


REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Date: February 22, 2016
Item No.: 11.a

Department Approval

City Manager Approval



Item Description: Receive Presentation about a Grant Received by the Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association to Host Community Conversations in Southeast Roseville

BACKGROUND

Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association (LMNA), along with The Advocates for Human Rights (AHR) applied for a grant from The Linking Communities Project to host three community conversations among residents in Southeast Roseville. The Karen Organization of Minnesota (KOM) and the City of Roseville Community Engagement Commission were also listed as supporters of the grant application. LMNA was recently notified that it was awarded a grant in the amount \$4,000 to conduct the community conversations. AHR will provide an additional \$1,200 for the sessions.

Sherry Sanders representing LMNA and Madeline Lohman of AHR, along with Theresa Gardella of the Community Engagement Commission will be present to provide information about the community conversations and answer any questions the City Council may have.

Given the City's priority in SE Roseville, staff recently met with the grant applicants to review the proposed work to make sure that it integrates with the City's efforts in the area. Given that the grant will allow for direct conversations with all residents in the area, staff feels this initiative is useful and will help highlight issues of mutual concern. As the City embarks on its efforts to look for ways to improve and strengthen SE Roseville, the input from these conversations will be helpful.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No direct financial cost to the City with the exception of staff attending the grant funded community conversations as appropriate.

REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION

No action required. Presentation for informational purposes only.

Prepared by: Patrick Trudgeon, City Manager (651) 792-7021

Attachment A: TLC Grant Application November 30 City Council Meeting Minutes



Grant Application

2016 Funding Cycle

The Linking Communities Project: Creating Welcome for Refugees (TLC Project) is supporting local, coordinated, and strategic initiatives to increase welcome for refugees and support for resettlement. TLC Project partners* urge groups to collaborate with each other and to reach beyond more usual refugee stakeholders to do this work throughout their community or region.

Grants of up to approximately \$3,000 will be made to implement proposed activities, however larger grants will be considered for community, regional, or statewide collaborations. The grant cycle will last six months, beginning January 1, 2016. Your organization will be required to submit an interim and final report of no more than two pages each during the grant period.

If you believe your organization, collaborative, or group would benefit from a grant, please answer the questions below. (Please type in your response with a short paragraph for each question.)

Notes:

- The organization that manages the grant must be a registered non-profit organization, and funds may not be used for lobbying.
- Funding may NOT be used for direct services to refugees.

Applications must be received by close of business on December 4, 2015 and sent to elizabeth.mandelman@hias.org (202-212-6023). Final decisions will be made by the end of the year.

You do NOT need to have attended the in-person statewide meeting in Minnesota to apply.

NAME OF ORGANIZATION(S):

Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association
The Advocates for Human Rights
City of Roseville Community Engagement Commission
Karen Organization of Minnesota

* TLC Project is coordinated by HIAS, partnering with Church World Service, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, the International Rescue Committee, the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and World Relief. We work closely with Refugee Council USA, Welcoming America, the Center for Applied Linguistics. The project is partially funded by the J.M. Kaplan Fund.

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IF MULTIPLE PARTNERS, NAME OF THE COORDINATING ORGANIZATION THAT WILL RECEIVE AND MANAGE THE FUNDS:

Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association

CONTACT AT MANAGING ORGANIZATION (name, email, phone):

Sherry Sanders, mccarronscommunity@gmail.com, 651-772-3311

CHECK SHOULD BE MADE OUT TO:

Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association

ADDRESS (to send check):

363 McCarrons Blvd South
Roseville MN 55113

1) What is your proposed initiative to create increased welcome for refugees and support for resettlement in your community or region?

Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association, along with The Advocates for Human Rights, the Roseville Community Engagement Commission and the Karen Organization of Minnesota will collaborate to host a series of three community conversations in southeast Roseville.

The population of Karen refugees in Roseville has dramatically increased over the past five years, with an estimated 120 families concentrated in apartment complexes in the southeast corner of the city. Despite their presence in the community for over five years, many of the surrounding neighbors have minimal knowledge of Karen culture or interaction with their Karen neighbors. This has led to conflict and misunderstanding, with several residents contacting city government to file complaints against their Karen neighbors. Karen refugees have faced numerous challenges to feeling welcomed in Roseville, but most refugees lack the language skills or knowledge of how to seek city services, address neighborhood problems, or bring their opinions to city decision-making forums.

Through a series of three inter-linked conversations, the Karen, their neighbors, community institutions such as schools and churches, and members of the Community Engagement Commission will come together to build relationships, work across cultural barriers, discuss common problems and collectively strive to make Karen refugees welcome in Roseville.

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The Karen Organization of Minnesota will facilitate the first event, which will be conducted predominantly in the Karen language. Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association will host the second and will partner with the Central Park Elementary School to host the third.

At each conversation, participants will first meet over a light meal to begin building relationships with fellow residents. Following the meal, the facilitator will lead the large group in a discussion of what a welcoming community looks like to them. Then, the participants will divide into small groups to tackle the following questions:

- Do I feel welcome in Roseville [or in Roseville schools]?
- Of the things I identified as being part of a welcoming community, what is working well? What is not working well?
- What would I change to feel more welcome in Roseville [or in Roseville schools]?

These questions focus on “welcome” as a way to direct the conversation towards the needs of newcomers such as the Karen, but the questions are also open enough that even long-term residents will be able to share their experiences of feeling included in their community. At the conclusion of the event, the small groups will share some of their responses with the large group.

After the conversations, The Advocates will provide a workshop for Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association and interested individuals from the Community Engagement Commission and the Karen Organization of Minnesota that will help them analyze the results of the conversations. The workshop focuses on using the conversation results to identify immediate next steps and future actions that would improve community engagement in Roseville.

The Advocates for Human Rights will draft a report with the results of the community conversations and the workshop in consultation with Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association and the other partners. The report will focus on recommendations for short- and long-term actions that the Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association, the Community Engagement Commission and other community institutions can take to help the Karen feel more welcome in Roseville. The final report will be released publicly in a community event that would also include participants from the three conversations.

2) Is this a new initiative or a continuation/expansion of one that you have already started? If it is not new, please briefly describe how the funding will help you take your initiative further than you otherwise would have been able.

Last year, The Advocates for Human Rights published *Moving from Exclusion to Belonging: Immigrant Rights in Minnesota Today*, a report that centers on the human rights of refugees and immigrants in Minnesota. The report places its findings and recommendations within the context of state, federal, and international human rights law to identify what is working to promote integration and success, what is failing, and what gaps exist in public policy.

As a follow up to that work, The Advocates is collaborating with communities that are working to improve the experiences of potentially marginalized residents such as immigrants and refugees on many issues, including civic engagement, housing, and education.

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The Advocates has been in discussions with the Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association and the City of Roseville Community Engagement Commission to bring this initiative to their community. The funding will enable this coalition to carry out the events and to host them in the most inclusive way possible, encouraging the involvement of all by providing transportation, food, activities for children, and translation and interpretation.

In 2014, the City of Roseville Community Engagement Commission also began hosting regular Karen Interagency Work Group meetings involving multiple units of city government, the Ramsey County Commissioner's Office, KOM, Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association, Roseville Adult Basic Education, and other stakeholders with an interest in welcoming Karen refugees.

Through this initiative, Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association and its partners will gather input directly from residents to share with this diverse group of stakeholders. These meetings will also help identify ways for residents to become more involved with Karen Interagency Work Group and its members on an ongoing basis.

3) How do you see this initiative positively affecting the level of welcome for refugees and support for resettlement in your community?

Both city government and neighbors are crucial to making refugees feel welcome in their new homes. The Karen need city services and assistance but do not have the language skills or political knowledge to present their needs to city government. Cultural differences are causing tensions with other local residents. By bringing together refugees, members of the Community Engagement Commission, and local residents in productive, solution-oriented conversations, the initiative will help address current issues in the community and build the relationships necessary for the long-term inclusion of refugees in Roseville.

4) How will partner organizations work together, and/or how will you leverage other connections you have in your community?

Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association will lead the coalition, scheduling the events, arranging the venues, coordinate food and transportation with the Community Engagement Commission, conducting outreach with local residents, and bringing in local community partners such as Galilee Lutheran Church and Central Park Elementary School.

The Advocates for Human Rights will facilitate the English-language conversations, provide technical assistance to other facilitators and discussion leaders, create promotional materials and all materials needed for the events, and write the final report detailing the outcome of the conversations.

The City of Roseville Community Engagement Commission will serve as a liaison with city officials and staff, conduct outreach, and assist with drafting the final report.

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The Karen Organization of Minnesota will conduct outreach and foster participation by the Karen community, facilitate the first conversation in Karen, provide translation and interpretation for the two subsequent English-language events, and assist with drafting the final report.

5) How do you plan to engage mainstream society/how will your initiative reach beyond already existing refugee stakeholders?

Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association has a diverse membership including many long-term residents. Many of these residents do not know the Karen community and are unsure of the demographic changes to their neighborhood. One purpose of the conversations is to build bridges between these residents and the Karen, to help combat misunderstandings, increase cross-cultural knowledge, and increase community cohesion.

The City of Roseville Community Engagement Commission is interested in helping the Karen feel welcome in the city and will serve as liaison with city government, keeping them informed of the progress of the project and offering opportunities for involvement in the conversations and subsequent reporting.

6) How will you include refugee voices in your project?

The Karen Organization of Minnesota (KOM) is the first Karen-led nonprofit organization in the country. They will conduct outreach to the Karen community to encourage participation in all three community conversations. For the first conversation, KOM will be the primary host, facilitating the event almost entirely in Karen for maximum accessibility. The goal of the first event is to allow Karen residents to speak more freely and gain confidence to participate in the subsequent events with the larger community. KOM will provide translation and interpretation for those subsequent events since language is a major barrier for refugees to feel welcome in Roseville.

7) How much money are you requesting?

\$4000

8) How do you plan to document and evaluate the effectiveness of your efforts, as well as how funds are spent?

Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association, The Advocates for Human Rights, the Karen Organization of Minnesota, and members of the Community Engagement Commission will write a draft report of the results from the conversations and release it publicly in a community event that would also include participants from the three conversations.

The report will include recommendations for short- and long-term actions that the Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association, the Community Engagement Commission and other community institutions

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can take to help the Karen feel more welcome in Roseville. Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association, The Advocates for Human Rights and the Community Engagement Commission will follow-up after the release of the report to monitor which of those recommendations are carried out.

9) *Please provide a simple budget, and include other funds or in-kind support you will provide or receive from partners or other funders.*

See attached.

**Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association
The Advocates for Human Rights
City of Roseville Community Engagement Commission
Karen Organization of Minnesota**

**TLC Project Budget
January - June 2016**

REVENUE

TLC grant	4,000
The Advocates for Human Rights partner funding	1,200
TOTAL PROJECT REVENUE	5,200

EXPENSE

Van rental (\$150 x 3)	450
Refreshments (\$300 x 3)	900
Printing	450
Publicity	250
Child care (\$50 x 3)	150
Stipend for use of space (\$100 x 3)	300
Advocates for Human Rights Staff 40 hours @ \$30 per hour Workshop preparation, facilitation, and report	1,200
Karen Organization of Minnesota Staff 60 hours @ \$25 per hour Participant recruitment, workshop facilitation, interpretation, translation	1,500
TOTAL PROJECT EXPENSE	5,200