
Sponsor: Parks & Recreation

Meeting Date: 12/21/2021

Title: Ramsey County's Parks & Recreation 2021 Competitive Equity Grant Awards

File Number: 2021-684

Background and Rationale:

In 2021, the Metropolitan Council authorized over \$2 million in Parks Interest Earnings for the Equity Grant Program. These dollars may be used to fund operating costs, including programming and staff by Regional Park Implementing Agencies. The 2021 Equity Grant Program emphasizes partnership building, equity programming efforts, internal and inter-agency collaboration, and designing accessible capital projects that not only meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, but provide innovative ways to bring meaningful, rich experiences to users.

The 10 Regional Parks Implementing Agencies submitted 37 applications, of which 23 were approved for funding. Ramsey County received funding for an equitable learn-to-ski program at the new Battle Creek Winter Recreation Area, as well as funding to support a cultural liaison position.

All of the mental and physical health benefits, leadership development opportunities and connection to the natural world that outdoor winter recreation can provide has been withheld from generations of communities in the east metro who may not have funds, access or cultural tradition to make winter recreation a part of their lives. The learn-to-ski program will unlock the outdoors in winter for thousands of culturally and racially diverse community members and people with disabilities in the east metro by removing barriers, building community and welcoming new communities into the winter outdoors with open arms.

Currently, Ramsey County Parks staff isn't reflective of the county's diversity and changing demographics. The addition of cultural liaison positions for Ramsey County Parks would be a powerful agent of change. By hiring racially and ethnically diverse staff to support outreach and programming geared toward diverse communities, we hope to increase the number of diverse participants in county programming as well as diversifying the Parks & Recreation's workforce.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Ratify the submittal of the grant application to Metropolitan Council in the amount of \$2,000,000 for Equity Grant Programs.
2. Accept a grant award from and approve a grant agreement with the Metropolitan Council for Unlocking Winter Recreation - A Robust and Equitable Learn-to-Ski Program at Battle Creek Regional Park Equity Grant for the period of grant execution through June 30, 2024 in the amount of \$161,300.
3. Accept a grant award from and approve a grant agreement with the Metropolitan Council for Cultural Liaisons for Parks Equity Grant for the period of grant execution through June 30, 2024 in the amount of \$38,700.
4. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the grant agreements.
5. Authorize the County Manager to enter into agreements and contracts and amendments to agreements and contracts in accordance with the county's procurement policies and procedures, provided the amounts are within the limits of the grant funding.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Frethem, seconded by Commissioner Reinhardt.
Motion passed.

Aye: - 7: Carter, Frethem, MatasCastillo, McDonough, McGuire, Ortega, and Reinhardt

By: 

Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board