



Legislation Text

File #: 17-203, Version: 1

ACTION REQUESTED:

Communication from the City Manager, Director of Public Works and Chief Innovation Officer with a Request to APPROVE the POSTING of the PROGRAM DIRECTOR, CREW SUPERVISOR and CASE MANAGER Positions for the Proposed PEORACORPS Program, with Conditional Hiring Based upon Approval of Grant Funding.

BACKGROUND: In 2015, City staff from the Public Works Department and Innovation Team traveled to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to learn about their best practices around green infrastructure installation and maintenance. A key component of their maintenance regime is a program called PowerCorpsPHL, an AmeriCorps program which provides opportunity youth with the training and skill development necessary to pursue careers in related industries. City staff were inspired by the model and returned to Peoria with the intention of scoping the potential for a similar program locally. Following extensive engagement with the IDEAS Committee, One Water Committee, and other outreach through neighborhood associations and community groups, this model was deemed high priority for the Innovation Team's slated list of initiatives.

An Advisory Committee comprised of non-profits, potential fee-for-service organizations, the local workforce investment board, and other relevant stakeholders convened to develop the pillars of a PeoriaCorps model. Areas including recruitment, training, education, and support services were crafted by the Advisory Committee. The program is intended for opportunity youth, those ages 18 to 24 who have been out of school and unemployed for six months, to gain the employability skills necessary to become productive members of Peoria's community. Two crews of ten participants each will serve consecutive terms of six-months. Participants will spend 20% of their time in a classroom setting to gain the necessary knowledge to maintain green infrastructure as well as life skills such as financial literacy. The remaining 80% of participants' time will be spent in the field conducting green infrastructure maintenance. Participants will earn a stipend of \$6,500 which will be dispersed throughout their term of service.

The Advisory Committee's input was then used by City staff to apply for two grant opportunities. The first grant opportunity is through the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) for AmeriCorps funding. The City was recently notified that it has been selected for funding in the amount of \$138,285 plus additional educational awards for participants after program completion. Once a grant agreement has been prepared, it will be taken to Council for approval. The second grant opportunity is through the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for the Apprenticeship Plus Youth Program. The City has received notification of progress to the final round of review. While the City does not yet have final notification of this grant award, the premise of the grant application has been accepted and the remaining steps are administrative in nature before a final award will be granted.

With the news of the AmeriCorps funding and the anticipation of funding through the Apprenticeship Plus Youth Program, the Public Works Department is seeking approval to move forward with posting the Program Director, Crew Supervisor, and Case Manager positions for PeoriaCorps. Posting the positions now would ensure adequate lead time for recruitment for these positions. An offer to hire will not be extended until the Council has approved the AmeriCorps grant agreement and the Apprenticeship Plus Youth grant agreement.

Funding Source	Amount
----------------	--------

CNCS AmeriCorps	\$138,285
DCEO Apprenticeship Plus Youth (est.)	\$205,000
In-Kind - Program Partners	\$20,400
City of Peoria - Public Works Department	\$101,547
Total Program	\$465,232
<i>CNCS Education Awards for Completers</i>	<i>\$58,150</i>

FINANCIAL IMPACT: There is no financial impact or obligation for the City of Peoria to post the Program Director, Crew Supervisor or Case Manager positions. An additional Council communication will be forthcoming with the final details of all grant awards and the City's obligated match. An offer will not be extended to hire until Council approval has been received.

The current expectation for the City's year one match is \$101,547. The CNCS AmeriCorps grant is a three-year grant cycle that is renewed annually. The DCEO Apprenticeship Plus Youth grant is a one-year grant. The DCEO grant is focused on piloting innovative programs that can then become self-sustaining. The PeoriaCorps model is premised on fee-for-service work for additional green infrastructure maintenance within the City or to other entities in future years in order to fill the funding needs once the DCEO grant ends.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS: Neighborhoods that have been engaged about PeoriaCorps have been excited not only about the additional capacity to maintain the City's existing green infrastructure installations, but also about the opportunity to employ people from within the community to do the work.

IMPACT IF APPROVED: The Program Director, Crew Supervisor and Case Manager positions will be posted and the recruitment process will begin. However, an offer will not be extended until the Council has approved the grant agreements and the City's match.

IMPACT IF DENIED: If denied, the PeoriaCorps program may not meet its required launch date under both grant agreements of August 2017. Staff, most importantly the Program Director, will need to be hired before August in order to develop program policies and procedures, as well as recruitment of the first cohort of PeoriaCorps.

ALTERNATIVES: The City could refrain from posting the Program Director, Crew Supervisor and Case Manager positions until the grant agreements have been approved by Council and signed. This would likely place the City in risk of not meeting grant requirements to launch the program in August 2017.

EEO CERTIFICATION NUMBER: N/A

WHICH OF THE GOALS IDENTIFIED IN THE COUNCIL'S 2014 - 2029 STRATEGIC PLAN DOES THIS RECOMMENDATION ADVANCE?

1. Financially Sound City Government, Effective City Organization
2. Vibrant Downtown: Riverfront/ Central Business District/ Warehouse District
3. Attractive Neighborhoods with Character: Safe and Livable

WHICH CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR(S) FROM THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DOES THIS RECOMMENDATION IMPLEMENT?

1. Support sustainability.

2. Invest in our infrastructure and transportation.
3. Reinvest in neighborhoods.

DEPARTMENT: Public Works and Innovation Team