



City of Austin

Recommendation for Action

File #: 23-3655, **Agenda Item #:** 8.

4/18/2024

Posting Language

Authorize negotiation and execution of a contract with Raasin in the Sun to administer the Austin Civilian Conservation Corps Arts/Homelessness initiative for a total contract amount not to exceed \$1,094,390.

Lead Department

Economic Development.

Fiscal Note

Funding in the amount of \$1,094,390 is available in the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 American Rescue Plan Act funds of the Economic Development Department (Workforce Development - Austin Civilian Conservation Corps [ACCC] Homeless & Creative).

Prior Council Action:

May 7, 2020: Council approved Resolution No. 20210507-061, directing the City Manager to create the ACCC, to employ Austinites who are economically impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency to complete conservation and other beneficial projects.

June 10, 2021: Council approved Resolution No. 20210610-077 adopting the American Rescue Plan Act Spending Framework and authorizing the City Manager to make the necessary allocations. \$1,000,000 to EDD: Workforce ACCC (Homeless and/or Creative Sector) and for Arts Industry Supports. Resolution 20210610-077.

For More Information:

Sylvia Holt-Rabb, Acting Director, Economic Development Department, 512-974-3131; Meghan Wells, Cultural Arts Division Manager, Economic Development Department, 512-974-9314.

Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

April 19, 2021 - Arts Commission formed an "Emergency Funding and Proactive Strategies for Future Funding Working Group" with Commissioners Barnes, Flores, Schmalbach, Van Dyke, and Zisman.

May 15, 2023 - The Arts Commission voted to approve recommendations from the Emergency Funding and Proactive Strategies for Future Funding Working Group for the Austin Civilian Conservation Corps Framework on Commissioner Gray motion, Commissioner Schmalbach second on a 7-0 vote with Commissioner Garza absent.

Additional Backup Information:

The ACCC is a workforce development initiative established by the City Council in May 2020. The initiative helps Austinites affected by the COVID-19 pandemic to earn income through work that improves the community. Participants receive training, certifications, and experience that will help them establish careers in conservation and sustainability-related job fields.

In 2021, the Economic Development Department and the Parks and Recreation Department piloted three

ACCC programs to employ artists to create new work that addressed safety, mental health, and community healing during the pandemic:

- (1) Arts Responders employed nine artists/arts collectives to organize and engage the community through social practice to cope with and overcome COVID-19;
- (2) Austin Safely Creates contracted with local arts nonprofit, Creative Action, to use interactive performance produced by teaching artists to promote self-expression and healing; and
- (3) The "BeWell" murals at the Lamar Underpass, curated by Raasin in the Sun, share positive, uplifting and informative visual messages to promote physical and mental health. This initiative employed six number of artists.

These pilot programs, as well as input from the Arts Commission and others, informed how the departments will advance future ACCC programming for creatives - funded through \$1.9M of from the federal American Rescue Plan Act. The future programs will use the arts as an instrument for community resilience, as well as to support and grow the talents of the local creative workforce.

The \$1.1M ACCC Arts/Homeless initiative is funded from the American Rescue Plan Act \$1,000,000 from Workforce ACCC (Homeless and/or Creative Sector) and \$94,390 from Arts Industry Supports. The project will be loosely based on the Philadelphia Mural Arts program, Color Me Back, in which professional artists partnered with people experiencing homelessness in a same-day work-pay mural program.

The Economic Development Department continues to partner with sister department Austin Public Library to better serve the community. APL will provide in-kind donation of the physical space (underground Parking Lot at Central Library) for this initiative. This has been discussed and mutually accepted by both departments and will be governed by provisions in a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines the terms, roles, and responsibilities of each party.