

LRB-FISCAL REVIEW SECTION ANALYSIS

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

ITEM 16, FILE #040800

OCTOBER 18, 2004

JEFF OSTERMAN

File # 040800 is a resolution relating to application for, and acceptance and funding of, a National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council 2005 Challenge Grant.

Background

1. This resolution authorizes the Department of Public Works-Operations Division to apply for, accept and fund a National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council 2005 Challenge Grant.
2. Grant proceeds will be used to fund a 3-year pilot program, known as “Grow Green Careers,” to guide minority and underserved populations into careers in urban forestry. The program will be administered by the Forestry Section.
3. Of DPW-Forestry Section’s 112 currently-filled Urban Forestry Specialist positions, 5 are filled by white females, 4 by black females, 3 by Hispanic males and 17 by black males.
4. This is a new grant program for the City and will be the second grant program administered by the Forestry Section, the other being the Urban Forestry Grant, which this year is being used to fund a street tree inventory program known as the “Grey to Green Street Tree Management Initiative.”

Discussion

1. With the Grow Green Careers program, the Forestry Section will partner with Milwaukee Public Schools and the Private Industry Council to develop an urban forestry curriculum for use at three targeted high schools (potentially the High School of the Arts, Vincent High School and Riverside High School) to encourage interest and increase awareness of urban forestry and forestry careers among minority and underserved populations.
2. The program will also offer 8 high school students summer internships in the Forestry Section. Those who successfully complete the internship program will be eligible for grant-funded scholarships to pursue post-secondary education through an associate or bachelor’s degree in urban forestry from partner institutions such as MATC, Mid-State Technical College, UW-Stevens Point or Southern University. Forestry will also offer internships to 6 of these individuals while they are enrolled in college.

3. Upon completion of their forestry degrees, the 6 Grow Green Careers participants who have obtained the college urban forestry education will be eligible for employment as Urban Forestry Specialists in the Forestry Section as positions become available. Hiring is forecasted to begin in 2008 and will be based on vacancies and continued funding of existing positions.
4. As part of this program, the Forestry Section will create and distribute CD-rom materials detailing the Grow Green Careers career-fostering model.
5. This grant encompasses the period of September 1, 2005, through August 31, 2008.

Fiscal Impact

1. The total cost of this grant-funded project is \$623,147, of which \$285,190 will be provided by the grantor (State of Wisconsin) and \$337,957 will be an in-kind contribution from the City. This is considerably larger than the Urban Forestry Grant, which has a 2004 cost of \$54,285, including a City contribution of \$29,285.
2. Of the \$285,190 in grant funds, the largest portions will be used for:
 - Personnel costs (6 high-school interns and 8 urban forestry interns) \$57,670
 - Tuition and room and board for 6 students enrolled in urban forestry college programs \$149,410
 - Expenses relating to operating one-week urban forestry camps in 3 summers \$51,946
3. The City's in-kind contribution will consist of salaries, fringe benefits and overhead costs totaling \$337,957 for the 6 Urban Forestry Specialist positions to be filled by individuals who successfully complete the Grow Green Careers program and compete in the City hiring process.

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