



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT BOARD MEETING DATE: December 13, 2016

DATE: November 22, 2016
TO: Board of County Commissioners
FROM: Gabrielle Enfield, County Grants Administrator
genfield@washoecounty.us, 775-328-2009

THROUGH: Al Rogers, Management Services Director

SUBJECT: **Recommendation to approve the submission of the following grants to the State of Nevada Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for funding consideration: Gerlach Economic Development Plan, in the amount of \$120,000; and Nevada Small Business Development Center- Counseling and Training for Rural LMI Entrepreneurs and Small Business, in the amount of \$95,786; priority ranking for the applications recommended as follows: Gerlach Economic Development Plan priority one, and Nevada Small Business Development Center- Counseling and Training for Rural LMI Entrepreneurs and Small Business priority two; and if approved, authorize the Chair to execute the documents concerning same. (All Commission District)**

SUMMARY

The Gerlach Economic Development Plan and the Nevada Small Business Development Center- Counseling and Training for Rural LMI Entrepreneurs and Small Business, are eligible grant proposals seeking CDBG funding to provide a benefit to the residents of Washoe County and rural Nevada. A summary of the grant projects are provided below. Prior to submission to the State the Washoe County Commission must approve submission of the Washoe County proposals.

County Priority/Goal supported by this item:

- **Proactive Economic Development and Diversification**

PREVIOUS ACTION

No previous action on the State of Nevada Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program for FY 2017-18. Washoe County has participated in the State CDBG grant program since 1982.

BACKGROUND

Washoe County is eligible to receive CDBG funds through the State of Nevada. The goal of the national CDBG Program is to develop viable communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities for persons of low to moderate income.

Since 2011, when the Governor's Office of Economic Development was created, the goal of the State of Nevada CDBG Program has been to closely align the CDBG program with the economic development goals of GOED. Additionally, with reductions in allocations from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) since 2010, HUD also urged states to focus on fewer eligible activities for greater impact. So, even though there are 16 eligible CDBG activities, states are able to focus on activities that are prioritized by state CDBG programs, and that also support the goals for the state. The state of Nevada has identified Economic Development as the State program priority. Projects not providing a determined economic benefit are not eligible to be submitted to the Nevada State CDBG program.

The State of Nevada CDBG Program utilizes an annual competitive process for the allocation of limited CDBG funds. Both the Gerlach Economic Development Plan; and Nevada Small Business Development Center- Counseling and Training for Rural LMI Entrepreneurs and Small Business have been determined eligible for the State of Nevada CDBG competition.

In order to solicit public participation and input from the community regarding Washoe County's grant submissions staff held CDBG Citizen Participation meetings on August 18, 2016, and a meeting to present potential projects on October 19, 2016. These public meetings were noticed in the Reno Gazette Journal on August 3, 2016 and October 4, 2016 respectively. The public was invited to participate by providing ideas, comments and suggestions concerning potential projects; other items discussed include the grant application and selection process, past grant performance and status of existing CDBG grants, and potential projects for the 2017-2018 funding year. Notice of the meeting and application process was also provided to county departments and the General Improvement Districts in unincorporated Washoe County. A presentation was also provided to the Gerlach Community Advisory Board on October 6, 2016, and to the Sun Valley General Improvement District board on October 13, 2016.

The State of Nevada CDBG Program allows each eligible city and county to submit two standard applications from the jurisdiction, additionally, each eligible city and county may submit two sponsored applications for local non-profit or other governmental entities.

The selection process to determine the county's applications began with notice of the CDBG Citizen Participation meeting, and technical assistance to all interested parties, provided by the county's CDBG representative. Proposals were submitted to the county through the State of Nevada ZoomGrants electronic system. Three applications were submitted to the CDBG program for eligibility review:

County Applications:

- Gerlach Economic Development Plan – Office of the County Manager
- Sun Valley ADA Ramp and Sidewalk Project – Community Services Department

County Sponsored Application:

- Nevada SBDC Counseling & Training for Rural LMI Entrepreneurs and Small Business – Submitted by University of Nevada Reno, Small Business Development Center.

The Sun Valley ADA Ramp and Sidewalk Project was denied for eligibility by the State of Nevada CDBG Program. Notice from CDBG identified that while this project is an eligible CDBG activity, it does not align with GOED: Nevada's CDBG Program priorities and is denied.

The remaining applications received eligibility approval by the State CDBG program and were evaluated by the Washoe County CDBG Advisory Committee. This committee is comprised of a representative from the Budget Division—Lori Cooke, a representative from the Community Services Department—Mojra Hauenstine, and a community representative—Sarah Chevliccek.

The Washoe County CDBG Advisory Committee recommends to the Board of County Commissioners that both the Gerlach Economic Development Plan and the Nevada Small Business Development Center- Counseling and Training for Rural LMI Entrepreneurs and Small Business applications be submitted to the State CDBG program for funding consideration.

The State CDBG Program also requires that the applications be ranked by priority. The priority ranking for the applications recommended was as follows: Gerlach Economic Development Plan priority one, and Nevada Small Business Development Center- Counseling and Training for Rural LMI Entrepreneurs and Small Business priority two.

Gerlach Economic Development Plan \$120,000

The proposed project will create a comprehensive plan that will help the town of Gerlach redefine its economic future by exploring new economic development strategies for increased opportunities for income growth. The plan will include: inventory of existing assets, workforce analysis, regional traffic creation strategy for arts and tourism opportunities, and strategies for project implementation.

Nevada Small Business Development Center (NSBDC) - Counseling and Training for Rural LMI Entrepreneurs and Small Business \$95,786

The NSBDC, University of Nevada, Reno, is requesting support for an economic development grant to provide business counseling to rural entrepreneurs. The project will assist LMI entrepreneurs in rural Washoe County and other rural Nevada counties. The funding project will provide consistent business counseling services and training; leverage resources and partnerships with SBA and University of Nevada, Reno, and local partners; and create economic impact through businesses started and expanded, jobs created and saved.

FISCAL IMPACT

No Fiscal Impact

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation to approve the submission of the following grants to the State of Nevada Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for funding consideration: Gerlach Economic Development Plan, in the amount of \$120,000; and Nevada Small Business Development Center- Counseling and Training for Rural LMI Entrepreneurs and Small Business, in the amount of \$95,786; priority ranking for the applications recommended as follows: Gerlach Economic Development Plan priority one, and Nevada Small Business Development Center- Counseling and Training for Rural LMI Entrepreneurs and Small Business priority two; and if approved, authorize the Chair to execute documents concerning same.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board accept staff's recommendation a possible motion would be: *“move to approve the submission of the following grants to the State of Nevada Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for funding consideration: Gerlach Economic Development Plan, in the amount of \$120,000; and Nevada Small Business Development Center- Counseling and Training for Rural LMI Entrepreneurs and Small Business, in the amount of \$95,786; priority ranking for the applications recommended as follows: Gerlach Economic Development Plan priority one, and Nevada Small Business Development Center- Counseling and Training for Rural LMI Entrepreneurs and Small Business priority two; and if approved, authorize the Chair to execute documents concerning same.”*