



**Agenda
City of Vernon
Special Vernon CommUNITY Fund Grant Committee Meeting
Wednesday, August 20, 2025, 10:00 AM
City Hall, Council Chamber
4305 Santa Fe Avenue, Vernon, California**

**Leticia Lopez, Vice Chair
Ronit Edry, Member
Steven Froberg, Member
Frank Gaviña, Member
Sebastian Lozano, Member
Sandra Solorzano, Member
Vacant, Member**

The public is encouraged to view the agenda and meeting at CityofVernonca.gov/publicmeetings. In the event of any technical difficulties, you may view the live meeting at www.cityofvernonca.gov/LiveMeeting.

You may address the Committee in the Council Chambers, via mail or email to PublicComment@cityofvernonca.gov, include the meeting date and item number in the subject line (mail and/or email must be received at least two hours prior to the start of the meeting).

CALL TO ORDER

FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public interested in addressing the Committee during this Special meeting may address any item which has been described in the notice of this Special Meeting in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.3(a).

PRESENTATIONS

1. Selection of Chair and Vice Chair

Recommendation:

Select one member to serve as Chairperson and one member to serve as Vice Chairperson for the term ending on June 30, 2026.

2. Vernon CommUNITY Fund 10-Year Anniversary Publication

Recommendation:

Receive and file the Vernon CommUNITY Fund: A Decade of Giving 2014-2024 Impact Report.

CONSENT CALENDAR

All matters listed on the Consent Calendar may be approved with one motion. Items may be removed from the Consent Calendar for individual consideration. Removed items will be considered immediately following the Consent Calendar.

3. Meeting Minutes

Recommendation:

Approve the December 11, 2024 Special Vernon CommUNITY Fund Grant Committee Meeting Minutes.

NEW BUSINESS

4. Fiscal Year 2024-25 Vernon CommUNITY Fund (VCF) Scholarship Grants

Recommendation:

Award Fiscal Year 2024-25 VCF Scholarship Grants totaling \$50,000 to 38 students as follows:

1. A \$1,000 scholarship to each application number listed: 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 16, 17, 30, 33, 36, 38, 40, 41, 49, and 53.
2. A \$1,500 scholarship to each application number listed: 2, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 29, 31, 34, 37, 39, 46, 50, 51, and 52.
3. A \$2,000 scholarship to each application number listed: 22 and 28.

5. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Allocation and Grantmaking Focus for Fiscal Year 2025-26

Recommendation:

- A. Determine distribution for Direct Service Grant and Scholarship Grant awards; and
- B. Provide direction on grantmaking areas of focus.

ORAL REPORTS

6. Brief Reports, Announcements, or Directives to Staff

ADJOURNMENT

On August 14, 2025, the foregoing agenda was posted in accordance with the applicable legal requirements. Regular and Adjourned Regular meeting agendas may be amended up to 72 hours and Special meeting agendas may be amended up to 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

Vernon CommUNITY Fund Grant Committee Agenda Report

Meeting Date: August 20, 2025
From: Genoveva Rocha, City Clerk
Department: City Clerk
Submitted by: Sandra Dolson, City Clerk Specialist

Subject

Selection of Chair and Vice Chair

Recommendation

Select one member to serve as Chairperson and one member to serve as Vice Chairperson for the term ending on June 30, 2026.

Background

Pursuant to the Vernon Municipal Code (VMC) Section 2.48.060, members are required to elect a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson annually from different appointing categories under Section 2.48.040.B. Additionally, a member may not serve as Chairperson for more than two consecutive terms. The Municipal Code is silent on term limits for the Vice Chairperson.

The Vernon CommUNITY Fund Grant Committee consists of seven members including one person representing members of the California Legislature with a district that includes at least a portion of the Vernon area, four persons that reside or work in the Vernon area, one Business Representative, and one current Council Member. Members serve four-year terms, serving no more than two full consecutive terms.

The Committee only meets regularly twice a year in May and November. Due to an unscheduled vacancy, the position of Chairperson is now vacant. Committee Member Lopez was appointed to the position of Vice Chair on November 11, 2024.

The current members are as follows:

Committee Member	Appointing Category	Date Appointed	End of Term
Ronit Edry	Business Representative	June 7, 2022	June 30, 2026
Leticia Lopez	Council Member	August 5, 2025	June 30, 2029
Sebastian Lozano	Legislative Representative	March 4, 2025	June 30, 2026
Steven Froberg	Vernon Area Representative	August 5, 2025	June 30, 2029
Frank Gaviña	Vernon Area Representative	August 5, 2025	June 30, 2029
Sandra Solorzano	Vernon Area Representative	August 5, 2025	June 30, 2029
Vacant	Vernon Area Representative		June 20, 2026

All members of the Committee are eligible to serve as Chairperson or Vice Chairperson. The Committee should select a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson to serve through June 30, 2026.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Attachments

None.

Vernon CommUNITY Fund Grant Committee Agenda Report

Meeting Date: August 20, 2025
From: Brian Saeki, City Administrator
Department: City Administration
Submitted by: Diana Figueroa, Senior Management Analyst

Subject

Vernon CommUNITY Fund 10-Year Anniversary Publication

Recommendation

Receive and file the Vernon CommUNITY Fund: A Decade of Giving 2014-2024 Impact Report.

Background

As one of the key elements of the City's good governance reforms, the City Council created the Vernon CommUNITY Fund (VCF) to provide grants to charitable and governmental entities for projects and programs that benefit those residing and working in Vernon and surrounding communities, offering support through its funding of organizations that provide vital services. On February 4, 2014, the City Council established the VCF Grant Committee and provided basic grantmaking guidelines and operational procedures for the board, including fund distribution and processes for reviewing applications and awarding grants.

Since 2014, the VCF has been a consistent benefactor for nonprofit organizations in the Vernon Area (which encompasses Vernon, Huntington Park, Maywood, Bell, Commerce, Boyle Heights, and East Los Angeles), awarding grants to 71 organizations over the last 10 years. The VCF also extended its philanthropic reach by launching the VCF Scholarship Program in 2019 which assists high school seniors in the Vernon Area that are in pursuit of higher education. Overall, the VCF has awarded more than \$5 million in grants and scholarships. The VCF supports higher education and regional programs and services that address workforce development, youth advocacy, sports, the arts, violence prevention, homelessness, mental health, and more.

To highlight the magnitude of Vernon's contributions to the surrounding Southeast Los Angeles Area (SELA) and mark the 10-year anniversary of the VCF, Council approved Amendment No. 1 with Jemmott Rollins Group (JRG) on August 6, 2024 to authorize JRG to take the lead in the creation of a VCF anniversary impact report. With a goal to celebrate the VCF's history and good work, the comprehensive report features past grantees, testimonials, funding amounts and areas of focus, and metrics on program success. This 2024 special edition report aptly commemorates the VCF anniversary milestone and staff intend to distribute the publication to community members, partners, and local leaders.

The important grantmaking activities sponsored by the VCF embody the goodwill of the City and its grants and scholarships continue to contribute to the health, well-being, and quality of life in local communities.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Attachments

1. Vernon CommUNITY Fund: A Decade of Giving 2014-2024 Impact Report

2014–2024
IMPACT REPORT

Vernon CommUNITY Fund:

A DECADE OF GIVING



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Established in 1905, the City of Vernon is the first exclusively industrial city in the Southwestern United States. Located just southeast of Downtown Los Angeles, it is home to over 1,800 businesses employing around 50,000 people. The City of Vernon plays a key role in the regional economy and fosters strong connections with nearby communities where many of its workers reside, contributing significant financial resources to public services like health care and education.¹

The Vernon CommUNITY Fund (VCF) was established to provide grants to charitable and governmental entities for projects and programs that benefit those residing and working in and around Vernon. Since 2014, the City of Vernon has awarded over \$5.3 million which includes grants to non-profit organizations and local government entities serving the Vernon Area, and 48 student scholarships totaling \$170,000.



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Mission & Goals

The VCF provides grants to community-based organizations, governmental agencies, and students in an effort to improve quality of life, strengthen families and affirm Vernon's ties with neighboring communities in pursuit of bright futures. VCF goals include the following:

- Strengthen and support non-profit organizations that benefit residents and neighborhoods
- Encourage and inspire positive social development in Vernon and neighboring communities
- Support and assist organizations that expand opportunities for training and development of residents for potential employment in businesses located in Vernon and surrounding communities
- Promote positive social development of children, youth, families and senior residents in Vernon and surrounding areas
- Promote effective and responsible leadership at every level of society
- Provide disadvantaged youth in the Vernon Area the opportunity to achieve success in their post-secondary educational endeavors





About This Report

In honor of the 10-year anniversary of the Vernon CommUNITY Fund, the City of Vernon partnered with Jemmott Rollins Group and Shayla Spilker Consulting, a Los Angeles-based research and evaluation consulting firm, to conduct a retrospective look back at VCF grantmaking over the last decade – between 2014 and 2024. This report documents the impacts of VCF grantmaking on organizations and individuals residing and working in the Vernon Area. Through this process, the following learning questions were explored:

How have grantees used VCF grant funds?

In what ways have VCF funds strengthened and supported local organizations and communities?

What outcomes and impacts do grantees attribute to their VCF-funded work?

What challenges or barriers have VCF grantees experienced? What needs remain?

Impetus for the Vernon CommUNITY Fund

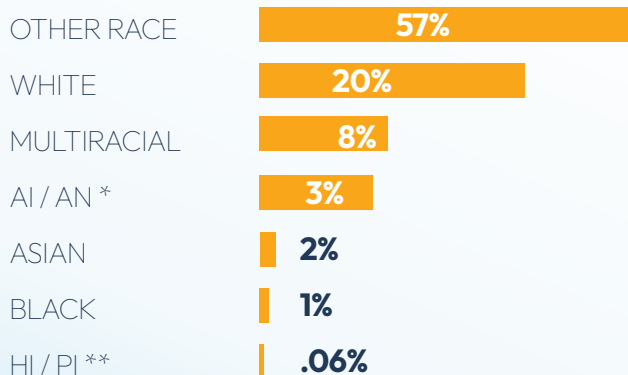
The City of Vernon is nestled in Northern Southeast Los Angeles (SELA), among other “Gateway” or “SELA” communities. These places were once sparsely populated hubs for manufacturing and railroads, and hosted major factories producing automobiles, tires, and steel. Over time, residential developments

in these areas grew and there became a need for socioeconomic support systems. The Vernon CommUNITY Fund service area was circumscribed to channel much-needed support through a network of community partners that could help strengthen the underserved populations in SELA.

Demographic Snapshot

As of the 2020 census, just over 331,000 individuals lived in the Vernon CommUNITY Fund region. After the 1965 Watts Uprisings, demographic and economic restructuring transformed cities like Vernon into predominantly Latino communities, marking a significant shift in the cultural and social landscape of Southeast LA.² Approximately 95% of residents identified as Hispanic/Latino across all races included in Exhibit 1, and 19% live below the federal poverty level.³

EXHIBIT 1. Race/Ethnicity of VCF Communities



* American Indian / Alaska Native
** Hawaiian / Pacific Islander

\$60,615



**Average median income in the VCF region.
19% of the population lives below the federal poverty level**

55%

**Employment rate
across VCF region**



Origins and Administration

The Vernon CommUNITY Fund (VCF) was established by the City of Vernon to provide grants to charitable and governmental entities for projects in the “Vernon Area,” which includes the cities of Vernon, Maywood, Bell, Huntington Park, and Commerce, the area within the City of Los Angeles known as Boyle Heights, and the unincorporated area known as East Los Angeles.

An independent board, the VCF Grant Committee, evaluates grant applications and awards grants to qualified applicants. The Grant Committee is comprised of seven members including: One person representing a Member of the California Legislature with a district that includes at least a portion of the Vernon Area; four persons that reside or work in the Vernon Area; one person who represents the owner or operator of a business located in Vernon; and one current member of the Vernon City Council. The VCF Grant Committee has prioritized a community driven approach to grantmaking, with an overall mission to contribute to the betterment of the SELA region and uplift Vernon and its surrounding cities.

Through stimulating non-profit entities, the City of Vernon has positioned itself as a leader and benefactor for important social causes and has enhanced its relationships with local legislators and municipal governments, community partners, and its own Vernon workforce and residents.

In 2019, the Vernon CommUNITY Fund (VCF) incorporated a scholarship program into its portfolio of grant offerings. The program was deemed to be a great opportunity for the VCF to establish a personal, viable connection with youth in the Vernon Area while supporting their pursuits of higher education and, in turn, elevating the region as a whole by ensuring that the career goals of students in SELA communities are more attainable.

The City of Vernon is dedicated to enriching lives by making accessible services, resources, and opportunities that promote equity, justice, and stability among vulnerable populations. Giving back to the community it serves has become a Vernon hallmark.

The VCF Grantees

Through ten years of hyperlocal grantmaking, the City of Vernon has invested over \$5.3 million into local organizations serving Vernon residents and neighboring communities.

The VCF funded 71 grantee organizations between 2014 and 2024, with grantees providing critical programming and services across a range of neighborhoods and priority populations. Grantee organizations serve

all age demographics, including children and youth under 14 (n=45), teens and young adults (n=40), adults (n=42), and seniors (n=19). Among individuals who completed the VCF grantee survey (n=31) the primary sectors represented include community-based organizations (n=22), education (n=11), and primary care/behavioral health (n=8).

The map below highlights the total number of grantees serving specific VCF communities, many of which are historically and systematically underinvested.

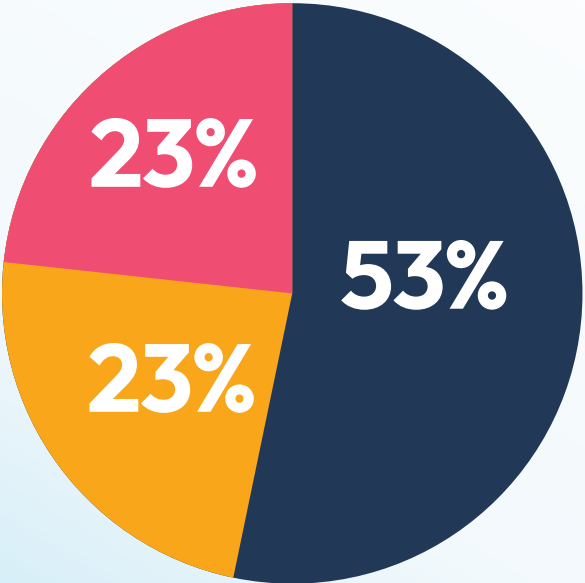


"n" represents the number of individuals or groups in stated category."

Since 2014, the VCF has supported grantees via both program-specific and general operating support grants. General operating grants provide organizations the flexibility to determine the best use of the funding to meet their organizational needs, especially

in times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Among survey respondents (n=31), about 50% used funds for general operating support of some kind (either alone, or in combination with program support).

EXHIBIT 2. Primary grant purpose (n=31)



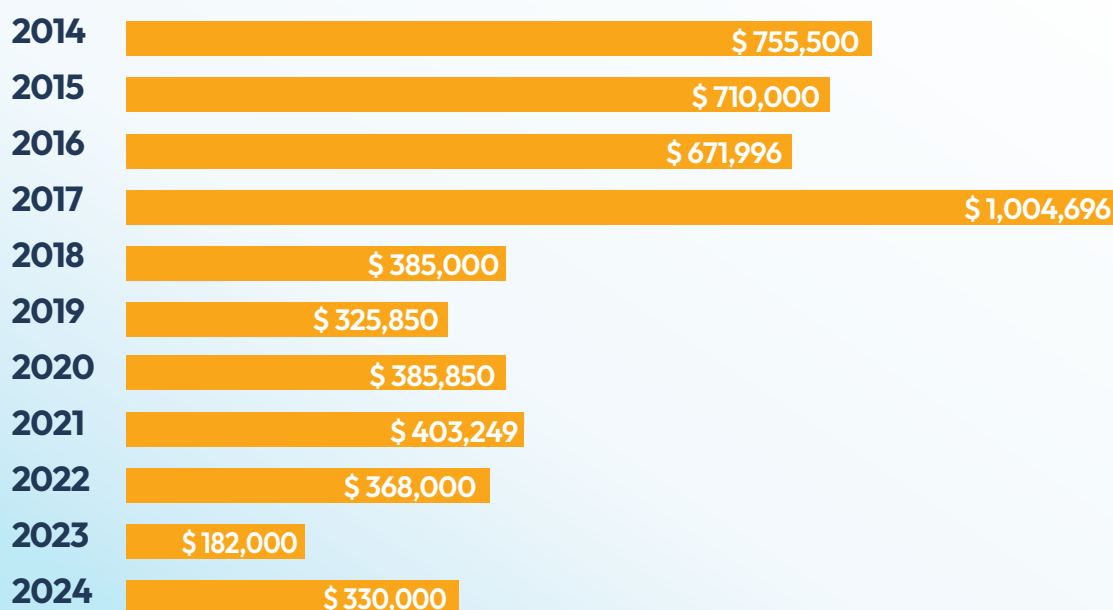
■ PRIMARY PROGRAM SUPPORT ■ PRIMARY GENERAL OPS ■ EVENLY SPLIT

“I cannot stress enough how general operating grants are imperative to non profits... Organizations that don’t have rent and accounting covered are organizations that will not survive...Non-profits need funds they can freely use to enhance their programs organically.”

GRANTEE SURVEY RESPONDENT

Grantmaking Snapshot

Since 2014, the **VCF has invested approximately \$5.3M** into the City of Vernon and surrounding communities through the provision of general grants, capital grants, and scholarships. The number of grantees selected and the total funds available vary by year and are primarily dependent on the City Council's fund allocation for the budget year and priorities of the VCF Grant Committee.



Thirty-five organizations received more than one VCF grant (between 2-5) since 2014. Some survey respondents (n=8) discussed the impact of receiving funding for more than one year. Some indicated that the ongoing support from the VCF helped them with program development and expansion, and two described how they were able to secure additional funding as a result of their VCF grants.

“VCF has not funded [our organization] for more than one consecutive year but has funded [us] multiple times. The VCF funding has a ‘multiplier effect’, meaning that VCF’s support brings in 5x-6x more support from other organizations to VCF’s service area.”

GRANTEE SURVEY RESPONSE

Capital Grants Overview

The VCF provided eight Capital Grants between 2017 and 2020, **totaling just over \$1 million** in grants. Capital Grants supported grantees with larger infrastructure and programmatic needs.

■ **The City of Bell** used Capital Grant funding to support soccer field improvements at Debs Park. These improvements included installing new LED lighting, a high-grade artificial turf for youth sports, a chain link fence around the soccer field to ensure safety of spectators, passersby and vehicles, and signage recognizing the VCF for support of the park improvements.

■ In 2017, **PUENTE Learning Center** received a \$250,000 Capital Grant “to support the construction of two new 1,000-square-foot first grade classrooms called the ‘butterfly wings’ as part of [the] charter elementary school expansion. It was part of a phased roll-out of expanding the charter school — that was kindergarten only for about 17 years — to open one grade a year beginning in 2018-19.” The work was completed in August 2022, and PUENTE is now a full TK - 5th grade public elementary school.



Student Scholarship Overview

Along with its traditional grantmaking, VCF offers scholarships to senior high school students in the region, providing financial support for those pursuing post-secondary education at trade schools, community colleges, or universities. Through this program, VCF builds meaningful connections with local youth, helping them achieve their educational and career goals while contributing to the overall growth and success of the Vernon area.

Looking Back: Ten Years of Community Impact

This retrospective look back on grantee work and accomplishments revealed four key findings about the impacts of the Vernon CommUNITY Fund since 2014.



FINDING 1

VCF grants supported the expansion of programming and direct service delivery to historically underserved communities in and around the City of Vernon.

FINDING 2

VCF funding supported grantees with staffing and infrastructure, including expanding paid staff, building staff knowledge and skills, expanding organizational infrastructure and operations, and increasing program delivery and efficiency. These organizational changes allowed VCF grantees to better serve their communities and operate more effectively overall.

FINDING 3

Receiving a VCF grant supported organizations in building new or expanding existing partnerships and enhanced the overall ecosystem of organizations serving the Southeast Los Angeles community. Some partnerships supported grantees to do their work better while others, with new and different types of funders, contributed to longer-term organizational sustainability.

FINDING 4

Grantees navigated various obstacles and challenges, including the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which transformed many organizations' work during 2020 and beyond.

“We use our resources and expertise to continuously create programs that make a difference in girls' lives, something we've been doing for 100 years. We don't know what the next 100 years will look like, but we do know that right now we're giving girls the skills to be visionary doers, innovators, creators, and thinkers. The positive impact of [our organization's work] manifests throughout girls' lives.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2020

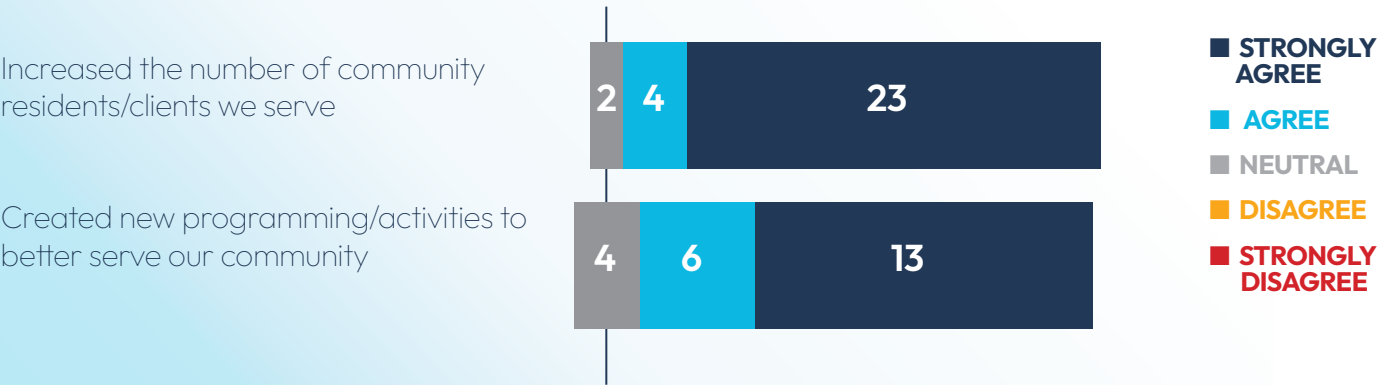
FINDING 1

Expanding Programs and Direct Services

VCF funding supported the expansion of programming and direct service delivery to historically underserved communities in and around the City of Vernon. Grantee reporting data submitted between 2014 and 2024 indicated a total of **162,507 local Vernon area residents who were directly served because**

of grantees’ VCF funded work.* Among survey respondents (exhibit 3), the majority agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to “increase the number of residents/clients served”. Grantee reporting highlighted direct services and programmatic successes.

EXHIBIT 3. Program and Direct Service Changes (n=31)**



“This funding supported the work of [our] Homeless Services Program to assist more than 300 persons annually in the City of Vernon and surrounding communities to transition from the streets into permanent housing, receive housing stabilization services for one year after housing placement, and receive a range of supportive services including linkages to needed resources including food, clothing, medical care, mental health care and substance use counseling.”

GRANTEE SURVEY RESPONDENT

* Grantees did not consistently report service delivery counts and reporting did not specify duplicated/unduplicated count requirements.

** A total of 31 individuals completed the grantee survey; charts exclude “not applicable” responses, and totals for each item may be less than 31 as a result.

1. VCF grantees provided a range of workshop offerings and targeted training for priority populations. Workshops and trainings covered topics ranging from financial literacy classes, child development and parenting, building self-esteem, and even self-defense. Many of the trainings focused on youth engagement and skill building, mental health and physical health supports,

as well as civic engagement. VCF grantees also tended to recognize the importance of cultural sensitivity and responsiveness in their programming, given the diversity of the communities that they serve. For example, several organizations described bilingual programming/curricula to ensure access for a greater number of community residents who speak Spanish.

“Youth have been able to assist our art instructors as well as facilitate workshops on their own, using art and art making to have conversations and find solutions to issues that are of concern to youth in the areas served by the VCF. Topics such as access to the arts, advocacy, civic engagement, health, and displacement have been areas of heavy interest.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2015

“We conducted rapid raid response trainings in Boyle Heights and East LA and [supported] the creation of a local rapid response network that has been able to mobilize hundreds of community residents in bringing attention to the people impacted by the aggressive raids being conducted in the Eastside of LA.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2016

FINDING 1

Expanding Programs and Direct Services

2. About half of the grantee reports (n=92; 51%) described ways that VCF grantees used funding to provide direct aid and service to their local communities. This included educational and technology supports for young people to engage in programming, housing subsidies and transitional housing for vulnerable populations, health and mental

health services such as screening and counseling, and other employment and educational supports to foster leadership and independence. In addition to providing services, many VCF grantees described how they centered community engagement and trust building in their direct service provision, which enhanced community building over the long term.



“[We] requested grant funding to help us expand justice access for low-income survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking living in the Vernon area. Funding has been instrumental in allowing [our organization] to provide free legal representation and case management. These complementary services ensure that survivors receive justice, secure legal protections, and have the best odds of re-establishing safety, stability, and freedom from violence and abuse.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2023



FINDING 1

Expanding Programs and Direct Services

3. About one third of grantee reports (n=92; 30%) described the ways that funds supported larger scale community events, including conferences, social gatherings and spaces focused on youth and family engagement. Some events focused on information sharing, while others prioritized activities that fostered joy and entertainment in local communities. Several grantees described events focused on empowering community members through education and skill-building, while others focused on cultural awareness and celebration of diverse identities and heritage. Some events targeted very specific populations with programming and resources, such as caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's or children with developmental delays.

“We will be lending tablets, wifi hotspots, and any instruments needed for summer camp participation. [We] will also pay technology stipends to volunteers who will be providing online instruction, mentorship, and support during summer camp. Additionally, we are providing all workshop supplies, food gift cards, and a camp shirt to all our participants.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2020

“The VCF grant changed lives...Victor [a small restaurant owner in Huntington Park] came to [us] a victim of a predatory loan... He came to [our organization and we] were able to decrease his monthly payments, at a more manageable interest rate, [which] allowed Victor to have more cash flow for his restaurant and pay his 12 employees, restaurant equipment and other necessities, without damaging his credit.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2018

“This year also saw great success with the implementation of [our] second VCF-sponsored Resource Fair. In its first year the Resource Fair had around 45 attendees, including both parents and consumers. This year's event was attended by 80 clients, with a total of 124 parents and 176 children, which included siblings of clients. The fair had over 20 exhibitors in attendance, including the Family Health Care Centers of Greater Los Angeles, Learning Rights Law Center, Team of Advocates for Special Kids, CARE 1st Health Plan, Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), LAUSD Office of Transition Services and the Social Security Administration. These agencies provide vital services to children and adults diagnosed with developmental disabilities, giving families an opportunity to have their questions answered, or to connect with services that will improve their lives.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2016



CITY OF VERNON

makes possible happen
in
Southeast-Rio Vista

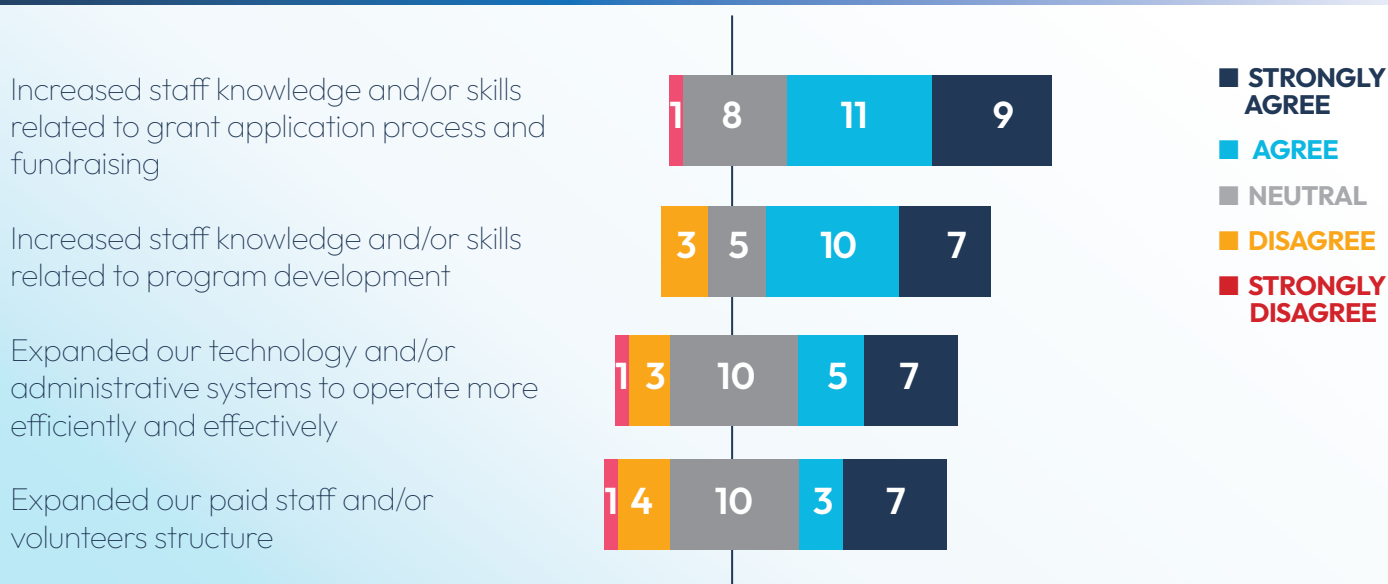
TOGETHER, WE MAKE POSSIBLE HAPPEN.

FINDING 2

Enhancing Organizational Capacity

VCF funding supported grantees with staffing and infrastructure, including expanding paid staff, building staff knowledge and skills, enhancing organizational infrastructure and operations, and increasing program delivery and efficiency. These organizational changes allowed VCF grantees to better serve their communities and operate more effectively overall.

EXHIBIT 4. Organizational Capacity Changes (n=31)*



“Funds were immediately dedicated to hire the proposed Quality Assurance Coordinator, whose contributions have increased efficiency and productivity throughout [our] Homeless Services and Rapid Rehousing Program. By providing continuous oversight for the accurate maintenance of records, the interpretation of rules and regulations, and insight on developments in state and county regulations pertaining to housing and [our] contractual obligations, we have a much more comprehensive and robust system for quality and compliance, and most importantly the provision of services for clients.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2018

* A total of 31 individuals completed the grantee survey; charts exclude “not applicable” responses, and totals for each item may be less than 31 as a result.

“Funding allowed us to engage a therapist and case manager to provide therapy, case management, advocacy, crisis intervention and safety planning.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2014

1. Some grantees (n=14) reported on staffing changes or staff hiring that supported their work including hiring for new roles, or bringing part time staff up to full time, as well as providing different forms of training and professional development to staff and volunteers. Different positions that VCF funding contributed to included therapists and case managers, operations and development staff, as well as specific teaching roles, such as teaching artists and instrument instructors, among others.

“The goal of having two youth ministers, both deaf, continues to have a tremendous impact on our youth and their ability to work with civic, religious, and educational communities. Being that our youth ministers are diversity-responsive, they have also taught our youth to bridge the deaf and hearing gap... In addition, we added a third member for our team, a youth minister with a background in social work. This individual has allowed us to infuse our program with on-the-spot counseling services.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2015

FINDING 2

Enhancing Organizational Capacity

2. Some grantee organizations highlighted ways that the funding contributed to enhanced organizational operations and improved or expanded facilities for programs and services. This included specific changes such as:

■ **Strategic planning** to support organizational growth and prioritization of activities for sustainability. Two organizations described engagement in strategic planning processes, while a third discussed how board guidance has shaped organizational direction for the future.

■ **Renovations and equipment upgrades**, such as improvements to medical facilities and purchasing and installation of new equipment to improve service for community members. These improvements not only improved the functionality of grantee facilities but also enhanced the quality of care provided to patients, ensuring that they have access to necessary medical technology.

■ **Expanding community facilities and outdoor spaces**, such as community gardens, climbing walls for youth, and expanded locations to host youth

“Grant funds received empowered our organization through much-needed general operating support to contribute toward rent, insurance and operational expenses as well as program supplies. This allowed our team to focus on completing our needs assessment with the Indigenous community where we received over 220 individual community responses. We identified actionable steps to best serve [the] community through additional engagement programs occurring throughout 2024.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2023

“[We] requested \$28,200 from the City of Vernon CommUNITY Fund to purchase a patient portal kiosk and an Ultrasound machine for the Maywood clinic, which serves patients who live in Vernon and other surrounding communities. Both pieces of equipment have been purchased, delivered, and installed.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2018



Capital Grant Spotlight: **InnerCity Struggle**

In 2018, the Vernon CommUNITY Fund provided a Capital Grant to InnerCity Struggle as part of the organization's larger capital campaign to complete construction for its own Youth and Community Center. The capital project included construction of the building, along with updated equipment to provide community referrals, a comfortable hang-out for youth participants, childcare space for families, a technology room for youth and parent members, and more.

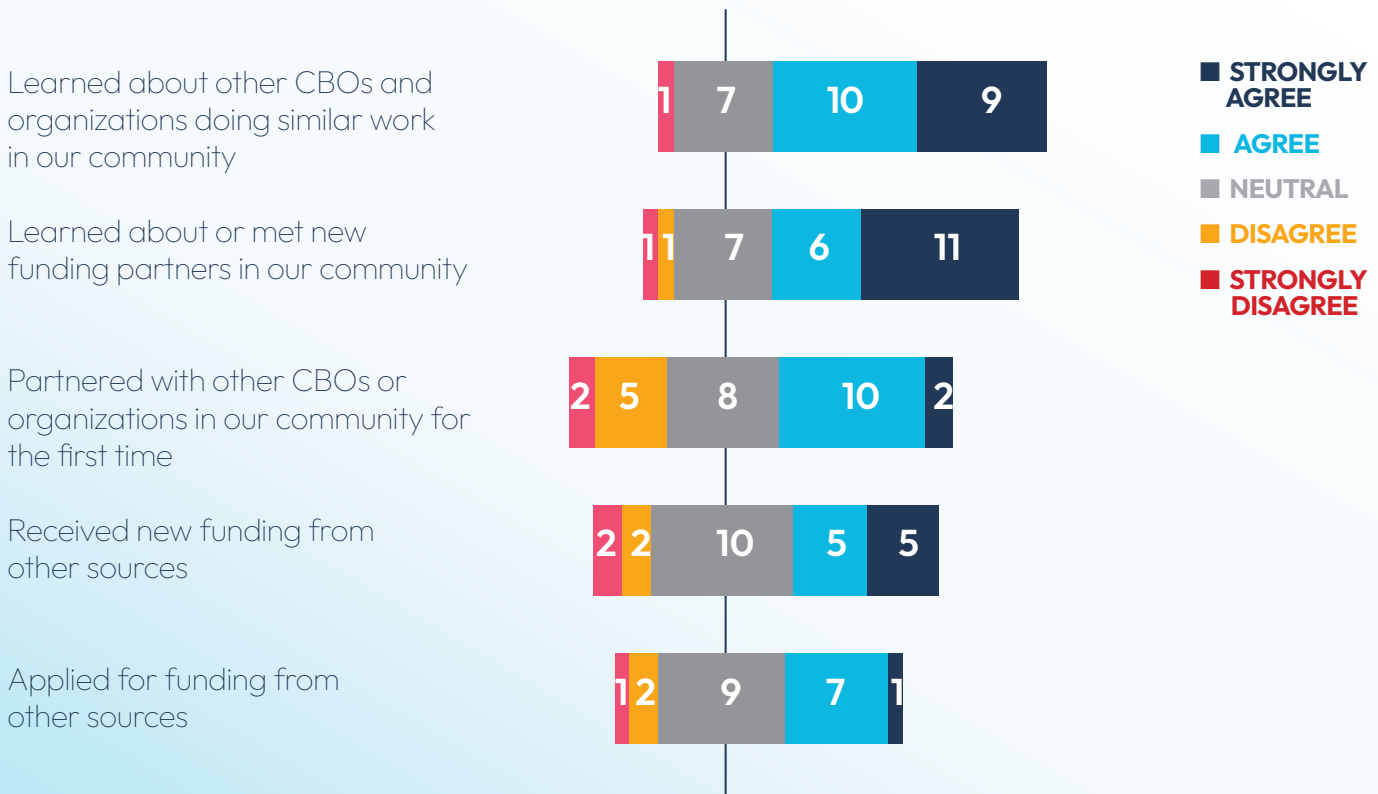
In 2019, the community and local leaders gathered for the ribbon-cutting ceremony. As ICS's website describes, "The 6,000 square foot, two-story building will serve as a vehicle for community organizing in the Eastside of Los Angeles. The Center will be a place where residents are able to work together to find solutions to issues impacting their community. The Center will also be a place where youth can find their voice and be prepared for college."

FINDING 3

Building Partnerships

The VCF grant supported organizations in building new or expanding existing partnerships and enhanced the overall ecosystem of organizations in the Southeast Los Angeles communities. This finding suggests an increased organizational capacity to effectively participate with other service providers and advocates as well as a stronger capacity to attract new funding partners.

EXHIBIT 5. Partnerships and Funder Changes (n=31)*



* A total of 31 individuals completed the grantee survey; charts exclude "not applicable" responses, and totals for each item may be less than 31 as a result.

“Another highlight of the year was the launching of [our] Latino Dementia Network on March 22, 2018. The meeting brought together 75 organizational leaders to focus on the needs of Latinos dealing with Alzheimer's and dementia in the target cities identified by Vernon CommUNITY Fund.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2016

1. Approximately one third of grantee reports (n=92) described ways that partnerships have developed in association with VCF funded work.

■ **Building stronger community connections.** Some grantees emphasized the importance of developing partnerships with local groups to enhance community engagement and resource sharing. One grantee mentioned partnering with groups working in related realms, such as environmental justice, to overcome challenges and direct more resources into underserved areas.

■ **Collaborative projects.** Other organizations described collaborative projects that brought together multiple partners to address community needs. For example, one grantee built a cradle-to-college and career pipeline involving over 30 community and institutional partners to support youth in Boyle Heights. Another grantee partnered with various organizations to create a collaborative aimed at increasing economic opportunities for small businesses in the region.

“We are also grateful for the community partnerships we have been able to develop over the past year. Our new community partners such as the Boyle Heights Chamber of Commerce, the National Council of La Raza, Puente Learning Center, and Hollenbeck Terrace have recently started requesting [our] students to perform at their own community events.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2015

FINDING 3

Building Partnerships

2. Some grantees attributed additional organizational exposure and awareness by new or different funders to their VCF grant funded work. For most organizations that mentioned fundraising-associated impacts, the focus was primarily on other funders seeing the fruits of their VCF funded work, such as the ability to provide high quality programs and services to existing clients. Others mentioned how investment in operational capacities could position them to garner funds in the future, for example via better data and reporting systems. Additionally, as exhibit 5 indicates, some grantees stated that they learned about new funders in the community as a result of VCF, while some indicated that they received additional funding as a result of their VCF funded work.

“Our work in the Vernon-area has received a lot of attention from other groups that want to direct more resources into areas with low civic engagement. Another huge success was seeing our grant work featured in the national publication, American Bicyclist Magazine. The article was centered on how our outreach in an area of low civic engagement, with a history of disinvestment, lays the foundation for the creation of communities that are healthy and safe for walking and bicycling.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2015

“Funding from the Vernon CommUNITY Fund establishes a system for accountability and real-time feedback that will establish a solid foundation for sustainable growth, which is a major organizational goal. By establishing and maintaining reliable, consistent, and transparent quality reporting, beginning with the clients we serve, we are establishing a basis for the development of additional layers of evaluation metrics throughout the organization.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2018



VCF Capacity Building: **Meet the Grantmakers**

The Jemmott Rollins Group and City of Vernon partner to provide current and former VCF grantees, and other local organizations the opportunity to meet Los Angeles and California-based funders. Through “Meet the Grantmaker” panels, grantees had the opportunity to hear directly from funder partners about their strategic priorities, inquire about strategies to be competitive for funding, and network more broadly.

As one survey respondent shared, “Being connected with VCF and their events and grants has led to an increase in knowledge about the agencies and funders operating in this space. As a newer grants manager in this area, I specifically have learned a great deal from VCF activities!”

FINDING 4

Navigating Barriers and Challenges

Grantees navigated a number of barriers and challenges, including the COVID 19 pandemic, which influenced their work in a variety of ways. Most grantees described progress and creative solutions, despite these challenges. With the pandemic, several were forced to adjust their plans and adapt to the new context and changing community needs.



1. Organizational and grant-related challenges


were the most commonly cited (n=34 reports), and primarily focused on staffing and staff turnover, the need for grant funding and general operating support, and other programmatic limitations. Hiring and turnover challenges disrupted operations and service delivery for some organizations, especially those that provide direct services such as mental health counseling.

2. Community and client-related challenges

were another frequently mentioned (n=27 reports) barrier that grantees worked to address. COVID-19 was the most significant community challenge, leading to increased illness, loss of income, and heightened food and housing insecurity. For many organizations, the effects of COVID-19 were exacerbated by previous challenges experienced by the communities they serve, including entrenched housing insecurity and access to critical resources such as health care. Organizations working with immigrant communities also described changes after the 2016 election, which resulted in increased fear and reduced engagement among those populations.

3. Systems-level barriers

(n=10 reports) ultimately underlie many of the challenges that VCF grantees named, including difficulties with coordinating across County agencies, partners and other stakeholders, as well as inadequate funding and limited systemic supports for the most vulnerable populations. Grantees described ways they bolstered partnerships with other organizations and agencies to overcome some of the systemic barriers that prevent community access, while some others describe how they are building advocacy skills among their community base in an effort to advance broader systems change over time.



“[Our organization], like any other small non-profit organization, spends a lot of time seeking and securing funding from multiple sources. These efforts coupled with the pressure to direct all resources to programs and services creates significant financial stress. Continuing to have insufficient operating support to cover our organization's needs and finding enough money to achieve our mission remains an ongoing challenge.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2014

“[We] noted a trend across lenders that demand for loans has decreased in areas with large migrant and immigrant communities, including Vernon and East LA. This challenge has been building over the past few years due to growing anti-immigrant sentiment and increasing fear among this demographic. These communities are trying to ‘fly under the radar’ due to an uncertain political climate and fear of raids.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2018

“In conjunction with the compounding issue of family homelessness across this region, many low-income and homeless families are in need of specialized mental healthcare in order to end the cycle of generational poverty. However, strict eligibility requirements under our contracts with the LA County Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) make it difficult to provide services to each and every family who come to us seeking help.”

GRANTEE REPORT, 2018

Looking Ahead: Considerations for the Future

Since 2014, the Vernon CommUNITY Fund has played an important role in supporting local organizations to enhance their work and provide essential community services. VCF grantmaking supported organizational programming and service delivery, enabled organizations to expand infrastructure, and expanded organizational capacity in traditionally underserved communities. By reducing barriers to entry, such as onerous funding applications and organizational infrastructure requirements, the VCF created additional space for grantees to focus on their missions, whether providing education, healthcare, or community development. This investment has helped to foster stronger, more resilient neighborhoods. Lessons from grantee reporting and survey data provide insight into how the VCF can continue supporting grantees in the future.



■ Multi-year investment in organizations can stabilize programs and build capacity to receive grant funding from other sources

Grantees that received successive years of funding recommended that the City of Vernon and the VCF institute a one-time multi-year grant application to relieve the administrative burden on applicants to re-apply each year. In that the grant budget for VCF is approved each year by the City Council as part of the Annual budget for the City, multi year grantmaking is not possible. However the Grant Committee could consider a modification of the application process to support returning grantees by reducing the need to produce forms and documents already on file with the City.

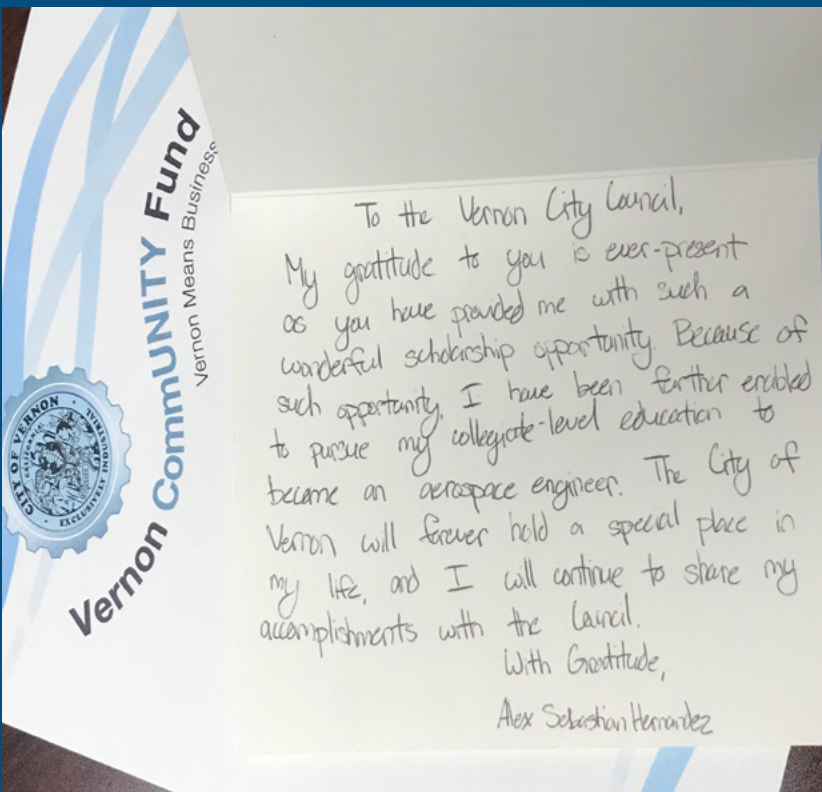
■ Continue to foster partnerships and networking among organizations and funders

Grantees expressed interest in ongoing networking and community building activities, including additional opportunities to 1) meet and engage in dialogue with grant-makers and 2) learn more about other organizations and opportunities for strategic partnership.

■ Consider providing additional technical assistance and resources

Some grantee organizations expressed interest in other types of support, in addition to financial resources, such as training and staff professional development related to various organizational capacities (e.g., fund development, evaluation).





“Key partners of the Vernon CommUNITY Fund, including the Jemmott Rollins Group and the City of Vernon, can further support organizations like ours by offering additional resources beyond financial contributions that enhance our ability to serve the community effectively. For example, providing access to professional development workshops on grant writing, program evaluation, and community impact measurement would strengthen our organizational capacity and increase the sustainability of our programs. Moreover, creating networking opportunities where community organizations can connect with local businesses, government agencies, and other nonprofits would foster collaborative efforts to address community needs comprehensively. Increased visibility and engagement through public acknowledgment of funded programs at city events or in local publications would also raise awareness and strengthen community support.”

GRANTEE SURVEY RESPONDENT

Appendix I:

Grant Recipients

1. Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
2. Alzheimer's Greater LA
3. Big Citizen Hub
4. Boyle Heights Youth Football
5. Boys & Girls Club of West San Gabriel Valley
6. CA Children's Academy
7. CA Derby Dolls
8. CA Latino Leadership Institute
9. Cal State LA University Auxiliary Services
10. Camp TLC at East LA Rising
11. Casa 0101
12. Catholic Big Brothers Big Sisters
13. Center for Nonviolent Education & Parenting
14. Centinela Youth Services
15. Chicxs Rockerxs
16. City of Bell
17. Clinica Oscar Romero
18. Coalicion de Latinos Americanos
19. Dolores Mission School
20. East LA Community Corporation
21. East LA Women's Center
22. Eastmont Community Center
23. Family Health Care Centers of Greater LA
24. Future Scholars of Bell High Program
25. Girl Scouts of Greater LA
26. Girls on the Run of LA County
27. Helping Hands Society of LA
28. Helpline Youth Counseling
29. Hispanas Organized for Political Equality
30. Holy Angels Church of the Deaf
31. Human Services Association
32. Huntington Park Youth Football & Cheer
33. Immigrant Youth Coalition
34. Inclusive Action for the City
35. InnerCity Struggle
36. Jovenes
37. LA Area Council Boy Scouts of America
38. LA Center for Law and Justice
39. LA Community Garden Council
40. LA County Bicycle Coalition
41. LA Family Housing Corporation
42. LA Music and Art School
43. Las Fotos Project
44. Latino Equality Alliance
45. Libros Schmibros Lending Library
46. Mark Taper Foundation Shelter
47. Muscular Dystrophy Association
48. Neighborhood Music School
49. Opportunity Fund
50. Plaza Community Services
51. Project Return Peer Support Network
52. PUENTE Learning Center
53. Rio Hondo-Vernon Rotary Club Foundation
54. SCGA Junior Golf Foundation
55. SELA Collaborative
56. Self-Help Graphics and Art
57. So'oh-Shindali Sister Project
58. South Central Family Health Center
59. South Central LA Regional Center
60. Southeast Churches Service Center
61. Southeast Community Development Corp
62. Southeast Community Foundation
63. TreePeople
64. Variety Boys & Girls Club
65. Vernon City Elementary
66. Vision to Learn
67. Woodcraft Rangers
68. YMCA of Metro LA-Southeast Rio Vista
69. YMCA of Metro LA-Weingart East LA
70. Youth Champions
71. YWCA Greater LA



Appendix II: Methods

This report incorporates history and context of the region and the VCF, drawn from background documents and other artifacts, and relies upon the following data sources:

■ Grantee annual reports

Grantees' interim and/or final reports were qualitatively analyzed to identify themes related to project progress and challenges, along with outcomes of the work. A total of 92 grantee reports were analyzed, which included at least one grant report for 55 unique VCF grantees (representing 82% of the 67 grantees required to submit annual reports). In some cases, grant reports were available for the same grantee for multiple years of funding, and in other cases they were not.

■ Grantee survey

Grantees completed a retrospective impact survey in October and November 2024 to reflect on key outcomes and experiences associated with their VCF grants. Participants received gift cards as a token of appreciation for their time and contribution. A total of 31 submissions were received, representing 30 grantee organizations (43% of 69 grantees invited to participate).

Appendix III: Limitations

This report is subject to the following limitations:

■ Reliance on grantee reporting

Grantee reporting served as the primary data source to minimize burden on grantee organizations, however reports were not available for all grantees for all years of funding. Additionally, reports may reflect the perspectives of individual staff members or lack comprehensiveness, which can introduce bias or an incomplete picture of the work. Although analysis of grant reports reduces burden on grantees, this approach may not provide nuanced details, context, or unintended outcomes that could be captured through other forms of data collection.

■ Recall bias

The grantee survey asked respondents to retrospectively consider the impact of grant funds. Respondents who were funded earlier in the history of the VCF (i.e., between 2014-2020) may not accurately or completely remember specific details, outcomes, or challenges associated with their grant funded work.

Appendix IV:

References

1 Vernon CommUNITY Fund.

<http://www.vernoncommunityfund.org>

2 Sonksen, M. A Brief History on the Gateway Cities.

<https://greenportal.wca.ca.gov/local-voices/a-brief-history-on-the-gateway-cities-2>

3 US Census Bureau. City Profiles search for cities of: Vernon; Bell City; Commerce City; Huntington Park City; Maywood City; East Los Angeles CDP.

<https://data.census.gov>

4 City of Vernon. Vernon Community Fund Grant Committee.

<https://www.cityofvernon.org>

Acknowledgements

JRG gratefully acknowledges the guidance and support of the Vernon City Council, the Vernon CommUNITY Fund Grant Committee, and the City of Vernon Administration Team.

This publication was produced for the City of Vernon, CA by



- Fran Jemmott, CEO, Project Manager
- James Hull, Information Technology Manager
- Shayla Spilker, MSPH, Evaluation Consultant
- Brent Rollins, Graphic Designer



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Grant Committee Agenda Report

Meeting Date: August 20, 2025
From: Genoveva Rocha, City Clerk
Department: City Clerk
Submitted by: Sandra Dolson, City Clerk Specialist

Subject

Meeting Minutes

Recommendation

Approve the December 11, 2024 Special Vernon CommUNITY Fund Grant Committee Meeting Minutes.

Background

Staff has prepared and submits the minutes for approval.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Attachments

1. December 11, 2024 Special VCFGC Meeting Minutes

**MINUTES
VERNON COMMUNITY FUND GRANT COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2024
COUNCIL CHAMBER, 4305 SANTA FE AVENUE**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gonzalez called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

FLAG SALUTE

Chairperson Gonzalez led the Flag Salute.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Mark Gonzalez, Chairperson
Leticia Lopez, Vice Chairperson
Ronit Edry, Committee Member
Frank Gaviña, Committee Member
Clara Gazcon, Committee Member
Michelle Ybarra, Committee Member

ABSENT:

Steven Froberg, Committee Member

STAFF PRESENT:

Zaynah Moussa, City Attorney
Deborah Harrington, Interim City Clerk
Diana Figueroa, Senior Management Analyst
Jessica Alcaraz, Financial Services Administrator
Frances Jemmott, Consultant
James Hull, Consultant

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION

Vice Chairperson Lopez moved and Committee Member Edry seconded a motion to approve the agenda. The question was called and the motion carried 6-0, Committee Member Froberg absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION

Vice Chairperson Lopez moved and Committee Member Gazcon seconded a motion to approve the Consent Calendar. The question was called and the motion carried 6-0, Committee Member Froberg absent.

The Consent Calendar consisted of the following item:

1. Approval of Minutes

Recommendation: Approve the November 20, 2024 Regular Vernon CommUNITY Fund Grant Committee Meeting Minutes.

NEW BUSINESS

2. Fiscal Year 2024-25 Vernon CommUNITY Fund Direct Service Grants

Recommendation:

Award a Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 Direct Service Grant in the amount of \$10,000 to Catholic Big Brothers Big Sisters of Los Angeles County.

Senior Management Analyst Figueroa presented the staff report.

Consultant Fran Jemmott, Jemmott Rollins Group (JRG), provided information on the merits of the Catholic Big Brothers Big Sisters of Los Angeles County grant application and recommended funding.

In response to Member Edry's question, Senior Management Analyst Figueroa provided information on coordination efforts between JRG and the City's Information Technology team to share access to an email inbox for application submittals to ensure all grant applications are captured.

Given that there was no further discussion by the Committee Members and there were no public comments, Chair Gonzalez called for a motion.

MOTION

Committee Member Edry moved and Committee Member Ybarra seconded a motion to award a Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 Direct Service Grant in the amount of \$10,000 to Catholic Big Brothers Big Sisters of Los Angeles County. The question was called and the motion carried 6-0, Committee Member Froberg absent.

ORAL REPORTS

3. Brief Reports, Announcements, or Directives to Staff

None.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chairperson Gonzalez adjourned the meeting at 10:19 a.m.

LETICIA LOPEZ, Vice Chairperson

ATTEST:

GENOVEVA ROCHA, City Clerk

Vernon CommUNITY Fund Grant Committee Agenda Report

Meeting Date: August 20, 2025
From: Brian Saeki, City Administrator
Department: City Administration
Submitted by: Diana Figueroa, Senior Management Analyst

Subject

Fiscal Year 2024-25 Vernon CommUNITY Fund (VCF) Scholarship Grants

Recommendation

Award Fiscal Year 2024-25 VCF Scholarship Grants totaling \$50,000 to 38 students as follows:

1. A \$1,000 scholarship to each application number listed: 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 16, 17, 30, 33, 36, 38, 40, 41, 49, and 53.
2. A \$1,500 scholarship to each application number listed: 2, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 29, 31, 34, 37, 39, 46, 50, 51, and 52.
3. A \$2,000 scholarship to each application number listed: 22 and 28.

Background

As one of the key elements of the City's good governance reforms, the City Council created the Vernon CommUNITY Fund (VCF) to provide grants to charitable and governmental entities for projects and programs that benefit those residing and working in Vernon and surrounding communities, offering support through its funding of organizations that provide vital services. On February 4, 2014, the City Council established the VCF Grant Committee and provided basic grantmaking guidelines and operational procedures for the board, including fund distribution and processes for reviewing applications and awarding grants. The VCF extended its philanthropic reach by launching the VCF Scholarship Program in 2019 which assists high school seniors in the Vernon Area that are in pursuit of higher education.

To assist in the administration of VCF grantmaking, the City has partnered with Jemmott Rollins Group, Inc. (JRG) to provide consultation, guidance, research and specialized support services to the City Administrator and City staff for all matters related to the VCF. JRG has extensive experience in non-profit grantmaking and grants management and functional knowledge of ethics and principles governing the grantmaking process.

Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 Funding Recap

Pursuant to Vernon Municipal Code (VMC) Section 2.48.100, the City Council may appropriate funds to the VCF. Through the normal budgetary process, City Council authorized an amount of \$400,000 to the VCF for FY 2024-25. The Grant Committee was required to allocate funds for FY 2024-25 in accordance with the following formula:

- a. Administrative Costs shall be determined for the fiscal year and the amount shall be allocated for payment from funds appropriated to the VCF.
- b. The remainder of available funds in any fiscal year may be awarded to proposals to expend funds on direct services and/or scholarship grants. No single grant of this type shall be in an amount more than \$250,000.

In consideration of Administrative Costs of \$70,000, the total maximum amount of grant funds available for Direct Services and/or Scholarship Grants during FY 2024-25 was \$330,000. At its May 15, 2024 meeting, the VCF Grant Committee approved an allocation distribution in the amount of \$60,000 toward the VCF Scholarship Program. Subsequently, VCF Direct Service

Grants totaling \$270,000 were awarded by the Grant Committee at its meeting on November 20, 2024, and a second Grant Committee meeting on December 12, 2024 saw an additional Direct Service Grant awarded for \$10,000, for a total distribution of \$280,000.

After all Direct Service Grant approvals, there is now a total of \$50,000 available for 2025 Scholarship Awards. As such, JRG and City staff recommend the Grant Committee award \$50,000 in scholarship grants for FY 2024-25 in the specified amounts to the individual students identified in this staff report.

Criteria for Ranking Scholarship Grant Applicants

Pursuant to VMC Section 2.48.120(B), all eligible scholarship applicants must be ranked using the following:

Award Criteria (not in order of priority)

1. Financial need
2. Academic achievement
3. Community/extracurricular involvement
4. Leadership at school or in the community
5. Awards and recognition
6. Personal and/or family attributes, as demonstrated through scholarship application process

FY 2024-25 Scholarship Grant Applications

Out of the 53 student applicants, there are 38 FY 2024-25 Scholarship grant candidates presented for review, deliberation, and award by the Grant Committee. All 38 proposed scholarship recipients meet the eligibility requirements set forth in VMC Section 2.48.110(B). Students remained anonymous as applications were thoroughly vetted by JRG and City staff using the aforementioned ranking criteria. Proposed scholarships are either \$1,000, \$1,500 or \$2,000 due to the limited VCF funds available.

Based on the application criteria, due diligence findings, and the amount of funding available, the total amount of scholarship grant funding recommended for FY 2024-25 is \$50,000. To guide the Grant Committee's deliberations at its August 20, 2025 meeting, scholarship recipient information summarized in evaluation forms and full student applications have been provided to Grant Committee members under separate cover, as these materials contain confidential and Personal Identifiable Information (PII) which is to be protected. The students' evaluation forms and scholarship applications (samples of which have been attached) will not be included in the public Vernon CommUNITY Fund Grant Committee Agenda Packet.

Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact is \$50,000 and the amount is within the recommended Grant Committee allocation distribution of \$50,000 for Scholarship Grants for FY 2024-25. Sufficient funds are available in General Fund, Good Neighbor Program Account No. 011-010-140-529715.

Attachments

1. List of Proposed Scholarship Awards
2. Sample Scholarship Evaluation Summary Form
3. Sample VCF Scholarship Application

Proposed Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Awards

	App #	Amount	School
1	1	\$1,000	Maywood Academy
2	2	\$1,500	Maywood Academy
3	5	\$1,000	Bishop Mora
4	6	\$1,000	Huntington Park High
5	7	\$1,000	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
6	8	\$1,500	Mendez High
7	9	\$1,000	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
8	10	\$1,500	Huntington Park High
9	11	\$1,000	Bell Senior High
10	12	\$1,500	Bell Senior High
11	13	\$1,500	Huntington Park High
12	14	\$1,500	Mendez High
13	16	\$1,000	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
14	17	\$1,000	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
15	20	\$1,500	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
16	21	\$1,500	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
17	22	\$2,000	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
18	23	\$1,500	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
19	24	\$1,500	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
20	25	\$1,500	Huntington Park High
21	28	\$2,000	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
22	29	\$1,500	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
23	30	\$1,000	Huntington Park High
24	31	\$1,500	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
25	33	\$1,000	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
26	34	\$1,500	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
27	36	\$1,000	Don Bosco Technical Institute
28	37	\$1,500	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
29	38	\$1,000	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
30	39	\$1,500	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
31	40	\$1,000	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
32	41	\$1,000	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
33	46	\$1,500	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
34	49	\$1,000	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
35	50	\$1,500	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
36	51	\$1,500	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
37	52	\$1,500	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)
38	53	\$1,000	Maywood Center for Enriched Studies (MACES)



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program

Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Applicant Evaluation Form

Applicant: _____

GPA: _____

School: _____

Resident City: _____

The criteria below will be used to evaluate applicant:

- Financial need (30 points)
- Community/extracurricular involvement and leadership (30 points)
- Academic achievement (20 points)
- Awards and recognition (10 points)
- Personal and/or family attributes and values (10 points)

1. DEMONSTRATED FINANCIAL NEED (30 POINTS POSSIBLE)

SCORE _____

The applicant has completed the Financial Analysis Summary to project their anticipated costs for their post-secondary educational pursuits. A VCF Scholarship may be awarded in a dollar amount that considers all financial aid being awarded to applicant and the total cost for their education. Total unmet financial need of applicant is \$ _____.

2. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND LEADERSHIP (30 POINTS POSSIBLE)

SCORE _____

The Autobiographical Essay, Recommendation Forms (and letters if applicable), and Verification of Community Service Hours should collectively demonstrate the applicant's personal motivation, influences, academic ability, and potential. Consideration should be given to the applicant's unique situation and/or experience, career goals, and how receiving a scholarship will help the applicant. Recommendations should speak favorably to the applicant's dependability, initiative, and maturity, and specify applicant's talents and abilities, such as leadership, artistic abilities, excellence in athletics or extra-curricular activities, etc. Applicant should be viewed as capable of success in college. The applicant's participation in events and/or activities (such as student body office, work experience, special family responsibilities and obligations, and/or community service) leading to the accumulation of knowledge, attitudes and skills needed in post-secondary education should be considered. The quality and quantity of such events in the life of the individual should be assessed.

3. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT (20 POINTS POSSIBLE)

SCORE _____

Transcript and report card should validate the applicant's preparedness for post-secondary educational demands. Preparatory courses (e.g. algebra, biology, literature, composition, chemistry, history, government, foreign language) should be completed with passing grades (at a minimum). Through academics, the student should demonstrate their ability to be successful in their pursuit of a trade school/college education.



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program

4. AWARDS AND RECOGNITION (10 POINTS POSSIBLE)

SCORE _____

If application indicates that the student has received awards and/or recognition during their high school career in academics and/or in extracurricular activities, this should be considered. Acknowledgement by others demonstrates how the candidate is regarded and validates their work ethic, spirit, abilities, maturity, and perseverance in efforts to excel.

5. PERSONAL AND/OR FAMILY ATTRIBUTES AND VALUES (10 POINTS POSSIBLE)

SCORE _____

The Autobiographical Essay and Recommendation Forms (and letters if applicable) should convey the applicant's distinguishable characteristics and values. The applicant's ability to be successful in their prospective career will be based upon personal qualities demonstrated in their day-to-day school/work/volunteer activities. Qualities such as motivation, enthusiasm, dedication, and the desire to achieve a successful outcome in their chosen field of study should be assessed.

6. COMMENTS

TOTAL SCORE

RECOMMENDED FOR VCF SCHOLARSHIP?

☐ Yes

☐ No

IF YES, INDICATE RECOMMENDED AWARD AMOUNT:

\$ _____



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the Vernon CommUNITY Fund (VCF) Scholarship Program! The Vernon CommUNITY Fund and Vernon City Council are dedicated to enriching the local community, and promoting higher education is aligned with our overall mission to contribute to the betterment of the Southeast Los Angeles County region. Vernon leaders are excited to offer the VCF Scholarship to students who are committed to investing in their education for a brighter future.

The City Council of the City of Vernon created the VCF to provide grants to charitable and governmental entities for projects and programs that benefit those residing and working in Vernon and its surrounding areas. The City Council established the Vernon CommUNITY Fund Grant Committee (Grant Committee) and provided the basic guidelines and operational procedures for said Committee and its officers, including those related to the allocation of funds and the processes for reviewing and ranking applications and awarding grants. Since its inception in 2014, the VCF Grant Committee has awarded approximately \$5 million in grants to non-profit organizations in the Vernon Area.

Over the years, the Grant Committee has sought to expand the work of the Vernon CommUNITY Fund in meaningful ways. The VCF Scholarship Program began as a concept, but quickly gained traction amongst Vernon leaders. The program was deemed to be a great opportunity for the VCF to establish a personal, viable connection with youth in the Vernon Area while supporting their pursuits of higher education and, in turn, elevating the region as a whole by ensuring that the career goals of students in our community are more attainable.

In 2018, the Vernon City Council authorized the Grant Committee to proceed with the implementation of the VCF Scholarship Program. The implementation of this program is the result of much thought, planning, and care. It has been designed with a true philanthropic mindset. It is the hope of the Vernon CommUNITY Fund and Vernon City Council that the VCF Scholarship Program will be a vehicle that offers many motivated, exceptional young people a path to accomplish their academic and career goals.

Again, thank you for your interest in the VCF Scholarship Program. The selection team looks forward to reviewing your application package and congratulates you on your many educational achievements thus far.

Sincerely,

Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Administration



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package Table of Contents

- I. Scholarship Program Guidelines
- II. Scholarship Program Timeline
- III. Application Requirements
- IV. Applicant Checklist
- V. Scholarship Applicant Information
- VI. Financial Analysis Summary
- VII. Applicant Autobiographical Essay Guide
- VIII. Recommendation Forms
- IX. Proof of Post-Secondary Educational Institution Acceptance/Enrollment
- X. Volunteer Hours Verification
- XI. High School Transcript/Report Card
- XII. Applicant Proof of Vernon Area Residency (if High School Not in Vernon Area)
- XIII. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Grant Agreement



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

I. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Guidelines

The Vernon CommUNITY Fund (VCF) Scholarship Program focuses on 12th grade students living or attending school in the Vernon Area (which includes the cities of Vernon, Maywood, Bell, Huntington Park, Commerce, the area within the City of Los Angeles known as Boyle Heights, and the unincorporated area known as East Los Angeles).

Scholarship Criteria

Vernon Municipal Code (VMC) Section 2.48.120(B) sets forth the specific selection criteria for scholarship recipients and will be the specific standards used to identify qualified applicants who, ultimately, will be recommended as scholarship recipients. Selection criteria have been identified to clearly define the profile of the scholarship recipient.

Many factors will be considered when evaluating scholarship applicants. Scholarship criteria include an applicant's financial need, academic achievement, and the geographic distribution of scholarships. The scholarship criteria support the purpose of the Vernon CommUNITY Fund, which was established to provide charitable contributions in support of improved quality of life, strengthening of families, and affirmation of Vernon's ties with neighboring communities in pursuit of bright futures. The VCF Scholarship Program was created to provide disadvantaged youth in the Vernon Area the opportunity to achieve success in their post-secondary educational endeavors.

Award Criteria

- Financial need (30 points)
- Community/extracurricular involvement and leadership (30 points)
- Academic achievement (20 points)
- Awards and recognition (10 points)
- Personal and/or family attributes and values (10 points)

Eligibility

12th grade students enrolling in a post-secondary educational institution with full-time status who reside or attend school in the Vernon Area (as defined above) may submit an application for a VCF Scholarship.

Specific eligibility standards are identified within this section. In order to be considered for award, applicants must meet all of the following detailed criteria:

- Graduating High School Senior
- Achievement of a Minimum Weighted Grade Point Average of 2.0 in high school level coursework for trade school or two-year College applicants; or Minimum Weighted Grade Point Average of 2.5 in high school level coursework for four-year College/University applicants at the time of VCF Scholarship application submission
- Pursuit of a two-year or four-year Degree from accredited College/University; or pursuit of Trade School Certification



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

- Full-time enrollment at post-secondary educational institution of choice (minimum of 12 units for college) at the time of award
- Immediate transition into a post-secondary educational institution upon graduation from high school (must begin post-secondary coursework within 6 months of graduation)
- Residency or school attendance in the Vernon Area (U.S. Citizenship is not required)
- Demonstration of strong leadership skills and responsibility (successfully communicated in scholarship application)
- Active in extracurricular activities (i.e., school/community involvement/employment/internship)
- A minimum of 20 hours of community service from 9th grade to first semester of 12th grade
- Not a City of Vernon employee or a legal dependent of a City of Vernon employee, Vernon City-appointed official, or Vernon City-elected official

Application Procedures

The information requested on the application is a reflection of the selection criteria designated for the VCF Scholarship Program. The following question and answer section (Q&A) addresses issues related to the VCF Scholarship application process:

Q: Where and when are scholarship applications available?

A: Beginning on January 1st of each year, applications will be available on the Vernon CommUNITY Fund website: www.vernoncommunityfund.org

Q: Where should scholarship applications be submitted?

A: Students may submit their complete application packages to the Vernon City Hall City Administration Office. Contact information is available on the website if any questions or technical issues arise during the application submission process.

Q: When are scholarship applications due?

A: The Vernon CommUNITY Fund will accept scholarship applications through the last Thursday in March.

Q: What additional information/documents must accompany the scholarship application?

A: As per the eligibility criteria noted above, students must submit proof that they reside or attend school in the Vernon Area (e.g. utility bills, proof of school enrollment); most recent report card; evidence of GPA with high school transcripts; sworn statement (found on the Vernon CommUNITY Fund website in scholarship applicant package) of a teacher or program director/supervisor with knowledge that applicant has performed the minimum amount of community service; and evidence of extracurricular activities. Although not required, students may also include letter(s) from post-secondary educational institution(s) along with their scholarship application.

Q: How and when will the scholarship award winners be notified?

A: Scholarship grant applicants recommended for award will be reviewed at the regular VCF Grant Committee meeting in May. Applicants selected for award will be notified within one week of scholarship award via email.



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

Q: How and when will the scholarship awards be disbursed?

A: Award disbursement will occur in June, with checks directly mailed to scholarship grantees.

The VCF Grant Committee retains the right to withhold scholarship grants in any given year if no candidate is determined to be qualified.

Additional Considerations

- Scholarship amount will be based on applicant competition and funds available for award
- Personal interview of scholarship applicant may or may not be required, and shall be determined after initial review of applicant pool
- Applications may be summarily denied, with or without prior notification to the applicant, if any statements or representations in the application and supporting materials are found to be untruthful, dishonest, or misleading

Selection Procedures

Procedures for selection of award will mirror the current process used for the award of direct service grants through the Vernon CommUNITY Fund. The initial evaluation of a scholarship application will be a joint effort amongst City staff and consultant, Jemmott Rollins Group (JRG). Ultimately, the application of any candidate(s) recommended for award will be brought to the VCF Grant Committee in May for deliberation and approval(s) of grant(s).

The VCF Scholarship Program is designed to benefit a broad class of beneficiaries through an objective process that is nondiscriminatory in nature.



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

II. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Timeline

A VCF Scholarship Program Timeline has been established based upon the calendar year. In summary, applications are accepted beginning January 1st through the last Thursday in March of a given year. In May, the Vernon CommUNITY Fund Grant Committee will select scholarship grantees. Funds for scholarship awards will be dispersed in June to all scholarship grant recipients.

January – March

Window to receive candidate applications for VCF Scholarship Program

April

Review of candidate applications to determine recommended grant awards for VCF Grant Committee approval

May

Approval of VCF Scholarship Grant Awards at the regular May VCF Grant Committee Meeting (held on the 3rd Wednesday in May at 10:00 a.m.)

June

VCF Scholarship Grant Awards are processed for payment



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

III. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Application Requirements

Complete application information (see below) must be received no later than **5:00 p.m. on the last Thursday in March (March 27, 2025)**. It is the responsibility of the applicant to complete and submit all parts of the application by the deadline.

- ✓ Applicant Checklist
- ✓ Applicant Information
- ✓ Financial Analysis Summary
- ✓ Autobiographical Essay
- ✓ Two (2) Recommendation Forms
- ✓ Proof of Educational Institution Acceptance/Enrollment
- ✓ Volunteer Hours Verification
- ✓ Copy of Current Transcript/Report Card
- ✓ Proof of Vernon Area Residency (if not attending school in Vernon Area)

A complete application package must be delivered to:

Vernon City Hall
4305 Santa Fe Avenue
Vernon, CA 90058
Attention: Diana Figueroa, City Administration

OR, sent via email to dfigueroa@cityofvernon.org

Failure to submit all requested materials by the deadline will disqualify you. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS.**



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

IV. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Applicant Checklist

Please complete the following checklist:

- ☐ Applicant Checklist completed and signed
- ☐ Applicant Information completed and signed
- ☐ Financial Analysis Summary completed and signed
- ☐ Autobiographical Essay completed as per formatting requirements and attached to applicant package
- ☐ Two (2) Recommendation Forms completed and signed
- ☐ Proof of Post-Secondary Educational Institute Acceptance/Enrollment attached to applicant package (if not available at time of application, must be presented prior to grant check release if selected for award)
- ☐ Volunteer Hours Verification section(s) completed and signed
- ☐ A copy of Current Transcript AND most recent Report Card attached to applicant package
- ☐ If not attending a high school in the Vernon Area, Proof of Vernon Area Residency attached to applicant package (e.g. utility bills) AND a copy of a valid photo identification (e.g. school I.D., California I.D., Driver's License)

I confirm that I have reviewed the checklist and that this scholarship application package includes all required materials for proper evaluation.

Applicant Initial: _____



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

V. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Applicant Information

1. Name: _____ Birthdate: _____
2. Address: _____ Zip Code: _____
3. Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____
4. Email Address: _____
5. What college/university/trade school will you attend after high school graduation?

6. List all trade schools, community colleges, and/or four-year institutions to which you have been accepted.

7. College Major/chosen field of study? _____
8. Career Objective: _____
9. Do you live in the Vernon Area*? _____
(*Vernon Area includes the cities of Vernon, Maywood, Bell, Huntington Park, Commerce, the area within the City of Los Angeles known as Boyle Heights, and the unincorporated area known as East Los Angeles.)
10. High School Name: _____ City/Zip Code: _____
11. Are you the first member of your immediate family to attend college? _____

I certify that all statements made in this application are true and complete. Furthermore, I agree and understand that any misrepresentation or omission of a material fact, or any falsification of official documentation will be justification for rejection of my award.

Applicant Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____
(If applicant is under 18 years of age)



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

VI. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Financial Analysis Summary

College/University/Trade School Attending: _____

Cost Analysis

Registration per Year (include all semesters/quarters for the year): \$ _____

Books/Fees per Year: \$ _____

Housing (Dorms/Rent): \$ _____

Total Annual Cost: \$ _____

Awards/Financial Aid Assistance

Have you applied for other scholarships? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If awarded, please list names of awarding organizations and associated amounts:

Organization Name	Amount
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____

Have you applied for Financial Aid? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If awarded, please list the type of financial aid (e.g. loan, work study program, grant) and associated amounts:

Type of Financial Aid/Assistance	Amount
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

Please sign to acknowledge the following statement:

I will report all awards, scholarships, and income to the educational institution (college/university/trade school) that I am attending. I have truthfully and accurately detailed the costs for my educational pursuits and the financial aid (if any) that I will receive. I understand that the information included in the Financial Analysis Summary Sheet will not impact my eligibility to receive a VCF Scholarship. I accept that the VCF Grant Committee's decisions regarding VCF Scholarship awards and dollar amounts are final and indisputable.

Applicant Initial: _____



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

VII. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Applicant Autobiographical Essay Guide

Autobiographical Statement

In essay form, please respond to as many of the following prompts as are applicable to your situation and/or personal experience:

- Effectively express your career goals and detail your plan to achieve success in your chosen field of study
- Identify work, volunteer, internship(s), and/or extracurricular experience and how and why it has impacted you
- Describe who or what has most influenced and motivated you to pursue a higher level of education and explain why
- Indicate why receiving a scholarship from the Vernon CommUNITY Fund will assist you in achieving your academic goals
- Discuss your academic ability and potential to be successful in your pursuits
- Provide a coherent, well-organized written product that conveys why you should receive a VCF Scholarship
- Identify any unique characteristics about yourself, your family and/or life circumstances that you would like to be considered in the evaluation of your application package

The prompts above appear in no particular order of importance, nor are you required to address each in your essay. The essay guide has been designed to provide you with insight into what the VCF Grant Committee may be interested in learning about you as a VCF Scholarship Applicant.

Your essay must be submitted in the following format:

- Typed (12-point font)
- Double spaced
- Written in first-person
- A combined total of three (3) pages or less

Reminders for Your Written Work

Structure/Organization

Your essay should give the reader a concise sense of who you are and how your particular life experiences have contributed to your current path. The structure of the essay should support its overall message and convey your personality. The story that you are telling should be logical, with a clear introduction, solid supporting ideas, and a conclusion.



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

Specific Examples

If you choose to reference life experiences or situations in your essay, they should be specific and not general. Each example that you include in your essay should help showcase your character traits and distinguish you, as an individual, from the other applicants.

Significance

The experiences or situations you include in the essay should address the prompts in a meaningful way. Additionally, they should show significance to your overall message, and lend support to your educational, career, and personal goals.

(Please insert your essay following this page)



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

VIII. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Applicant Recommendations

Please have two (2) teachers or mentors complete the attached Recommendation Forms as part of your VCF Scholarship Applicant package. Formal letters of recommendation will not be accepted in lieu of the Recommendation Forms included in the applicant package, but can be submitted along with all other application materials, if desired.

Recommendation Forms shall be completed by an individual who can effectively evaluate the qualities you possess as a student, volunteer, and/or employee. He/she must complete the form in its entirety, with his/her contact information and the relationship to the applicant clearly articulated.

(Please insert any optional letters of recommendation following this page)



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

Recommendation Form

Name of VCF Scholarship Applicant: _____

To the individual completing this form:

The person whose name appears above is applying for a Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship. The selection committee dedicated to evaluating all scholarship applicants kindly requests that your answers to the questions about the applicant be specific, thorough, and candid. Please make note of particular examples that illustrate his/her maturity, initiative, and potential to succeed in the applicant's educational endeavors and chosen career. Please understand that your recommendation may be made available for inspection at the applicant's request in accordance with the Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and related laws and regulations.

Please complete the following:

Your Name: _____ Title: _____

School/Organization: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

If a question included on this form is not applicable to your relationship with the applicant and you are unable to evaluate them on that subject as a result, please indicate "N/A", or not applicable as a response.

1. How long have you known the applicant? _____

2. What is your relationship to the applicant? _____

3. What is your assessment of the applicant's ability to succeed in his/her goal to attain a higher level of education?



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

4. What unique qualities does the applicant possess that distinguish him/her amongst their peers?

5. Based on your knowledge of the applicant, how would you rate the applicant's skills, characteristics, and motivation?

	Outstanding	Above Average	Average	Deficient
Academic Achievement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership Capability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Highly Motivated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Potential for Growth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Please add any additional insight or comments you may have about the candidate below:

Your Signature: _____ Date: _____



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

Recommendation Form

Name of VCF Scholarship Applicant: _____

To the individual completing this form:

The person whose name appears above is applying for a Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship. The selection committee dedicated to evaluating all scholarship applicants kindly requests that your answers to the questions about the applicant be specific, thorough, and candid. Please make note of particular incidents that illustrate his/her maturity, initiative, and potential to succeed in their educational endeavors and chosen career. Please understand that your recommendation may be made available for inspection at the applicant's request in accordance with the Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and related laws and regulations.

Please complete the following:

Your Name: _____ Title: _____

School/Organization: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

If a question included on this form is not applicable to your relationship with the applicant and you are unable to evaluate them on that subject as a result, please indicate "N/A", or not applicable as a response.

1. How long have you known the applicant? _____

2. What is your relationship to the applicant? _____

3. What is your assessment of the applicant's ability to succeed in their goal to attain a higher level of education?



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

4. What unique qualities does the applicant possess that distinguish them amongst their peers?

5. Based on your knowledge of the applicant, how would you rate their skills, characteristics, and motivation?

	Outstanding	Above Average	Average	Deficient
Academic Achievement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership Capability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Highly Motivated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Potential for Growth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Please provide any additional comments you may have to share about the candidate below:

Your Signature: _____ Date: _____



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

IX. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Proof of Post-Secondary Educational Institution Acceptance/Enrollment

Proof of post-secondary educational institution acceptance and/or enrollment is one of the requirements for a VCF Scholarship. Please submit documentation that fulfills this requirement along with your application package.

If you have not received an official notification of acceptance from the institution that you will attend and you are selected for scholarship award, proof of acceptance/enrollment must be presented prior to the issuance of the scholarship grant check. If this applies in your case, please include an explanation of the particular circumstances affecting you and acknowledge that you will be required to produce proof prior to the issuance of any scholarship grant award.

(Please insert proof of post-secondary educational institution acceptance/enrollment following this page OR a written statement of your intent to produce proof prior to receipt of grant check should you be selected for award)



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

X. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Applicant Volunteer Hours Verification

As one of the eligibility requirements for the VCF Scholarship, applicants must complete a minimum of twenty (20) hours of community service between 9th and first semester of 12th grade. In order to verify that the applicant has performed the minimum amount of community service, the application requires that a sworn statement be submitted by a teacher or program director/supervisor with knowledge that applicant has performed the minimum amount of community service.

The below section(s) must be completed by an authority who may validate the service hours completed by the applicant. The confirmed total number of hours dedicated to service should be NO LESS than twenty (20).

Your Name: _____ Title: _____

School/Organization: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Type of work performed by applicant: _____ Number of hours worked: _____

I verify that the above is true and correct (sign here to attest): _____

Your Name: _____ Title: _____

School/Organization: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Type of work performed by applicant: _____ Number of hours worked: _____

I verify that the above is true and correct (sign here to attest): _____

Your Name: _____ Title: _____

School/Organization: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Type of work performed by applicant: _____ Number of hours worked: _____

I verify that the above is true and correct (sign here to attest): _____



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

XI. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Applicant Transcript/Report Card

As one of the application requirements for the VCF Scholarship, applicants must provide a high school transcript to verify the Grade Point Average achieved at the time of application submission. This should be attached to the applicant package.

Additionally, the applicant must attach his/her most recent report card along with the VCF Scholarship application package.

(Please insert transcript and report card following this page)



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

XII. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Applicant Proof of Residency

As one of the eligibility requirements for the VCF Scholarship, applicants must either attend school, or be a resident of the defined Vernon Area (which includes the cities of Vernon, Maywood, Bell, Huntington Park, Commerce, the area within the City of Los Angeles known as Boyle Heights, and the unincorporated area known as East Los Angeles). Proof of U.S. citizenship is NOT required. Acceptable forms of proof include household utility bills and/or other documentation that identifies the applicant and/or their guardian's name and address.

A copy of a valid form of photo identification must also be included with the VCF Scholarship Application Package (e.g. school I.D., California I.D., Driver's License).

(Please insert proof of residency and photo identification following this page)



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

XIII. VCF Scholarship Grant Agreement

I understand that, if I am selected for a VCF Scholarship award, my scholarship is contingent upon my attending a post-secondary educational institution (trade school or college), as represented in this VCF Scholarship application. If for any reason I do not attend, I will return the full amount of my scholarship award to the City of Vernon.

I agree with the terms detailed above and I acknowledge the obligation to return any funds that are not used for the purpose of furthering my post-secondary education.

Applicant Printed Name: _____

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____
(If applicant is under 18 years of age)

Date: _____



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

Congratulations. You have completed the VCF Scholarship Applicant Package. We thank you for your interest and wish you the best in your pursuit for post-secondary educational opportunities.

You will receive feedback on your VCF scholarship application in the form of an email. Please feel free to contact 323.293.7074 with any questions.

Thank you.

Vernon CommUNITY Fund Grant Committee Agenda Report

Meeting Date: August 20, 2025
From: Brian Saeki, City Administrator
Department: City Administration
Submitted by: Diana Figueroa, Senior Management Analyst

Subject

Vernon CommUNITY Fund Allocation and Grantmaking Focus for Fiscal Year 2025-26

Recommendation

- A. Determine distribution for Direct Service Grant and Scholarship Grant awards; and
- B. Provide direction on grantmaking areas of focus.

Background

The City Council created the Vernon CommUNITY Fund (VCF) to provide grants to charitable and governmental entities for projects and programs that benefit those residing and working in Vernon and, on February 4, 2014, the City Council established the Vernon CommUNITY Fund Grant Committee (Grant Committee), providing the basic guidelines and operational procedures for said Committee and its officers, including those related to the allocation of funds and the processes for reviewing and ranking applications and awarding grants. The VCF highlights the City's commitment as a good neighbor to the Southeast Los Angeles region and upholds its responsibility to good governance and service to the community.

FY 2025-26 VCF Budget

Pursuant to Vernon Municipal Code (VMC) Section 2.48.100, the City Council may appropriate funds to the VCF at its discretion. Typically, City Council approves a budget appropriation for VCF funds each fiscal year through the normal budgetary process. For FY 2025-26 (beginning on July 1, 2025), Council adopted at its meeting on June 4, 2025 a VCF budget in the amount of \$400,000 (unchanged from FY 2024-25). With the allocation approved, it is recommended that the VCF discuss at its August 20, 2025 meeting the strategic vision for grantmaking in the current fiscal year, and desired distributions for Direct Service Grants and Scholarship Grants.

As per VCF guidelines, Administrative Costs (which include third-party support services, Committee stipends, and supplies) shall first be determined for the fiscal year and the amount shall be allocated for payment from funds appropriated to the VCF. For FY 2025-26, after an estimated \$70,000 for the Administrative Costs associated with grantmaking, process management, tracking, and applicant evaluation, the remaining amount available for Vernon CommUNITY Fund grant awards is \$330,000.

VCF Allocation Distribution

With the VCF budget appropriation for the year, pursuant to VMC Section 2.48.100, it is within the authority of the Grant Committee to allocate the appropriated funds for Direct Service Grants and Scholarship Grants. The Grant Committee has full discretion to advise on its preferred breakdown of the VCF budget allocation and may adjust or modify the grantmaking blueprint for the new fiscal year as it sees fit.

For FY 2025-26, the Grant Committee may wish to consider a larger distribution amount for Scholarship Grants, as the Program is more popular than ever, with the City receiving a total of 53 scholarship applications for calendar year 2025. The VCF Scholarship Program is a vehicle that offers many motivated, exceptional young people a path to accomplish their academic and

career goals and has proven to be a great opportunity for the VCF to establish a personal, viable connection with youth in the Vernon Area. By supporting students' pursuits of higher education, the VCF has the power to elevate the Southeast Los Angeles region, directly impacting the lives of young people who are eager to give back to their communities. With more funds, the VCF may offer more substantial awards to assist local students.

The Grant Committee is encouraged to deliberate on its goals for FY 2025-26 to address the most pronounced needs of Vernon Area communities. The following table is an example of a possible distribution of VCF funds for FY 2025-26 to be considered by the Grant Committee:

VCF Allocation Breakdown	Amount	Percentage of VCF Allocation
Administrative Costs	\$70,000	17%
Direct Service Grants	\$230,000	58%
Scholarship Grants	\$100,000	25%
Total:	\$400,000	100%

In the previous fiscal year, the Grant Committee approved a breakdown of the VCF allocation as follows: 70% for Direct Service Grants; and 13% for Scholarship Grants.

Grantmaking Focus

In addition to determining the distribution of VCF funds, staff also seek the Grant Committee's guidance on its preferred focus area(s) for grantmaking. Through the years, the VCF has awarded various organizations with grants that target healthcare, minority advocacy, education, youth recreation, elder care and services, food insecurity, the arts, and more. Last fiscal year, the Grant Committee opted to target its grantmaking toward education and youth support, and food insecurity. Insights on this year's Grant Committee preferences and priorities would help channel funds in the most suitable direction(s).

FY 2025-26 Meeting Schedule

Regular meeting dates for the Grant Committee typically occur in May and November. Restructuring to two meetings per year has effectively simplified VCF grant program management. Staff recommend continuing with the bi-annual regular meeting schedule for FY 2025-26 and proposes that the Grant Committee's November 2025 meeting continue to be dedicated to the award of Direct Service Grants and its May 2026 meeting dedicated to the award of Scholarship Grants.

Conclusion

With the Council approved FY 2025-26 VCF allocation of \$400,000, staff will utilize the distribution percentages for Direct Service and Scholarship Grants determined by the Grant Committee. It continues to be the City's mission to align with grantmaker best practices and streamline internal operations. City staff will sustain efforts to maintain proportional administration activities and related costs and provide thorough and thoughtful recommendations to the VCF Grant Committee that maximize the City's support of the Vernon Area.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Attachments

None.