

**City of Alexandria, Virginia**  
**FY 2023 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP**  
**Budget Questions & Answers**

**April 12, 2022**

**Question:** Can you provide the fiscal impact if the City were to create a community matching fund (similar to that of the fund focused on park improvements) to support civic associations and neighborhood groups in hosting events and activities that improve quality of life (e.g. neighborhood clean-up, mural painting, community listening sessions, etc.). Grants could range from 5-10K.

**Response:** The fiscal impact of a similar grant matching fund will be dependent on the scope of the program, the associated costs to administer the program, and the amount of the grant awards. Below are examples of existing grant fund programs within the City.

The current Community Matching Fund for park improvements is funded through the Capital Improvement Program. The City will match funds raised by community groups who fundraise for park and recreation facility improvements. The PARKnership manager oversees the competitive application process. This process includes making recommendations to the Park and Recreation Commission, who decides the final awardees. Pre-pandemic, approximately 5-6 projects were awarded annually. Implementation of projects are managed by RPCA Capital Development staff. The total City fiscal impact varies because awards are based on the availability of capital funding. Actual City funds matched have averaged \$100,000-\$150,000 annually (pre-pandemic).

Each year the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) applies to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Non-Competitive Litter Prevention Grant to fully fund the direct costs of the Adopt-a-Park program. Program costs include payments made to community organizations that contract with RPCA to clean up parks, as well as clean up supplies and materials.

The PARKnership manager for RPCA manages the Adopt-a-Park program and RPCA's Community Matching Fund for park improvements. The PARKnership manager is responsible for coordinating all community partnerships for RPCA under the "PARKnership" brand. PARKnership programs also include the Living Landscape Fund, Adopt-a-Bench, Adopt-a-Garden, RPCA Sponsorships, RPCA volunteers, and RPCA community group agreements. The annual cost of an FTE to manage these programs is approximately \$81,500. It should be noted that the PARKnership manager is at full capacity managing the various PARKnership programs. Additional programs would require an increase in staffing resources.

Since 1984, the City of Alexandria has been providing an Annual Arts grant to ensure access to quality arts programs and events for its residents and visitors. Applications are accepted from 501(c) 3 nonprofit arts organizations. Grants made through this category are up to \$10,000 and

shall not exceed 50% of total program budget; a cash match 1:1 is required. Organizations may apply for only one arts program grant per grant cycle. Program grants support an ongoing or short-term arts program performed or presented in the City of Alexandria to substantially engage or benefit the residents of the City of Alexandria. Annual grants fund activities that take place within the City of Alexandria between July 1– June 30 each year. The amount of available grant funding and qualifications may vary from year to year.

If Council is interested in creating a matching fund to support neighborhood groups, staff would recommend aligning funding levels with similar grant programs as referenced above. The potential funding level could range from \$50,000 to \$75,000, assuming \$10,000 matching fund per grant per year. An additional 0.5 FTE at a cost of \$42,000 is recommended to staff the additional programming.