The City of
MONTGOMERY
AND
MONTGOMERY
COUNTY

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS & REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Program Administration

CommUNITY Partnership Grant Program

1.0 Information & Background

The Montgomery County Commission ("County") is soliciting proposals from qualified nonprofit program administrator organizations to finalize and manage the Montgomery Thrive CommUNITY Partners Grant Program using funds allocated to the County through the American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA") State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund ("SLFRF") to build resiliency within the local government in the face of COVID.

The work shall include final development of each grant category definition, eligibility requirements, application materials, application scoring metric, and form of recipient grant agreement, advertising to eligible entities, working with eligible entities to finalize applications, application review and scoring, and submission of recommendation to the ARPA grant committee, finalization of grant agreements, collection of all requisite audit materials on each award to meet County audit requirements and in compliance with ARPA. Applicants should have broad knowledge of other grant programs in order to leverage any funding provided by other sources.

2.0 Amount of Funding Available and Porject Schedule

The Montgomery Thrive CommUNITY Partners Grant Program will be funded at or near $1,000,000 (one-million dollars) for a period of 24 months. The contract with the program administrator is expected to run until December 31, 2026, with an expected launch date of January 1, 2025. The County may increase or decrease the allocation of funds to the program by December 31, 2024, at their discretion.

Time is of the essence in that pursuant to ARPA guidelines, funds allocated to this program must be obligated through contract by December 31, 2024, and fully spent by December 31, 2026. The selected program administrator must include a detailed schedule for performance of their work with the proposal.

3.0 Application, Approval Process and Submission Deadlines

- RFQ/RFP released on September 13, 2024
- RFQ/RFP questions can be submitted by or before September 18, 2024
- Proposal submission deadline is October 3, 2024
- Proposal review process to begin on October 4, 2024
- Funding awards anticipated by or before October 15, 2024
- 24 month contract execution is anticipated within 30 days.

How Will Funding Decisions be Made?

Proposals will undergo an evaluation process conducted by a review committee ("Committee"). The Committee will develop a score for each proposal based on a combination of experience, staffing and cost as follows:

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- 20 points - Relevance and depth of experience in providing program administrator services for similar programs.
- 20 points - Capacity to manage the financial aspects of the program effectively.
- 20 points - Quality and clarity of financial management and oversight processes.
- 20 points - Competitiveness of fee structure.
- 20 points - References and past performance.

Interviews

The County reserves the right to determine whether interviews will be necessary and the number of proposers to be interviewed. If the County deem interviews necessary, selected proposers will be notified. The Proposer's primary contact, as well as other key personnel must be present and participate in the interview. The purpose of the interview is to further document the Proposer's ability to provide the required services and to provide the Committee with an understanding of how the program will be implemented and specific services will be furnished.

4.0 Eligible RFP Responders

Public entities, non-profit agencies or organizations, including faith-based organizations, and Community-Based Development Organizations are eligible to respond to this RFP if they meet the following criteria:

- Must be a registered nonprofit organization with a minimum of 5 years of experience in financial administration and management.
- Demonstrated experience in managing federal or state-funded programs, preferably related to community development or violence intervention.
- Strong financial management skills, including budgeting, accounting, auditing, and reporting.
- Ability to work collaboratively with multiple stakeholders, including governmental entities, community organizations, and consultants.
- Knowledge of and compliance with federal, state, and local financial management regulations.

5.0 Ineligible Uses of Funds

The description of Ineligible Use of Funds includes, but are not limited to:

- Political activities, including lobbying;
- Other uses as determined by the County, or that are prohibited in the Final Rule

6.0 CommUNITY Partners Program Design and Implementation Plan

The County will allocate at or near $1,000,000 (one-million dollars) of funds it has received pursuant to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to fund grants, aid programs and services that were impacted by the COVID pandemic, or provide new programs and services that were found to be deficient or lacking in resiliency during the COVID pandemic. This is a one-time funding source to the County; accordingly, the grant applicants will need to demonstrate financial sustainability through ongoing operation and management of proposed projects.

The County wishes to make funds available to Montgomery County based non-profits, small businesses, local governments, and local government instrumentalities in the following categories:

1. Affordable and Sustainable Housing: Targeted for grants to aid in the development of housing for low-and moderate-income individuals. Projects may include development of necessary infrastructure to support the development of affordable and/or sustainable housing, such as critical home repair, residential energy efficiency upgrades, or extension or expansion of municipal sewer or water service. Scoring should emphasize the number of units impacted, the targeted population (the lower the income target of the public to be served the higher the score), the amount of other funding leveraged, and the longevity of the commitment to maintain the housing's availability for low- and moderate-income individuals.

2. Childcare: Targeted to assist in making childcare more available and affordable within Montgomery County. The County is aware of the scarcity and cost of childcare, and its impact on the availability of parents to enter and maintain a presence in the local workforce, especially on adults working in essential job fields such as health care, law enforcement, utility services, food distribution, and sales, etc. At the same time, traditional low salaries for workers in childcare has limited the pool of available workers in the field, and the low return on investment has discouraged development of adequate day care facilities within Montgomery County. Proposals may include development of childcare facilities, training programs for prospective workers, assistance programs for workers in essential professions and in childcare. Scoring of applications should recognize the number of children potentially served, the leverage of other funding, the impact on essential service providers, and the sustainability of the program. (Note that this is not intended to support short-term direct childcare payments.)

3. Mental Health: Targeted to assist public and community mental health projects. Applications to conduct studies and assessments of at-risk populations that have been or would be negatively impacted by a pandemic situation and/or the development of programs and services to address or prevent the increase in need for mental health services. Scoring of applications should be based on the following:

a. Ability to perform;
b. Programs that build on addressing the needs of at-risk populations based on national, state, regional, or other local studies;
c. Benchmarking against other similar programs;
d. Prospective longevity of implementation programs,

e. Prioritizing prevention-based programs over treatment; and,
f. Effectiveness of proposed strategies based on comparable studies and/or programs.

4. Arts, Culture, and Recreation: Targeted to assist non-profits and businesses to expand arts, culture, and recreation opportunities so that more opportunities are available for residents. The need to provide more recreation opportunities for residents was evident during COVID as capacity of existing facilities was impacted by the need to maintain safe social distancing. Scoring should emphasize the leveraging of other funding, the provider's experience in providing services or facilities, the economic sustainability of the endeavor, the capacity of the facility or program to provide service to the target audience, the provision of facilities or programs in an area not served or underserved for the service provided, and the establishment of need for the service and/or program.

5. Transportation: Targeted to projects that address transportation needs for underserved residents and/or workers. During the pandemic residents had issues getting to medical appointments, court appearances, job interviews, supermarkets, work, and other essential services due to the need to maintain social distancing in existing public bus service, the limited nature of public bus service within Montgomery County, and the lack of alternative modes of transportation. Projects to set up ride sharing/matching programs, small scale employee transport services, medical and grocery shopping service for seniors, disadvantaged neighborhoods, or other impacted group are eligible for funding. Scoring should be based upon the number of clients that would be served, the need for the service in the proposed target population (meaning they have a lack of options), the amount of funds leveraged, and the sustainability of the program.

6. Public Safety: Targeted to provide funding to organizations and instrumentalities that support public safety initiatives within the community. Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations and local law enforcement agencies. The goal of this category is to enhance the safety and security of the public through innovative programs, equipment procurement, community engagement, and training initiatives. Applications should propose projects that align with the following examples, though other public safety-related projects will also be considered: community policing programs, violence prevention and intervention, emergency preparedness and response, first responder equipment and training, school safety initiatives, substance abuse prevention and treatment. Scoring of applications should consider the project's impact on crime, with an emphasis on violence crime, the ability to scale and sustain its impact in the targeted communities, and how the funds will be used to help adapt, innovate, and continue serving those in need.

7. Workforce Development: Targeted to train people for jobs in essential service fields. Applications for funding of training programs in partnership with employers, including trades-work apprenticeships, are encouraged. Projects may also include partnering with local colleges and/ or trade schools to develop and deliver a small business startup certificate program to support the start-up costs of new businesses and the educational background required for entrepreneurs. Scoring of applications shall be based on the identified shortage of workers in the professions proposed to be served, the amount of funds leveraged, and the long-term impact of the program in training and attracting people to jobs in the target fields.

8. Capacity Building: Targeted to help small non-profit organizations and neighborhood associations that suffered a negative economic impact from the pandemic build capacity to do the critical work of supporting vulnerable communities, providing essential services, and fostering local resilience. The pandemic severely strained the financial resources of many nonprofits, leading to decreased capacity to deliver critical assistance. All non-profit organizations are allowed to submit under this category, but preference will be given to organizations whose work is focused on violence prevention and/or community policing, youth education, and food insecurity. Scoring of applications shall be based on the organization's positioning to scale its impact in the targeted communities, the extent of how the organization was negatively impacted by the pandemic, and how the funds will be used to help them adapt, innovate, and continue serving those in need.

9. Small Business Microgrant: Targeted to provide financial support to historically disadvantaged small business enterprises whose owners can demonstrate a disproportionate impact from the pandemic. This initiative aims to level the playing field by offering critical funding to businesses that face systemic barriers to traditional financing. Eligible businesses must be classified as small business enterprises, with preference given to businesses whose owners are determined to have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic as defined in the U.S. Treasury Guidelines for ARPA funding. Grants under this program are not to exceed $5,000.00 (five-thousand dollars). Funds can be used for operational costs, technology upgrades, inventory purchase, marketing, and other business development activities.

7.0 Scope of Work

1. Work with the County Grant Administrator to finalize application criteria, application forms, scoring criteria, and recipient grant agreements for all grant categories. All requirements must include the criteria mentioned in this RFP as well as conform with the requirements for the County's use of ARPA funding. The final category definitions, recipient contract, and scoring criteria will be submitted to the County Grant Administrator for approval. (To note, grant agreements must include reclamation provisions in case funds are not spent within the timeframe or in accordance with ARPA guidelines.)

2. Devise and deliver an outreach program to build community awareness of the grant program and how to seek assistance in applying.

3. Define a process to offer assistance to individuals, non-profit corporations, and local government agencies in preparing and submitting applications for funding under the ARPA grant categories defined herein. After award of a grant, assistance should also be provided to the grant recipients in complying with all grant reporting requirements in order to provide proof the funds were properly dispersed and used in accordance with the grant award and grant recipient agreement requirements. Finally, it is extremely important that application assistance be combined with a review of other available funding programs. While the County hopes to leverage its funding (meaning other private and grant sources should be maximized), the County is not averse to providing local match against other grant and aid programs where legally permitted. The County wants to avoid funding projects that are clearly eligible for funding from other sources instead of using County funding.

4. Review and score the submitted grant applications. The selected program administrator will develop processes and procedures for the review of all submitted grant applications in collaboration with County staff. The selected program administrator will make recommendations on award to an ARPA Grant Review Committee, which shall be composed of County officials or their designee. Upon notification by the County, the selected program administrator shall prepare each grant recipient agreement for execution with the recipient. Upon execution, the program administrator will make direct payment to the grant recipient.

- *The program administrator must be aware that some or all of the funding for this program may come from an elected official's discretionary ARPA funds. In such cases, specific processes and procedures will be required to grant these officials full discretion in making an award to a specific expenditure category once the program administrator determines that the application meets all applicable requirements and criteria.*

5. Create and adhere to an aggressive implementation deadline. The selected program administrator should include their proposed process for each element of this scope of service.

8.0 Additional Requirements

This Request for Proposal shall be considered as part of the contract. Unless otherwise specified in the Proposal or contract between the County and the selected program administrator, it is assumed that all services requested in the RFP are included in the resulting contract’s scope of work.

The selected program administrator and all subcontractors shall certify to the County that they will meet all applicable local, state, and federal requirements regarding employment and professional standards.

The selected program administrator shall obtain insurance, as deemed appropriate by the County, for itself, its subcontractors, and the County for coverage of claims which may arise from the performance of any aspect of the contracted work. Proof of insurance shall accompany the proposal and shall be attached to each selected program administrator contract as Schedule "B" thereof. A sample copy of County insurance requirements is attached hereto.

All verbal clarifications, changes, or modifications of the scope or details in the work are to be followed up with written verification and agreement by both parties. The County, through the County Administrator, reserves the right of final interpretation of any clarifications or modifications made within the context of the contract.

The County will not be bound to make use of any of the work produced by any consultant.

8.0 Insurance Requirements

Type of Insurance	**Minimum Limits**
Commercial General Liability	$1,000,000 per occurrence. Commercial general coverage covering comprehensive General Liability on an "occurrence" basis
Automobile Liability	$1,000,000 per occurrence. No endorsement shall be attached limiting the coverage.
Workers' Compensation	$1,000,000 per accident. Subrecipient may rely on a self-insurance program to meet those requirements, but only if the program of self-insurance complies fully with the provisions of the State of Ohio. The Workers' Compensation policy shall be endorsed with a waiver of subrogation in favor of the entity for all work performed by the Subrecipient, its employees, agendas, and subcontractors.
Professional Liability For licensed professionals performing work pursuant to this Agreement	$1,000,000 covering the licensed professionals' errors and omissions. Any deductible or self-insured retention shall not exceed $150,000 per claim

9.0 Compliance and Monitoring

The County will monitor the selected program administrator to ensure that:

- Proper accounting and financial controls are in place and maintained
- Program regulations are being followed
- Supporting documentation is provided for all expenses
- All payments and human resource matters are being handled in a timely fashion

10.0 Federal Lobbying Prohibition Disclosure

All agencies or organizations that receive SLFRF funds must sign and follow the Certification for Federal Lobbying Prohibition Disclosure in contract documents. For additional information, please see this link: https://lobbyingdisclosure.house.gov/amended_lda_guide.html

11.0 Proposal Requirements

Each response to this RFP shall include the information described in this section. Provide the information in the specified order. Failure to include all the elements specified may be cause for rejection. Additional information may be provided but should be succinct and relevant to the goals of this RFP.

A. *ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW*

   Provide a brief description of your organization, mission, and history of managing similar projects. Please also make sure to include the following information: title of this RFP, name and mailing address of organization, and identify the designated contact person (including email address and phone number).

B. *FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT APPROACH*

   Describe your financial management and oversight processes, including tools, software utilized, and tasks you feel are important in serving as the program administrator of a successful community partnership initiative.

C. *QUALIFICATIONS*

   List the professional qualifications of your organization and the staff who will be involved in managing the program administration and fiscal responsibilities. The County will accept proposals from individuals, individual firms, or a team of firms and individuals with one entity as the lead firm holding the single contract with the County. Firms responding to this RFP should demonstrate experience in the following areas by providing past project experience and references:

   - Matching project needs with available grant and other aid programs. In other words, the selected program administrator should be knowledgeable about a wide variety of grant programs and opportunities.

- Public outreach to the target clientele.
- Preparing grant applications.
- Scoring grant applications against established scoring criteria.
- Processing requests for payment of grants.
- Collecting, organizing, and submitting grant compliance documentation.
- The requirements of ARPA, especially concerning local government use of such funds. This includes completion of compliance documentation from the grantees.

D. *EXPERIENCE AND CAPACITY*

Provide a statement that is not more than two (2) pages listing any current or past experiences with providing program administration services, especially for federally or state-funded programs. Indicate the clients/program names, locations, dates administered, and other relevant information.

E. *PROPOSED BUDGET*

Detailed explanation of your fee structure, including any indirect costs, direct costs, and other associated fees.

- The Proposer shall propose a separate fee for each of items within the Scope of Services herein as either a lump sum fee or as a percentage of award. The program administrator budget may not exceed 15% of the total annual program budget for each fiscal year.
- All payment requests shall recognize that the County shall retain 5% (five percent) until completion of the entire contract.
- Incidental expenses such as space rental, copying, printing, etc. shall be included in the selected program administrator’s total fee proposal.
- Vendors may provide any other relevant information that will assist the County in evaluating their proposals.
- Proposals shall remain valid until the execution of a contract by the County.
- Vendors may include in their proposal items not specified in this RFP, which they would consider pertinent. All such items shall be listed separate from the proposal and the cost thereof shall be separate and itemized.
- Proposals shall be examined and evaluated by the County’s evaluation team to determine whether they meet the requirements of this RFP and to make a recommendation to the County.
- The successful proposal shall not be determined by price alone. The evaluation process will be directed toward identifying a Vendor who best meets the County's functional requirements, is financially sound, technically oriented, user-friendly, competitively priced, and reflects Vendor experience and competency.
- The Vendor's entire response to the RFP will become part of the Contract.

F. REFERENCES

Provide a list of names, addresses, and telephone/email contacts of at least two (public sector preferred) clients for which the organization has successfully administered a state or federally-funded program.

G. EXPECTATIONS FROM THE COUNTY

Identify any information and tasks expected from the County to enable you to complete the Scope of Work.

12.0 Submission Requirements

Proposers shall submit all requested items by or before the deadlines detailed in Section 3.0 above.

Submission Format

- Email (1) PDF copy to Kindell Anderson (kindellanderson@mc-ala.org) and Regina Walker (reginawalker@mc-ala.org)
- Please note in subject line: Program Administration for CommUNITY Partners Program

Failure to provide all required submittals in completed form may result in a proposal being found unresponsive and given no consideration. Proposals must be neat, complete, and fully address all information requested.

13.0 Additional Information

- **Agreement.** All terms and conditions, as well as duties of the selected Proposer, shall be set forth in a contract agreement between the selected Proposer and County. The contract will incorporate reference to the requirements of the RFP and the Proposer's proposal as negotiated. State law prohibits the County from agreeing to (1) indemnify the Contractor; (2) waive the right for jury trial; (3) grant a security interest; or (4) binding arbitration.

- **Public Information.** All responses received will be subject to the Alabama Open Records Act, Ala. Code § 36-12-40 (1975), as amended, and may be subject to public disclosure upon request. The Open Records Act is remedial and should therefore be liberally construed in favor of the public. The Alabama Trade Secrets Act is Ala. Code §§ 8-27-1 to 8-27-6 (1975), as amended. Responders are cautioned to be familiar with these statutes. The burden is on the one asserting the trade secret to show that the information sought to be protected meets the definition of a Trade Secret as defined in the Act.

  Any RFP response submitted that contains confidential, trade secrets, or proprietary commercial information must be conspicuously marked on the outside as containing confidential information, and each page upon which confidential information appears must be conspicuously marked as such. Identification of the entire bid proposal as confidential is not acceptable unless the Proposer enumerates the specific grounds or applicable laws which support treatment of the entire material as protected from disclosure to the foregoing statutes or other applicable Alabama law.

The owner of the confidential information shall indemnify and hold the County and its staff harmless from all costs or expenses including, but not limited to, attorney fees and expenses related to litigation concerning disclosure of said information and documents.

- **Immigration Law**. The selected Proposer affirms that it will not violate federal immigration law or knowingly employ, hire for employment, or continue to employ an unauthorized alien within the State of Alabama for the duration of the agreement. Furthermore, a contracting party found to be in violation of this provision shall be deemed in breach of the agreement and shall be responsible for all damages resulting therefrom.

- **Minority and Women-Owned Businesses**. The County are committed to increase participation by Minority and Women-Owned Businesses (M/WBs) in the procurement process; to ensure equal opportunity for M/WBs to participate in the procurement process; to prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, or veteran status in the procurement process; and to achieve a minimum of 30% participation by M/WBs in the procurement process.

- **Rights Reserved.** The County reserve the right, it is sole discretion, to reject all submissions, reissue a subsequent RFP, terminate, restructure, or amend this procurement process at any time. Evaluation criteria contained herein shall be used in evaluating interested firms, groups, or persons for selection. The County may contact any RFP proposer after receiving its submittal to seek clarification on any portion thereof. The County further reserve the right to request additional information from any RFP respondent if such information is deemed necessary to further evaluate selection. All RFP material submitted becomes property of the County and will not be returned to the RFP proposers. All created and managed assets (i.e., maps, assets purchased for events, etc.) will also be the property of the County.

- **American Rescue Plan Act.** In the event American Rescue Plan Act funds are utilized for this purchase or contract, the County will require the selected program administrator to affirm its adherence to the applicable standards provided in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, including, but not limited to, its compliance with the applicable provisions of the following federal laws, regulations and orders:
  a. Title VI of the Civil Right Act of 1964
  b. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

c. Davis Bacon Act of 1931
d. Age Discrimination Act of 1975
e. Section 402 of the 1974 Vietnam Veterans Act
f. Byrd Anti-Lobbying Amendment Compliance and Certification
g. Executive Order 11246 and Equal Employment Opportunity