



## OMAHA CITY COUNCIL

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July 1, 2024

Clerk of the Legislature  
Mr. Brandon Metzler, Clerk  
State Capitol, Room 2018  
P.O. Box 94604  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Dear Mr. Metzler,

Enclosed, please find the reporting for the 2021-2022 South Omaha Turnback Tax Grant as required by Nebraska Revised Statute 13-2610:

- i. A description of the projects funded during the most recently completed calendar year – p. 2
- ii. A description of where such projects were located – p. 2
- iii. A description of the outcomes of such projects – pp. 2 – 6
- iv. A ten-year strategic plan on how the committee plans to meet the goals described in subdivision (3)(a) of §13-2610 – pp. 6 – 8

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns. Committee members can be reached via phone at 402-444-5547 or email [sarah.lara-toney@cityofomaha.org](mailto:sarah.lara-toney@cityofomaha.org).

Sincerely,

Ron Hug  
Grant Committee

Roger Garcia  
Grant Committee

Victor Baez  
Grant Committee

Sarah Dragon  
Grant Committee

## South Omaha Turnback Tax Grant Strategic Plan: 2022-2032

### I. Purpose

The strategic plan will ensure that the South Omaha Turnback Tax Grant Committee can continue to manage Turnback Tax Grant application and awards in a sustainable way. It provides a framework for sustainability by describing the South Omaha Turnback Tax Grant Committee's approach, roles and responsibilities, and reporting practices. This sustainability plan will support the Committee's commitment to reviewing grant applications and making awards to nonprofit organizations and small businesses in the South Omaha Community.

Per the revised Nebraska Convention Center Facility Financing Assistance Act (the Act), ten percent (10%) of the funds received by the City of Omaha in "Turnback tax" from the State each year will be distributed to areas with a high concentration of poverty. Those funds are to be used to showcase important historical aspects of those areas or to assist with the reduction of street or gang violence in the target areas, or assist with small business and entrepreneurship in such areas.

### II. Roles and Responsibilities

The South Omaha Turnback Tax Grant Committee is responsible for soliciting, reviewing, and awarding grant applications and reports on an annual basis.

The committee consists of four (4) voting members and one (1) non-voting member:

1. The member of the city council whose district includes a majority of the census tracts which each contain a percentage of persons below the poverty line of greater than thirty (30) percent.
2. Councilman Ron Hug, District 4, was appointed to this role in September 2023 when he was sworn in to the City Council. The commissioner of the county whose district includes a majority of the census tracts which each contain a percentage of persons below the poverty line of greater than thirty (30) percent.  
Douglas County Commissioner Roger Garcia, representative of District 1 has filled this appointment since his election in 2021.
3. Two (2) residents of the area with high concentration of poverty, appointed by the aforementioned two members of the committee, shall be appointed for four (4) year terms. Resident Committee Members Victor Baez and Sarah Dragon were selected from a total of four (4) applicants residing within the target grant area.
4. The member of the Legislature whose district includes a majority of the census tracts which each contain a percentage of persons below the poverty line of greater than thirty (30) percent...shall be a nonvoting member of the committee.  
Working with the City Planning Department, census reports were reviewed to determine that Senator Tony Vargas, representative District 7, fills this nonvoting committee appointment.

Each committee member receives the following information:

1. General Information – a binder given to the member upon his/her appointment to the committee, includes target area map, the Act, applicants and award recipients from the

- previous two years, annual timeline of events, and other miscellaneous general grant information. This binder is updated periodically as new information is received.
2. Grant Applications – once the period has closed, all applications are tabbed in alphabetical order for committee members to review prior to the decision meetings.

Committee members review all applications prior to the public meeting/s to make award decisions. At the meeting/s, each member takes it in turn to summarize an application and requested amount, after which, the full committee has a discussion regarding potential award amount, including questioning the applicant as necessary. Grant awards may go through several rounds before being finalized based on the total amount available to award.

### III. 2022-2023 Approach

As outlined in the Act, each area with a high concentration of poverty – North Omaha and South Omaha, respectively – shall establish a development fund and form a committee which shall identify and research potential projects to be completed in the area with a high concentration of poverty or in an area within close geographic proximity if the project would have a significant impact on the area itself.

In the most recent funding cycle of 2022-2023, once the Grant Committee was in place, public notice was provided on September 9, 2022, that the 2022-2023 South Omaha Turnback Tax Grant Applications would be accepted September 22, 2022, through November 3, 2022. Public meetings were held on September 9, 2022, to open the application period, and again on November 14, 2022, and November 30, 2022, to review applications and make award determinations. Award letters were mailed and a press release issued on December 9, 2022, announcing fifteen recipients were awarded a total of \$42,350.

After consulting with Legal, the committee chose to re-open the application from March 9, 2023 through April 6, 2023, to solicit applications for Small Business/Entrepreneurship Support, as no applications had been received during the initial application period. Public meetings were held on March 9, 2023, to open the application cycle, and on April 20, 2023, to review applications and make award determinations. Award letters and a press release were issued on April 24, 2023, to announce eight small business had been award a total of \$36,000.

Funded organizations are required to submit a grant report describing how the award was spent, along with receipts, in November of the funded year.

Final reports submitted by 2022-2023 grant recipients are available electronically via Google Drive: <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1GQnMtlG4g3NJjGwBJ5trjUNW4-sfK7E>

#### **Bannisters Leadership Academy | Y2M Youth to Movement Employment Program**

*Reduction of street or gang violence in South Omaha*

Stipends were provided to participants enrolled in the Y2M Youth to Movement Employment Program. Youth received work experience leading to permanent employment, exposure to business professionals, paid weekly stipends for work, and supplemental programming support.

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands | Community Based Mentoring in South Omaha**

*Reduction of street or gang violence in South Omaha*

Mentors are recruited, screened, and trained before being matched with youth in South Omaha. Program participants have reduced engagement in behavior, increased academic performance, and strengthened social-emotional outcomes.

**Boys Town South Omaha | Common Sense Parenting, Café Sessions, “What Every Parent Should Know”**

*Reduction of street or gang violence in South Omaha*

“What Every Parent Should Know,” is a shortened version of Boys Town’s Common Sense Parenting classes that assist parents with easy to learn techniques addressing issues of communication, decision-making, relationships, self-control, and success, all of which support the development of healthy family relationships.

**City Sprouts, Inc. | South Urban Farming Internship Program**

*Reduction of street or gang violence in South Omaha*

Student interns gain knowledge of sustainable farming practices, financial literacy, and development of workforce skills. Youth learn leadership skills through the development and execution of a summer gardening program, building relationships with volunteers, community gardeners, donors, and other urban farmers.

**Dulces Sonrisas Daycare | Daycare Improvement Project**

*Small business and entrepreneurship growth in South Omaha*

Business was able to hire a part-time teacher, install a security system, maintain concrete in front of the business, and procure general equipment and supplies needed for daily operations.

**El Museo Latino | History and Architecture of South Omaha**

*Highlights important historical aspects of South Omaha; Reduction of street or gang violence in South Omaha*

Funds were used to research, develop, create, and present exhibitions in 2023 which highlighted the history, culture, and the architectural styles present on select historical buildings in South Omaha. Educational community programming provided an opportunity for visitors to engage in the learning about the historic elements, with exhibitions becoming part of the permanent collection of the Museum.

**Estetica Tammy’s, LLC | Remodeling**

*Small business and entrepreneurship growth in South Omaha*

Business was able to update store front signage, secure new advertising options, purchase new chairs and stylist equipment, and training for the owner and staff.

**Girls Incorporated of Omaha | Success Prep College and Job Training for Teen Girls**

*Reduction of street or gang violence in South Omaha*

Success Prep prepares participants for college and future careers, providing them with knowledge and skills to set them up for success. Externships provide real-world work experience and connections to help identify areas of interest, develop a work ethic, and form mentoring relationships while earning wages.

**Gomez Heritage Elementary PTO | Unity Field Beautification**

*Reduction of street or gang violence in South Omaha; Small Business and entrepreneurship growth in South Omaha*

Unity Field is utilized by the 750 students attending Gomez Elementary School, as well as children in the neighborhood, and students from Spring Lake Elementary while that campus was under construction. The field was updated with additional seating, damaged items were repaired, and equipment was purchased for field maintenance.

**Heartland Hope Mission | Hunger and Homelessness Prevention**

*Reduction of street or gang violence in South Omaha*

Client Service Specialists provided food, clothing, diapers, hygiene items, and services to individuals/families in the community, allowing clients to make progress toward food security and financial stability, decreasing the likelihood of experiencing homelessness or having utilities turned off.

**Home Care Advantage | Caregiver Retention & Hiring Project**

*Small business and entrepreneurship growth in South Omaha*

Business was able to recruit new and retain existing workforce through the use of updated marketing materials at community events and offering retention bonuses to current staff, as well as provide updated training materials and website content.

**JME Design Solutions | Machinery Updates**

*Small business and entrepreneurship growth in South Omaha*

Business was able to purchase machinery that increases productivity and efficiency responding to client requests. Updated computer systems and equipment will allow staff to work with larger image files, while a larger CNC machine provides the ability to work at larger scales or generate multiple copies of a design.

**Latino Center of the Midlands | Summer 2023 Leadership Development: Raices Retreat & Arts Workshop**

*Reduction of street or gang violence in South Omaha*

The Raices Retreat and Arts Workshop are part of the larger Pathways to Success support system which serves the whole family. Students are taught skills to overcome truancy rates and increase academic success, while parents and caregivers are provided with referrals to community and educational resources which assist them in building healthy, positive relationships with their children.

**Midwest Health Insurance Solutions | Growth and Expansion**

*Small business and entrepreneurship growth in South Omaha*

Business used funds to hire an additional two staff members, allowing the owner to expand and provide services to minorities in communities which typically lack access to and understanding of health care coverage options.

### **Miguel Keith Project | Miguel Keith Memorial**

*Highlights important historical aspects of South Omaha*

The Foundation was able to restore lettering on the monument that was removed during graffiti abatement by the City, restore the Yellow Ribbon sidewalk, and added a silhouette of the USS Miguel Keith. The restoration of the park helps to rejuvenate the neighborhood, with schools and daycares increasing their use of the space for youth activities during the day.

### **Next Generation Child Care & Preschool | Next Generation Now Project**

*Small business and entrepreneurship growth in South Omaha*

Business used funds to assist with personnel expenses including payroll, and purchase equipment required for daily administrative and programmatic operations, and marketing materials to advertise a second daycare location.

### **Police Athletics for Community Engagement | 2023 Volleyball Program and Field Maintenance**

*Reduction of street or gang violence in South Omaha*

PACE was able to provide volleyball jerseys, equipment, shirts, and medals for participants in the 2023 volleyball program, as well as make repairs and improvements to the sports field which served approximately 3,000 participants in the free soccer, micro, and girls soccer leagues, baseball, flag football, volleyball, trail biking, and CrossFit Health and Wellness classes which are offered to the community.

### **Grupo de Danza Raices de Mexico | Familias con Cultura**

*Highlights important historical aspects of South Omaha; Reduction of street or gang violence in South Omaha; Small Business and entrepreneurship growth in South Omaha*

Raices de Mexico provides students of all levels with dance classes and the opportunity to develop mentally, physically, and culturally. Dance classes are offered at the South Omaha studio, with the organization covering costs associated with performances, including dressing, accessory, and make-up for participants.

### **South Omaha Neighborhood Alliance | The Alebrije Mural**

*Highlights important historical aspects of South Omaha; Small business and entrepreneurship growth in South Omaha*

SONA worked with a team of artists to paint a mural on the façade of the historic Holmes Adkins building depicting the Alebrije, the Aztec people who originally the symbolic creatures combining two living animals. The paintwork is in the mosaic style to match the landscaping and design of other artwork in the neighborhood.

### **SOVACC-GI Forum | Outdoor Restroom**

*Highlights important historical aspects of South Omaha; Reduction of street or gang violence in South Omaha; Small business and entrepreneurship growth in South Omaha*

By building an outdoor restroom, the Forum is able to provide an essential service to the pavilion area which increases its viability as an outdoor venue for community and private events. The Forum reinvests money earned from events into the scholarship fund offered to local students, which in turn promotes increased academic performance by community youth.

**Southside Barbers & Beauty | Southside Improvement Project**

*Small business and entrepreneurship growth in South Omaha*

Business was able to host a “Free Haircut” Day for local youth at South High School and surrounding elementary schools; procure additional trashcans to the area including the rear parking lot to promote a clean neighborhood; and add lighting to areas surrounding the exterior of the building for increased safety and access at night.

**Sunny Days Vending | Operating Expenses**

*Small business and entrepreneurship in South Omaha*

Business used funds to pay for advertising, restock inventory, and place a new vending machine in a local business.

**Victory Boxing Club | Victory Boxing Club & Community Center Youth Program**

*Reduction of street or gang violence in South Omaha*

VBCCC sponsored ten youth, including registration and tournament attire, with grant funds. They were also able to provide new boxing equipment and pay for travel expenses to three boxing tournaments for youth and coaches.

IV. 2023 - 2024 Approach

The 2023 – 2024 Grant Cycle timeline is included below:

- September 28 - public hearing to open grant application
- September 28 - November 9 -- grant applications accepted
- November 13 - grants distributed to committee for application review
- November 30 - public hearing to review & award applications
- December 20 – second meeting to review and award applications (*meeting was delayed due to committee schedules*)
- December 29 - grant financials and award amounts delivered to finance for check processing (*ten days for processing and printing, either January 8, 2024 or January 22, 2024*)

V. Strategic Plan

A. Process

The grant period takes place September – December annually. The committee will hold an initial meeting in September to open the grant cycle, distribute applications, and answer questions from applicants. Applications will be accepted for a period of six (6) weeks, with the application being available online via the City and Douglas County website. The public will be made aware of the meeting and application availability via notice in The Daily Record, posted notices on the City and Douglas County websites, and an email to previous applicants.

In the 2024-2025 application cycle will run along the following timeline, in order to align with the North Turnback Tax Grant application cycle as well as ensure award checks are processed and distributed by the end of December 2024.

August 26, 2024 | Open 2024/25 Grant Application  
September 30 | Close 2024/25 Grant Application

October 4 | Applications uploaded to Google Drive for Committee review  
October 28 | Committee score sheets emailed to staff in advance of award meeting  
November 7 | Public Award Meeting  
November 14 | Second Public Award Meeting (as necessary)  
November 8/15 | | Press release announcing award recipients  
December 9 | Award checks ready for disbursement

Once the application period closes, the committee will have approximately one month to review applications individually before publicly meeting to review and make award decisions. Each meeting will be publicly noticed via The Daily Record, and the City and Douglas County websites, allowing applicants and the general public to attend and participate.

After the final meeting, recipient award amounts are delivered to the Finance Department, along with a copy of the application and W-9, for check processing. This takes approximately fifteen days, during which time award letters are processed and prepared for mailing upon receipt of checks from Finance.

Committee members will be (re)elected and (re)appointed in the following years, according to their election cycle and term limits:

- 2025 – Douglas County Commissioner, District 1; Resident Committee Members; Legislative Member
- 2025 – City Council, District 4 Councilmember
- 2029 – Douglas County Commissioner, District 1; Resident Committee Members; Legislative Member  
2029 – City Council District

Additionally, the Committee will conduct an annual review of any amendment to the Act.

B. Goals

A committee formed under subdivision (3)(b) of the Act shall solicit project ideas from the public and shall hold a public hearing in the area with a high concentration of poverty. The committee shall research potential projects and make the final determination regarding the annual distribution of funding to such projects. Short- and long-term goals shall include:

- the solicitation and review of such applications for funding;
- annual review of recipient award reports to ensure effectiveness of award and consistency with Act guidelines;
- review of short- and long-term goals as needed to meet community needs

C. 2022 – 2032 Action Plan

1. Seek community feedback regularly to assess and prioritize community needs
2. Ensure awards meet community needs by reviewing reports and maintaining regular communications with recipients



3. Annual review recipients to determine whether consecutive funding limit has been reached under subdivision (3)(f) of the Act, and if it has, determine whether project is eligible for continued funding based on the criteria listed under subdivision (3)(f)i-iii.
4. Include consecutive funding limit on spreadsheet for committee review
5. Provide committee with application summary for quick review at public meetings, including comprehensive spreadsheet and one-page summaries
6. Provide tracking of review spreadsheet to increase committee accountability and transparency
7. Update application to reflect required information, including signature by applicants of reporting deadlines
8. Begin solicitation of new resident committee members for 2025/26 funding cycle
  - a. Process will need to take place in the first quarter 2025 to ensure committee is in place and briefed on processes prior to application cycle opening
9. Ensure interpreter is present for all public meetings
  - a. Schedule once timeline is approved by the committee
10. Ensure all materials – application, W-9, public notices, press releases – are available in Spanish and English
11. Schedule Finance Dept. to be present at public meetings to assist with W-9 completion to avoid delays at award processing.