



Mayor and Council

Work Session: Grants to Nonprofits

August 3, 2026



Outline

- Requested Feedback
- Background
- Program Overview
- Program Design Changes
- Next Steps
- Requested Feedback



Requested Feedback

1. Should the city adopt five proposed Impact Focus Areas to guide future grant funding decisions?
2. Should one or two of these Impact Focus Areas be prioritized in FY28?
3. Should the city provide a streamlined renewal pathway for high-performing programs?



Background

- 1982: Human services grants begin (REAP) in Community Services Division
- “Community Organization” grants offered through various departments
- Reorganized into Community Services & Enrichment Grant under DHCD (FY25)
- Community Empowerment Matching Grants also moved under DHCD (FY26)

Background

Benefits of Reorganization

- Stronger nonprofit partnerships
- Improved outcomes tracking and accountability
- Standardizing and improving administrative processes
 - Right-sizing requirements for smaller, lower-complexity grants up to \$10,000



Background

Right-sized requirements for smaller, lower-complexity grants up to \$10,000

- Community Empowerment Matching Grant program is now the **Community Empowerment Mini-Grants Program**
- One-time, up-front payments
- One-time, post-project reports
- Better fit, especially for events
- FY27 Community Empowerment Matching Grants budget will be administered and dispersed by June 2027.
- FY27 CS&E awards of \$10,000 or less have shifted to this streamlined process.

Background

FY27 Grantees Under \$10,000 Supported by Streamlined Process	
Organization	Program
Neuromotion, Inc.	Music in Motion: Therapeutic Rec Program
Bender JCC of Greater Washington	Delivering Good Network
F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Festival	F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Festival
Montgomery College	City of Rockville Scholarships
RHE Foundation	Scholarship Program
Village Support Network	Rockville Area Village Exchange (RAVE)
New Neighbor Interfaith Alliance	Monthly Women's Circle

Background

Right-sized requirements for smaller, lower-complexity grants up to \$10,000

- DHCD's FY28 proposed budget will include a small shift of funding from CS&E grants to the Community Empowerment Mini-Grant budget
- FY28 Mini-Grants accept requests up to \$10,000 (anticipate 10 to 15 applications)
- April 2027 deadline and community panel review
- May 2027 selection and recommendations to CMO
- June 2027 Mayor & Council approval via consent agenda



CS&E Grants Program Overview

- FY26: 40 programs, 34 nonprofits, total \$1,781,110
- FY27: 48 programs, 40 nonprofits, total \$1,845,790
- Nonprofit partners meet community needs and enrich the lives of Rockville residents
- Quarterly reports and site visits help measure performance
- Community Partner Cafés and Nonprofit Symposium
- Ongoing staff support and connections to resources



CS&E Grants Program Overview

Opportunities to Strengthen the Program

- Streamline requirements
- Improve the evaluation process
- Increase alignment with target outcomes
- Invest in long-term outcomes



Recommended Program Design Changes

Informed By:

- City of Rockville five Guiding Principles
- Human Services Needs Assessment
- Upward Mobility Framework
- Economic Mobility Catalog
- Feedback from multiple grantees to Mayor and Council, City staff
- 40 site visits with current grantees
- Human Services Advisory Commission
- Community Partner Cafés and Nonprofit Symposium
- Regional grantmaking practices
- National grantmaking best practices



Recommendation One: Adopt Impact Focus Areas

The Need

- Well-defined criteria to evaluate many worthy projects
- Applications greatly exceed available funding
- Help organizations prioritize applications aligned with grant goals
- Proposals most aligned should be most competitive for highest ratings
- Maintain flexibility for proposals beyond focus areas

Recommendation One: Adopt Impact Focus Areas



Recommended Impact Focus Areas				
Household Stability	Economic Mobility	Youth and Family Success	Service Access and Navigation	Community Enrichment and Belonging
Continued Service Areas				
• Adult Education • Arts and Culture • Food/Clothing Services	• Health Care • Housing Services • Immigrant Communities		• Public Safety Services • Senior Services • Youth Development	

Recommendation One: Adopt Impact Focus Areas



Household Stability	Economic Mobility	Youth and Family Success	Service Access and Navigation	Community Enrichment and Belonging
Preferred Strategies for FY28 Applications				
• Pre-eviction or foreclosure support • Rapid rehousing • Financial assistance • Basic needs access (e.g. food, healthcare, utilities)	• Workforce development and education tied to living wage careers • Financial and career coaching • Wealth and asset building	• Affordable, high-quality childcare • Low or no-cost youth development and out-of-school time programs • Youth and family behavioral health supports	• Community services navigation and case management • Expanding access to services where people live, learn or gather	• Programs that reduce social isolation • Arts, culture, and community-building activities that increase belonging and civic connection
Continue to ask and assess how proposals would support the City's JEDI goals and improve access, opportunity, and outcomes for Rockville residents				



Recommendation: Streamline Renewal for High-Performing Programs



The Need

- Support resident needs that cross more than one year of funding
- Reduce application burden for high-performing programs requesting renewal funding



Recommendation: Streamline Renewal for High-Performing Programs



- Allow a streamlined renewal for high-performing programs seeking funding to maintain that program (up to 2)
- Provide modest cost-of-service adjustments, subject to available funding
- After 2 renewals, programs resubmit through full application and review process
- Use site visits and reports to identify high-performing programs (beginning in FY27)
- Focus the annual, competitive review process on other applications

Next Steps

If these changes are adopted, staff will:

- Finalize program changes based on Mayor and Council feedback
- Communicate to current and prospective grantees via application materials, technical assistance sessions, and Community Partner Cafés (September 2026)
- Launch FY28 CS&E application with Impact Focus Areas (September 2026)
- Review applications using Impact Focus Areas in evaluation criteria (November 2026)
- Begin streamlined renewals for eligible high-performing programs (August 2027)

Requested Feedback

1. Should the city adopt five proposed Impact Focus Areas to guide future grant funding decisions?

Household Stability	Economic Mobility	Youth and Family Success	Service Access and Navigation	Community Enrichment and Belonging
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2. Should one or two of these Impact Focus Areas be prioritized in FY28?

3. Should the city provide a streamlined renewal pathway for high-performing programs?