

42) ***Community Grant Opportunities***  
SLI 116-1-A-1

**Statement of Legislative Intent:**

The City Council requests that the Executive analyze the benefits and costs of consolidating the administration of community grant opportunities across the city and submit a report and action plan no later than April 1, 2011.

**It is the intent of the Council to preserve and strengthen the community grant opportunities available to residents by ensuring that opportunities:**

1. Are easily accessible to the public;
2. Support all communities in applying for grants including communities who have been historically underrepresented in civic projects, through education and technical assistance;
3. Maximize dollars being granted to communities by seeking administrative efficiencies.

**The Executive should analyze the benefits and costs of consolidating the administration of community grants and prepare a report that includes:**

1. A description of all community grant opportunities and a brief history of their development in individual departments. The analysis should include but is not limited to the: Neighborhood Matching Fund (Large Projects Fund, Small and Simple Projects Fund, Small Sparks Fund) Technology Matching Fund, Tree Fund, Neighborhood Street Fund, Parks Opportunity Fund, Neighborhood Waste Reduction Grants and the Neighborhood and Community Arts Program. Many of these are “matching funds” requiring volunteer time or financial matches to the funds. Others do not require a “match” but do require that the idea for the project be generated and supported by the neighborhood or community. The intent is to include both of these types of opportunities.
2. The administrative costs for each of the funds, and administrative efficiencies that could be achieved by consolidating the outreach, processing, review, technical support or contract administration for multiple funds and any drawbacks of such consolidation.
3. A clear rationale for consolidating or maintaining independent funds, based on the ability to accomplish the goals outlined by the Council, above.

**Regardless of whether the city proceeds with consolidation, the Executive should develop an action plan to create a single informational point-of-access for all community grant opportunities.** This should include, but is not limited to:

1. a web-portal,
2. written materials, and
3. staff trained to answers questions by phone and in person about all community grant opportunities.

**Background**

Seattle’s neighborhood matching fund was founded in 1988 as a way to provide neighborhood groups with city resources for community-driven projects that enhance and strengthen their own neighborhoods. Over the past twenty years, it has developed into a national model for community building that has been replicated across the country. The matching fund model has

also been replicated throughout the city of Seattle for technology, arts and other projects. Though the projects and review processes differ by Fund, each maintains the same principle that city dollars are extended through matching volunteer contributions and hours.

In addition to matching funds, the City has several community grant opportunities which do not require a match, but that support community building projects generated by organized neighbors and communities.

Seattle currently has at least eight community grant and matching fund opportunities, some of which are coordinated through a single review process, including District Council review, others of which are not. The result is a range of resources for the community, but lack of coordination. If a community member has a project idea, there is not a single place where they might go to find information about all of the funds that might support their project.

Finally, in a time when the city is cutting significant services, community grants provide an opportunity for neighborhood organizations to “fill in the gaps”, since programs support everything from public safety, education, parks, transportation, and cultural programs and services. The Council is seeking ways to maximize the dollars in each of these funds available to communities through administrative efficiencies.

**Responsible Council Committee:** Seattle Public Utilities and Neighborhoods

**Date Due to Council:** Report and Action Plan due by April 1, 2011