000



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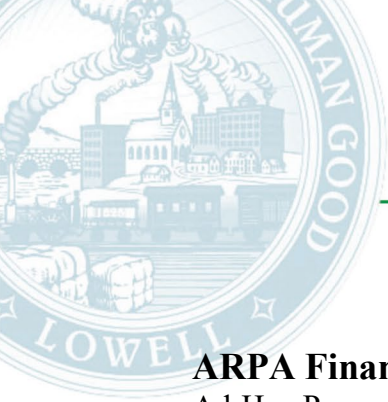
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Non-Profit Festival Grant Program (22 Applicants/ 16 Recipients)

- Lowell Puerto Rican Festival - \$11,830
- Youth Poetry Festival - \$8,350
- Southeast Asian Literary Festival - \$8,935
- Town and the City Festival - \$22,500
- MonsterBash - \$4,000
- Lowell Folk Festival - \$15,000
- Lowell Summer Music Series - \$15,000
- Angkor Dance Troupe – Free Summer Show - \$15,000
- Lowell Hispanic and Latinx Festival - \$15,000
- El Encuentro: The Latino Film Experience - \$3,500
- Jack Kerouac Festival - \$5,000
- Greater Lowell PRIDE - \$10,000
- Juneteenth Community Bloc Party - \$10,000
- Lowell Kinetic Sculpture Race - \$22,500
- Lowell Asian American Film Festival - \$22,500
- Points of Light Lantern Festival - \$10,700

Cultural Organization Recovery Grant Program (18 Applicants/ 14 Recipients)

- Arts League of Lowell: ALL Gallery Support - \$1,837.50
- Angkor Dance Troupe: Staff Development - \$30,000
- CMAA: Folk Music - \$19,500
- DIY Lowell: Program Support - \$30,000
- Friends of the Lowell Council on Aging: Program Extension - \$17,385
- Latinx Community Center for Empowerment: Language Programs - \$11,250
- Lowell Festival Foundation: Development Assistance - \$30,000
- Lowell Makes: Facility Investment - \$31,500
- Lowell Poetry Wheel: Program Extension - \$23,220
- Merrimack Repertory Theatre: Marketing Support - \$30,000
- Mill City Grows: Community Kitchen - \$26,000
- New England Quilt Museum: Exhibit Support - \$4,000
- Refuge Lowell: Program Support - \$33,000
- Whistler House Museum: Worthen Street Art Program - \$13,000



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ARPA Finance Team Grant Programs

Ad-Hoc Programs & Services Grant Program (27 Applicants/ 17 Recipients)

- Lowell Youth Leadership Program: Summer Camp Programming - \$30,000
- Bridge Club of Lowell: Bi-Lingual Recovery Coach - \$30,000
- Lowell Festival Foundation: Free Outdoor Pops Concert - \$27,587
- Merrimack Repertory Theatre: Come To The Theatre - \$28,185
- Greater Lowell YMCA: Mental Health for Kids - \$30,000
- Lowell Alliance: Diaper Bank - \$27,000
- Merrimack Valley Food Bank: Operation Nourish - \$30,000
- Lowell Folk Festival: Recycling Program - \$30,000
- Eliot Presbyterian Church: Eliot Day Center - \$30,000
- Catie's Closet: Basic Needs Program - \$30,000
- Refuge Lowell: Equitable Arts Program - \$30,000
- Lowell Junior High Athletics: Fee Free Youth Sports - \$30,000
- Life Connection Center: COVID Shelter Services - \$28,000
- Lowell Litter Krewe: Home Base Project - \$4,800
- Thrive Communities: Circle Keeper Initiative - \$30,000
- Women's Money Matters: Financial Wellness - \$30,000
- YWCA: Roaming Resource Van - \$30,000

Facilities Renovation and Rehabilitation Grant Program (20 Applications/ 8-10 Recipients)

- These applications are currently being evaluated and we anticipate announcing the recipients very soon.

It is important to note that due to the competitive nature of the grant process, not all applications received could be funded. Additionally, some of the applications were presented for projects/programs that were outside the scope of the grant, and or ineligible per US Treasury guidelines, so these could not be funded either.

To address these two situations, the ARPA team is working to create new grant opportunities that are going to be announced in early 2024. As part of this release of new grants, the ARPA team will reach out to those prior applicants that did not receive funding (through these earlier rounds) and provide these organizations a chance to apply again. They could simply resubmit their original application, or be asked to create a new one, to help increase their opportunity to be awarded funding.