



Performance Audit of the Port of Los Angeles Community Investment Grant Program #24-005



Report

December 3, 2024



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Cover page shows images of past Community Investment Grants funded programs (from top left counter clockwise): Friends of Banning Park Museum - Victorian Christmas, San Pedro Art Association – 2021 Student Art Competition, and Los Angeles Sailing Foundation – Port of Los Angeles Harbor Cup

Background

The City of Los Angeles' Harbor Department, also known as the Port of Los Angeles (Port) has been conducting a Community Investment Grants Program (Grants Program) since formalizing a program in 2014. Prior to that, it had been providing sponsorship support for programs from the community, based on the Port's strategic objectives. The Grants Program expanded on its community support and formalized the process to include a transparent application and awards structure to reach more non-profits in the community. It is part of the Port's budget that utilizes the Port's Harbor Revenue Fund and is intended to increase the public's access and use of the coastal area managed by the Port. The Grants Program is managed by the Port's Director of Community Relations. Since 2014, the Program has provided nearly 300 grants with over \$9.3 Million. The intent of the Program is to partner with non-profit community groups by providing grants to support programs that comply with the California Tideland Public Trust Doctrine. The Grants Program has funded various programs and activities including:

- Navigation of the Waters
- Maritime Commerce
- Fishing
- Marine Environment Ecological Preservation
- Marine-related Scientific Study
- Water-Related Recreation
- Visitor-Servicing Waterfront Activities

About this Audit

While the Community Investment Grants program is appreciated within the community, the full process of the Grants Program, from submitting applications, to award announcement, to payment is not a simple process for the non-profit grant applicants and can take several months before applicants know if and when funds will be granted. After the grants awards are selected by the Grants Selection Committee, the actual process to disburse funds to the recipients has been a burdensome administrative task for both the Port of Los Angeles and the non-profit organizations' staff. The purpose of the Performance Audit was to evaluate the Grants Program's policies and procedures, the management of the Grants Program, and provide recommendations for improvement to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Program.

Objectives

The overall objectives of this assessment were to evaluate the program's policies and procedures as they relate to outreach, awarding of grant funds, monitoring of awarded grant objectives, and any necessary reporting.

1. Review all policies and procedures relating to the Community Investment Grant program to ensure compliance throughout the grant award process;
2. Assess grant awardee's applications and management's evaluation processes to determine compliance with the California Tideland Public Trust Doctrine, and
3. Review the Community Investment Grant program applications and decision processes for consistency and equity in granting awards.

Scope

The scope of this audit included grant applications and grant awards from the past three fiscal years, including FY 2021-22, FY 2022-23, and FY 2023-24.

Methodology

To complete this performance audit, the consultants conducted the following steps:

- Conducted interviews and meetings with stakeholders. Stakeholders interviewed included all of the staff from the Community Relations unit that administered the Grants Program, the Grants Program selection committee, City Attorney staff, Risk Management staff, and several grantees.
- We reviewed historical documentation on the formation of the Grants Program as well as conducted a data and document review from the past three fiscal years of the program. We reviewed existing documentation for grants program for the FY 2021-22, FY 2022-23, and FY 2023-24.
- We conducted an online survey of grant applicants (both awarded and rejected applicants) for the past three fiscal years.
- We benchmarked the Port of Los Angeles' Grants Program with that of other port community grant programs from other ports in California including: Port of Long Beach, the Port of Oakland, the Port of San Diego, the Port of Hueneme, and the Port of Richmond.

What We Learned

Audit Results

Finding 1:

The Community Investment Grants program lacks sufficient written procedures.

Since it was formalized in 2014, the grants program has been primarily managed by the Port's Director of Community Relations. A general process was developed to solicit, evaluate, process, and award monies to community organizations. While the general background and process was documented in a "Policy Document," a comprehensive, step-by-step procedure has never been formally documented.

A comprehensive document provides specific, written procedures on executing the program with specific dates and/or expected timelines. They should be reviewed and concurred with by all relevant parties in the Port of Los Angeles to correctly describe the role, responsibility, and time required by all relevant units that participate in the Grants process. These should include, but not be limited to, Stakeholder Engagement, City Attorney, Risk Management, Finance, and Accounting. Such documentation should be consistent in form and content to those of the Port and the City of Los Angeles. The document should be used so that the process would allow anyone in the Community Relations unit to manage the process.

When the previous Director retired in 2023, there was limited written documentation of the procedures to facilitate a new manager's understanding of the grant program from solicitation to the final reporting. Division staff in Community Relations were aware of the general timeline and the major steps in the

program. Specifics as to individual responsibilities and necessary follow-up were not known to all. In particular, the document flow, i.e. the process of getting agreements to the grantees, was not clear. The consultant concluded that in one particular year, the issue was not identified until awarded grantees expressed concern about not receiving payment months after they had been notified of a grant award.

Recommendation:

1.1 *The Community Relations Department should develop a policies and procedures document to manage the Community Investment Grants program. The document should include expected timing for each step in the process, along with who is responsible for each step.*

1.2 *Ensure that the developed policies and procedures relating to the Community Investment Grants program meet each of the relevant Departmental policies and guidelines.*

Finding 2:

The review and processing of grant awards took significantly longer than what was initially represented to grant applicants.

The annual grant program’s timeline and the Port’s dissemination of information to the community, suggests that it will fund the activities for the grantee in a timely fashion, ideally prior to the occurrence of the awarded activity, but certainly within the upcoming fiscal year. However, as there is no official timeline or criteria for ensuring the timeliness of the process, the funds distribution process has been lengthy and inconsistent. Stakeholders interviewed, including grant committee selection members and Community Relation Division staff noted that each year they received complaints and inquiries regarding the payment of the grant funds over the fiscal years reviewed.

For each of the three grant years reviewed, applicants submitted grant applications in May, while the awarded grant payments were not released until sometime between October through June of the following year. Figure 1 below shows the actual timeline of the grants processes in FY 2020-21, FY 2021-22, and FY2022-23. The application process starts in March prior to the beginning of the upcoming fiscal year. Grant workshops are held to allow new grantees the opportunity to understand the process and ask questions. Completed applications are due in mid-May.

Applications are reviewed by a Selection Committee of six members that includes three Port of Los Angeles staff, two representatives from the local Chambers of Commerce, and a representative from the City of Los Angeles Council District 15. The Selection Committee meets in June and recommends grantees for selection to the Port of Los Angeles. The selected applications are reviewed by the City Attorney to determine compliance with the Tidelands Trust Nexus¹. Once approved, they are reviewed by the Risk Management division for insurance requirements and formal grant agreements are drafted.

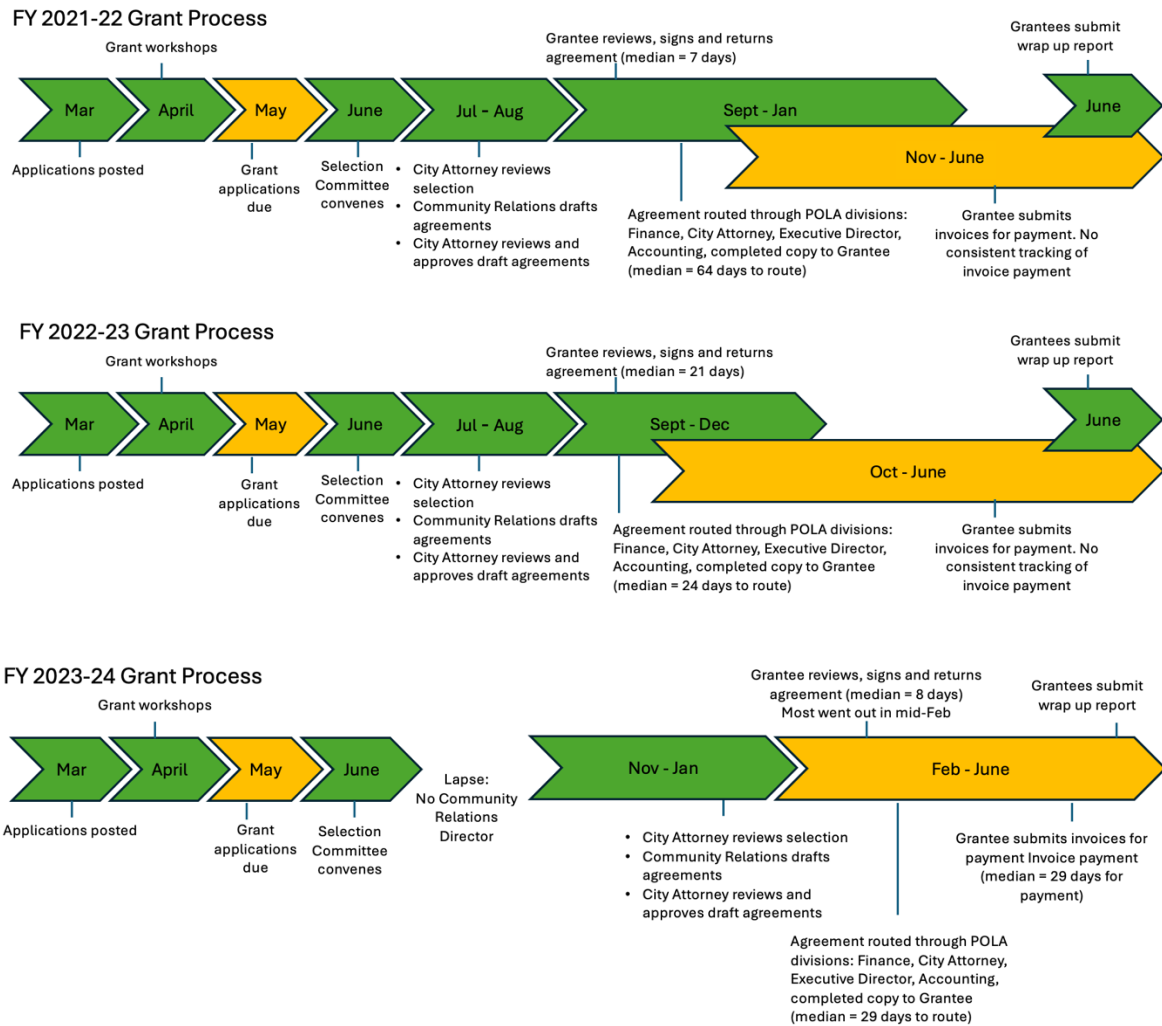
For two of the three years evaluated, the grantees were notified of their selection in September when they were sent grant agreements for signature. After receiving the signed grant agreements from the grantees, the internal routing process for Port of Los Angeles’ staff review and signatures took between

¹ The Tidelands Trust Nexus refers to a necessary relationship between a program/activity and the Tidelands Public Trust Doctrine, which the Harbor Department is responsible for upholding. Applications with programs or activities that are inconsistent with the Tidelands Trust cannot be funded by the Harbor.

28 to 67 days. Disbursement of funds are allowed after the fully executed agreement with all internal approvals and signatures are sent back to the grantee.

Exhibit 1

Timeline of the Grants Process for the Last Three Fiscal Years



To obtain funds, the grantee is required to submit an invoice for the grant amount. The invoice is processed and reviewed by Port of Los Angeles divisions to ensure that all administrative requirements have been met by the grantee. In FY2023-24, program staff monitored the payment process for such invoices and found that it took an average of 35 days for payment. Eighteen of the 36 grantees (50 percent) did not receive their funding payments prior to the end of the Fiscal Year on June 30, 2024 (over 15 months from applications submittal date).

Much of the current grant program is administered manually which results in a labor- and time- intensive process for Community Relations staff as well as other divisions (e.g., City Attorney, Risk Management, and Finance). Staff downloads the grant applications from emails to share with the Selection Committee

and City Attorney. Information from the applications is also manually collected from the applications, e.g., contact information, cost, scope of work, etc. to use for risk management review, draft agreements, and communicate with the grantees.

The large variance in processing times often results in grantees not receiving expected grant payments in a timely fashion. While larger grantees are often able to manage cash flow issues, many of the smaller grantees may be forced to cancel grant/programs or utilize other program funds to cover the expected grant income from the awarded program.

The grantee is also required to submit a wrap-up report by the close of the Fiscal Year on June 30th. It was noted that not all wrap-up reports were filed for FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23. The lack of wrap-up reports on file and documentation provided as to follow up on the grantees' non-compliance demonstrates a program deficiency but because of staffing changes, it could not be ascertained if the grantee did not submit a report as required by the agreement or if there was another reason for the lack of a wrap-up report. Except for three recipients, wrap-up reports for FY 2023-24 were submitted by all grantees who had received funds, despite some grantees receiving funds after the end of the fiscal year. Four of the grant awards for FY 2023-24 were cancelled by the grantee.

Recommendations:

2.1 *The Director of Community Relations should oversee and troubleshoot any problems to reduce payment timing as defined in the policies and procedures.*

2.2 *The Director of Community Relations should designate specific staff to regularly monitor the status of all the steps of the grant application and payment process steps in the grant process to ensure timely processing.*

2.3 *The Stakeholder Engagement Bureau should provide an electronic form for the grant application.*

Finding 3:

Rejected grant applicants whose activity does not meet the Tidelands Trust Nexus requirements are not notified of the specific reason for the rejection of their applications.

Utilization of Port revenues to sponsor community group's projects is subject to the Tideland Public Trust Doctrine. Applications that do not meet the Tidelands Trust Nexus are not eligible to receive Community Investment Grants program funding.

We conducted an online survey of all grant applicants for FY 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24, emailing a link to the survey to 106 grant applicant emails. The survey instrument is included in Appendix A. We received responses from 26 applicants (25% response rate). Of the 26 online surveys, only 50% of them agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the Tidelands Nexus Requirement. Stakeholder interviews suggested that grantees generally understood the requirements, with some exceptions.

The Port has not developed a process to provide a clear, specific response letter which would allow the applicant to address the Nexus shortfall in a future application. All rejected applicants receive a form letter stating that there were too many applicants for funding, even if their application was rejected for not meeting the Tidelands Nexus requirement or another reason. It has been noted that the Community Relations Director has been providing additional feedback upon request for further information.

Not providing those applicants official notification that there is a lack of a Tideland Nexus has led to over 50% of the survey respondents reported re-applying four or more times, many without any success. Eight out of 26 survey respondents (31%) reported applying multiple times with zero success. Two of the survey respondents commented that they could only speculate as to why they were rejected.

Recommendation:

3 The Director of Community Relations should identify types of causes that are controllable and provide specific feedback to prevent assumptions for rejections.

Finding 4 :

Insurance requirements are not clearly outlined in the application. It is only when selected and applicants are provided with a grant agreement that the full insurance requirements are presented to the grantee.

Any grant applicant that is awarded grant funds for an event on Port of Los Angeles property will be required to obtain additional insurance at a cost beyond that stated on the application instructions. The application states the minimum insurance requirements for indemnification only. Other specific requirements for additional insurance are not revealed until after the grant application has been submitted, the program is reviewed by Risk Management, and the grant agreement is issued. This can lead to significant additional and unexpected costs to the grantee. Insurance for the majority of the grantees generally included policies for General Liability, Auto Liability, and Workers' Compensation. If the event took place on water, included serving alcohol, or included picking up trash, it would additionally require Ocean Marine Liability, Liquor or Host Liquor Liability, and/or Pollution Liability.

For the 34 grantees for FY 2023-24, only eight (8) or 23.5% were required to carry indemnification only as described in the application. The majority of the grantees had to carry the general insurance requirements of General Liability, Auto Liability, and Worker's Compensation. In addition, 13 or 38.2% of the grantees were required to carry special insurance requirements for the Ocean Marine Liability, Liquor or Host Liquor Liability, and/or Pollution Liability. The insurance was required to be valid at the time of the invoice payment, even though 50% of the grantees with additional insurance requirements were held during a specified time period.

Each individual Community Investment Grant Program agreement carries a Port of Los Angeles vetted insurance requirement, often beyond that which is stated in the application documentation. The clause in the paragraph above only applies for events that are not held on Port of LA property. For events held on Port property, the Port has required insurance for General Liability, Auto, and Workers Compensation of \$1M each if on Port property and additional insurance for Water vessels, if relevant. This insurance requirement should be stated in the application.

In addition, the current grant agreement states that insurance is required for the duration of the grant agreement, rather than for coverage of the event itself. Risk Management would not need insurance coverage beyond that of the event, but yet because the signed grant agreements state that the coverage is needed for the duration of the grant agreement, the Port has required valid insurance coverage at the time of payment.

Recommendation:

4 *The Deputy Executive Director of the Stakeholder Engagement Bureau and the Director of Community Relations should specify minimum insurance requirements with the Director of Risk Management on required insurance coverage to place in the application information. Specific examples should be identified, and potential information requirements should be communicated to grantees at the application stage.*

Fieldwork Observations

In addition to the audit findings, we have included information that might be useful from our fieldwork on equity that could be used to improve the performance of the program.

Observation 1:

Community organizations may not realize that some applicants have already been allocated grant awards for multiple years. The annual announcement of the Community Investment Grants includes the total grant program amount including those amounts which already been determined. New applicants may believe there are more funds available and the Port may miss the opportunity to fund new grant programs. Consistently, over half of the grant awards were made to returning grant programs.

Grant fund announcements should distinguish between mention the multi-year Board-approved awards and state that this is included in the total grant budget for community grants.

In the three years evaluated, grant award announcements noted that there was \$1.0 Million or more available for the Community Investment Grants program; however, 19 of the grant awardees had been selected all three years evaluated for the performance audit for the same programs leaving only 8% to 33.2% of the grant funds to be available to new programs each year. While these programs have demonstrated their value to the Community and to the Port, there may be other organizations and programs that could also be of great value.

Observation 1 Recommendation:

The Stakeholder Engagement Bureau should promote funds available for new grantees, while still promoting their investment in existing repeat grants.

Observation 2:

More grant awards are given to organizations in San Pedro than in Wilmington. San Pedro received approximately half the grant allocations over the community of Wilmington, whose non-profit organizations received 10-15% of the grant allocations over the last three fiscal years.

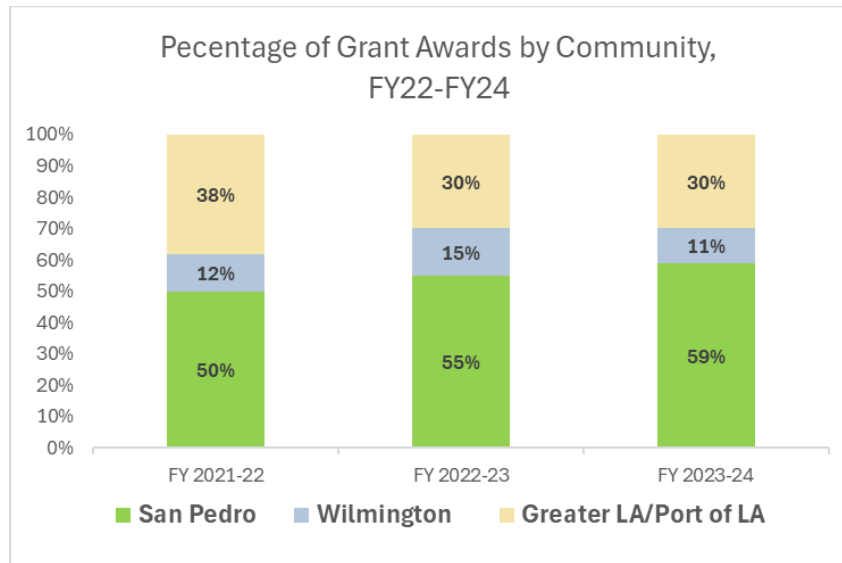
According to the Director of Community Relations, the involvement of the Chambers of Commerce from the neighborhoods of San Pedro and Wilmington was to ensure an equitable process between the two communities. Applications are divided between the two grant selection committees and grant awards are approximately split between the two groups. However, upon closer analysis of the grant applications and awards for FY 2020-21 through FY 2023-24, the pool of applications reviewed by the Wilmington team included grants received from the greater Los Angeles and surrounding area and often benefited the entire Port of Los Angeles area for both San Pedro and Wilmington. This meant that San Pedro grantees received half of the grant awards while Wilmington and other grantees received the other half. In reality, this results in the Wilmington community receiving a much smaller grant amount. Comparing the population of San Pedro to Wilmington, an equitable outcome of grant awards would be 3:2 ratio of San Pedro to Wilmington as shown in the exhibit below.

Exhibit 2:
Comparison of population of San Pedro and Wilmington

Community	Population (2022 US Census Est.)	Population Ratio
San Pedro	83556	61.3%
Wilmington	52698	38.7%

The current amounts of grants for each community in the past three fiscal years is demonstrated in Exhibit 3 below. While the number of applications for Wilmington non-profits have been less than the number of applicants from San Pedro, the current process has given approximately half the grant awards to San Pedro. The grants for the Greater LA/Port of LA are given to a non-profit organization that is in Los Angeles, but outside of San Pedro and Wilmington and tend to have programs that benefit both communities.

Exhibit 3



A more equitable grant selection process would be to have the San Pedro and Wilmington grant funds allocated at a ratio of 3:2 rather than the current process with allocates approximately half of the grant funds to Wilmington and Greater LA/Port of LA grantees and the other half to San Pedro grantees.

Observation 2 Recommendations:

- 1 To achieve greater equity in allocation, the Grants Selection Committee should seek to allocate grant funds to the communities of San Pedro to Wilmington based on its population and size at the ratio of 3:2.***

 - 2 The Director of Community Investment Grants should include the awardee community demographics when reporting out on awards each year.***
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APPENDIX A – CHART OF FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDING		RECOMMENDATION	RANKING
1) The Community Investment Grants program lacks sufficient written procedures.	1.1	The Community Relations Department should develop a policies and procedures document to manage the Community Investment Grants program. The document should include expected timing for each step in the process, along with who is responsible for each step.	High
	1.2	Ensure that the developed policies and procedures relating to the Community Investment Grants program meet each of the relevant Departmental policies and guidelines.	
2) The review and processing of grant awards took significantly longer than what was initially represented to grant applicants.	2.1	The Director of Community Relations should oversee and troubleshoot any problems to reduce payment timing as defined in the policies and procedures.	High
	2.2	The Director of Community Relations should designate specific staff to regularly monitor the status of all the steps of the grant application and payment process steps in the grant process to ensure timely processing.	
	2.3	The Stakeholder Engagement Bureau should provide an electronic form for the grant application.	
3) Rejected grant applicants whose activity does not meet the Tidelands Trust Nexus requirements are not notified of the specific reason for the rejection of their applications.	3	The Director of Community Relations should identify types of causes that are controllable and provide specific feedback to prevent assumptions for rejections.	Medium
4) Insurance requirements are not clearly outlined in the application. It is only when selected and applicants are provided with a grant agreement that the full insurance requirements are presented to the grantee.	4	The Deputy Executive Director of the Stakeholder Engagement Bureau and the Director of Community Relations should specify minimum insurance requirements with the Director of Risk Management on required insurance coverage to place in the application information. Specific examples should be identified, and potential information requirements should be communicated to grantees at the application stage.	Medium

Appendix B

Community Investment Grant Performance Audit Response

Finding 1:

The Community Investment Grants program lacks sufficient written procedures.

Recommendation:

1.1 The Community Relations Department should develop a policies and procedures document to manage the Community Investment Grants program. The document should include expected timing for each step in the process, along with who is responsible for each step.

1.2 Ensure that the developed policies and procedures relating to the Community Investment Grant program meet Departmental procurement and risk management policies and guidelines.

Response:

1.1 The Community Relations Division will update the existing policies and procedures document by providing a detailed schedule along with assigning staff specific responsibilities for the processing of the grants.

1.2 Community Relations Division agrees that the adopted policies and procedures will meet Departmental procurement and risk management policies and guidelines.

Finding 2:

The review and processing of grant awards took significantly longer than what was initially represented to grant applicants.

Recommendation:

2.1 The Director of Community Relations should oversee and troubleshoot any problems to reduce payment timing as defined in the policies and procedures.

2.2 The Director of Community Relations should designate specific staff to regularly monitor the status of all the steps of the grant application and payment process steps in the grant process to ensure timely processing.

2.3 The Stakeholder Engagement Bureau should provide an electronic form for the grant application.

Response:

2.1 The last grant cycle took significantly longer due to the departure of key staff; however, the Director of Community Relations and key administrative staff within the division continue to make a concerted effort to troubleshoot and work with staff to reduce the length of time to process and complete the payment of the grants.

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Community Investment Grant Performance Audit Response

2.2 During this last grant cycle, the Community Relations Division evaluated the various steps in processing grants and has taken steps to assign staff to manage and monitor them more diligently. A tracking system that is updated and reviewed regularly has been created to continue to move the grants through the process and allow for timely follow up with grant recipients. Additionally, we are adjusting the grant schedule to allow for timelier processing of the grants by reducing staffing conflicts with the community events schedule. Because of the multi-departmental processing of grants, we will convene key City Attorney, Risk Management, Budget, Contracts & Purchasing and Community Relations staff to explore efficiencies to improve the process flow.

2.3 An online form for the grant application and/or parts of the application process are currently being reviewed and will be implemented by the Community Relations Division should they demonstrate to efficiently the process the grant applications.

Finding 3:

Rejected grant applicants whose activity does not meet the Tidelands Trust Nexus requirements are not notified of the specific reason for the rejection of their applications.

Recommendation:

3 The Director of Community Relations should identify types of causes that are controllable and provide specific feedback to prevent assumptions for rejections.

Response:

3 The Director of Community Relations will make certain to explain more thoroughly the Tidelands Trust Nexus requirement during the application process as well as follow up individually with rejected applicants. Additionally, for applicants rejected although they do fulfil the Tidelands Trust Nexus, they too will have the receive feedback on the reason for the rejection.

Finding 4:

Insurance requirements are not clearly outlined in the application. It is only when selected and applicants are provided with a grant agreement that the full insurance requirements are presented to the grantee.

Recommendation:

4 The Deputy Executive Director of the Stakeholder Engagement Bureau and the Director of Community Relations should specify minimum insurance requirements with the Director of Risk Management on required insurance coverage to place in the application information. Specific examples should be identified, and potential information requirements should be communicated to grantees at the application stage.

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Response:

4 The Director of Community Relations will explain the insurance requirements in more detail during the application process. Additionally, the Community Relations Division will advise the successful applicant of Risk's insurance determination as soon as the Insurance Assessment Request form is returned to the Division, so the applicant can begin to work on securing their insurance needs as soon as possible.

Observation 1:

Community organizations may not realize that some applicants have already been allocated grant awards for multiple years. The annual announcement of the Community Investment Grants includes the total grant program amount including those amounts which already been determined. New applicants may believe there are more funds available, and the Port may miss the opportunity to fund new grant programs. Consistently, a significant portion of the grant awards were made to returning grant programs.

Recommendation:

1 The Stakeholder Engagement Bureau should promote funds available for new grantees, while still promoting their investment in existing repeat grants.

Response:

1 Community Relations will expand outreach and communication channels to promote the grant opportunities to a broader pool of applicants. Further, the Division will clarify the level of funding that is available any given grant cycle.

Observation 2:

More grant awards are given to organizations in San Pedro than in Wilmington. San Pedro organizations received approximately half the grant allocations, while Wilmington organizations received only 10-15% of the grant allocations over the last three fiscal years.

Recommendations:

2.1 To achieve greater equity in allocation, the Grants Selection Committee should seek to allocate grant funds to the communities of San Pedro to Wilmington based on its population and size at the ratio of 3:2.

2.2 The Director of Community Investment Grants Program should include the awardee city demographic when reporting out on awards each year.

Response:

2.1 Community Relations will improve tracking of awards and areas served to ensure the benefits of the grant program are equitably allocation across harbor communities. Outreach,

Appendix B

Community Investment Grant Performance Audit Response

education, and application support efforts will be enhanced in areas historically underserved by the program.

2.2 As part of the review of the Community Investment Grant Program, the Community Relations Division has added a request for demographic information to the Wrap Up Report, which will permit the Department to have a better understanding of who this funding is benefiting. This information will be included in the report out of the grant program.



Introduction

Arroyo Associates, Inc. is partnering with the Port of Los Angeles to conduct a performance audit of the Port's Community Investment Grants Program. We are looking to improve the process of the Grants program for both the Port and its grantees and would appreciate your thoughts and opinions to improve the program.

Your name and organization information will not be shared with the Port of LA or included in any public document. It will not be used to determine future grant awards.

* 1. What is your name?

* 2. What is the name of the organization you are representing?

3. How many years has your organization **applied** for a Port of Los Angeles' Community Investment Grant?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 or more

4. How many years has your organization been **awarded** a Port of Los Angeles' Community Investment Grant?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4+

5. Was your organization awarded a Community Investment Grant during FY 2023-24?

- Yes
- No

6. Does your organization utilize other grant programs (not from the Port of Los Angeles) for funding of your programs?

- Yes
- No

7. How did you hear about the Port of Los Angeles' Community Investment Grants Program?
(Check all that apply)

- Our organization has previously applied.
- I heard about it through Port of Los Angeles' media (email, website, social media, etc.).
- I heard about it through the local Chamber of Commerce.
- I found it through an online search of grants programs.
- I heard about it from a personal contact.
- Other (please specify)

8. Have you ever attended and/or listened to the grant workshop presented by the Port of Los Angeles prior to applying submitting an application?

- Yes, attended online.
- Yes, listen to the recording online.
- No.

9. On a scale of 1-5, rate the following statement: The application form was easy to understand and complete.

- 1. Strongly agree
- 2. Agree
- 3. Neither agree nor disagree
- 4. Disagree
- 5. Strongly disagree

10. On a scale of 1-5, rate the following statement: The requirements of the Tideland Nexus Statement was clear in the application process.

- 1. Strongly agree
- 2. Agree
- 3. Neither agree nor disagree
- 4. Disagree
- 5. Strongly disagree

11. On a scale of 1-5, rate the following statement: I completely understood the Port of Los Angeles' requirements (insurance, business license, invoicing, and wrap-up report) from the application information.

- 1. Strongly agree
- 2. Agree
- 3. Neither agree nor disagree
- 4. Disagree
- 5. Strongly disagree

12. Do you have any suggestions about the **application process** that you would like us to know?

13. On a scale of 1-5, rate the following statement: The Port of Los Angeles communicated well about the process of getting an agreement in place to receive grant funding.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

14. On a scale of 1 - 5, meeting the Port of Los Angeles' agreement requirements (insurance, business license, invoicing, and wrap-up report) was challenging for our organization.

- 1. Strongly agree
- 2. Agree
- 3. Neither agree nor disagree
- 4. Disagree
- 5. Strongly disagree

15. Did your experience with the Port of Los Angeles' Community Investment Grants program make your organization hesitant to apply for future grants?

- Yes
- No

16. If you could change anything about the Port of Los Angeles' Community Investment Grants Program, what would it be?

17. Would you be willing to be contacted to provide more information to the consultants? If so, please provide your email address in the space below:

Appendix D
Summary of Survey Results

Survey was received by 106 grant applicants from FY 2021-22, FY 2022-23, and FY 2023-24 and open from July 11, 2024 – July 20, 2024.

Q3: How many years has your organization applied for a Port of Los Angeles' Community Investment Grant?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1	7.69%	2
2	26.92%	7
3	11.54%	3
4 or more	53.85%	14
TOTAL		26

Q4: How many years has your organization been awarded a Port of Los Angeles' Community Investment Grant?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0	30.77%	8
1	7.69%	2
2	15.38%	4
3	3.85%	1
4+	42.31%	11
TOTAL		26

Q5: Was your organization awarded a Community Investment Grant during FY 2023-24?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	53.85%	14
No	46.15%	12
TOTAL		26

Q6: Does your organization utilize other grant programs (not from the Port of Los Angeles) for funding of your programs?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	80.77%	21
No	19.23%	5
TOTAL		26

Q7: How did you hear about the Port of Los Angeles' Community Investment Grants Program? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Our organization has previously applied.	80.77%	21
I heard about it through Port of Los Angeles' media (email, website, social media, etc.).	42.31%	11
I heard about it through the local Chamber of Commerce.	15.38%	4
I found it through an online search of grants programs.	7.69%	2
I heard about it from a personal contact.	50.00%	13
Other (please specify)	11.54%	3
TOTAL		54

Q8: Have you ever attended and/or listened to the grant workshop presented by the Port of Los Angeles prior to applying submitting an application?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, attended online.	53.85%	14
Yes, listen to the recording online.	7.69%	2
No.	38.46%	10
TOTAL		26

Q9: On a scale of 1-5, rate the following statement: The application form was easy to understand and complete.

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1. Strongly agree	42.31%	11
2. Agree	46.15%	12
3. Neither agree nor disagree	7.69%	2
4. Disagree	3.85%	1
5. Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		26

Q10: On a scale of 1-5, rate the following statement: The requirements of the Tideland Nexus Statement was clear in the application process.

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1. Strongly agree	19.23%	5
2. Agree	30.77%	8
3. Neither agree nor disagree	34.62%	9
4. Disagree	15.38%	4
5. Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		26

Q11: On a scale of 1-5, rate the following statement: I completely understood the Port of Los Angeles' requirements (insurance, business license, invoicing, and wrap-up report) from the application information.

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1. Strongly agree	30.77%	8
2. Agree	53.85%	14
3. Neither agree nor disagree	11.54%	3
4. Disagree	3.85%	1
5. Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		26

Q13: On a scale of 1-5, rate the following statement: The Port of Los Angeles communicated well about the process of getting an agreement in place to receive grant funding.

Answered: 25 Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	28.00%	7
Agree	20.00%	5
Neither agree nor disagree	20.00%	5
Disagree	16.00%	4
Strongly disagree	16.00%	4
TOTAL		25

Q14: On a scale of 1 - 5, meeting the Port of Los Angeles' agreement requirements (insurance, business license, invoicing, and wrap-up report) was challenging for our organization.

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1. Strongly agree	11.54%	3
2. Agree	0.00%	0
3. Neither agree nor disagree	26.92%	7
4. Disagree	50.00%	13
5. Strongly disagree	11.54%	3
TOTAL		26

Q15: Did your experience with the Port of Los Angeles' Community Investment Grants program make your organization hesitant to apply for future grants?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	26.92%	7
No	73.08%	19
TOTAL		26

Q16: If you could change anything about the Port of Los Angeles' Community Investment Grants Program, what would it be? (Edited Selection)

- *Much faster timeline between grant award decision and grant payments. The time it currently takes from award decision until grant payment is often 10, 12, or more months. This is way too long - not even other state and federal government agencies take so long. Such delays negatively impact grantees, forcing them to find alternative means of managing cashflow, complicating their accounting and IRS filings (lots of accounts receivable/delayed revenue), and functionally means they have less financial resources to pursue their missions on a very on-the-ground practical basis. Support is certainly appreciated, but it leads others (*not us) to question the sincerity of the Port's efforts to support the community, when the bar to secure such support is so high and onerous.*
- *I feel as though the Grant Applications should be due earlier in the year, perhaps January. That way selection and paperwork can be done and finalized before the start of the grant period. For a grant awarded for use July 2023-June 2024 not to be announced till Aug, Sept 2023 and not awarded till April/May 2024 is especially challenging for smaller organizations that rely heavily upon the grant.*
- *I would like to see the Port expand their giving to include more permanent impacts such as landscaping, beautification, building preservation and reuse of historical assets, port Exploratorium (like in San Francisco), a gondola that goes across the port (like in London). These are all so doable. It would be great if the Port could partner with the port cities and really see the history of Wilmington as a major tourist attraction.*
- *Knowing specifically why a grant submission did not meet the approval process, so the organization can determine whether or not to continue applying in the future. Grant writing is a detailed process that consumes ample time to prepare.*
- *Implementing an increase in the size of the grants due to increased costs.*
- *It seems several of the larger grant applicants, who have the advantage of full or part time grant writers on staff, seem to get large grants every year, can make it seem like a smaller applicant is being crowded out. We don't have "sour grapes" but this can become discouraging for a smaller grant applicant.*
- *The process for determining if we would get the grant took many months longer than expected. We were surprised to not receive anything.*
- *More communication with perspective, nonprofit organization seeking funds instead of only figuring it out on our own. More guidance would've been helpful or appreciated.*

- *We had to wait almost an entire year for the funding, which meant we have to be able to fund the events/programs ourselves and then get reimbursed.*
- *Processing was disorganized. Seems like it was delayed for many months from when it was supposed to be processed. The feeling is that the focus only on the biggest companies, not the small nonprofits.*
- *It would be helpful to receive grant award or decline notifications within 2-3 months of the application deadline.*
- *I would suggest designating a sponsorship vs. grants process, solicitation of open grant application with deadlines & timelines, and having a contact person for questions on the application process.*
- *Having a more well-defined geographic area. Many organizations in Downtown Long Beach are involved with promoting the cities of San Pedro and Wilmington and focusing on areas served sometimes is more impactful than awarding based on physical location.*
- *A pathway for added support of a great program in LA Harbor.*