

June 30, 2023

Patrick J. O'Donnell
Clerk of the Legislature
Room 2028
Nebraska State Capitol
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Dear Mr. O'Donnell,

Attached, please find the report submitted by the "North Omaha 'Turnback Tax' Grant Committee," in fulfillment of the annual reporting requirements outlined in Neb. Rev. Stat. §13-2610. This report includes: (i) A description of the projects that were funded during the most recently completed calendar year; (ii) A description of where such projects were located; (iii) A description of the outcomes of such projects; and (iv) A ten-year strategic plan.

Sincerely,

The North Omaha Turnback Tax Grant Committee

Commissioner Chris Rodgers
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Councilwoman Juanita Johnson
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*This document submitted electronically via Agency Submission Report form at
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/agencies/index.php>*

**North Omaha Turnback Tax Grant
2023 Report**

2021-22 Award Summary

African American Empowerment Network

\$9,000 awarded to support the 2022 *Christmas in the Village*, an event celebrating arts and culture.
2401 Lake Street, Ste. 110, Omaha, NE

BeAmbi & Company

\$5,000 awarded for equipment and supplies in a physical space to facilitate community passion projects for aspiring creatives.
5419 NW Radial Highway, Omaha, NE

Black Men United

\$5,000 awarded to support local activities related to a sister cities partnership with Accra, Ghana.
4200 N 30th Street, Omaha, NE

Black Votes Matter/ 4.Urban.org

\$5,000 awarded to support North Omaha tours designed to increase tourism, and cultural and historical understanding.
2422 Lake Street, Omaha, NE

Center for Holistic Development

\$10,000 awarded to provide cultural experiences for youth and families participating in the *Urban Youth BOLT* program.
6659 Sorensen Parkway, Omaha, NE

Completely KIDS

\$5,000 awarded to provide children and family academic and enrichment programming in partnership with The Salvation Army.
2566 St. Mary's Avenue, Omaha, NE

Culxr House

\$10,000 awarded to support cultural economics programming for North Omaha artists and entrepreneurs.
3014 N 24th Street, Omaha, NE

Elite Hustle Trucking Co.

\$10,000 awarded to support costs associated with entry into the trucking and logistics industry.
5229 Crown Point Ave, Omaha, NE

Freedomtainment

\$20,000 awarded to support Freedom Festival 2022: A Celebration of Juneteenth.
5829 Northampton Boulevard, Omaha, NE

Great Plains Black History Museum

\$10,000 awarded to support the Museum's 2022 Community Exhibits and Presentations.
2221 N 24th Street, Omaha, NE

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2021-22 Award Summary (continued)

Johnny T's Bar and Grill (Norma Ruth's Restaurant)

\$10,000 awarded to support the renovation of a former car service building in the historic 24th street corridor into a full service restaurant.
3825 N 30th Street, Omaha, NE

Juneteenth Nebraska

\$5,000 awarded to support 2022 Juneteenth activities, including a N. 24th Street Festival, in partnership with Freedomtainment.
3818 N 22nd Avenue, Omaha, NE

Metro Area Youth Services (MAYS)

\$11,000 awarded to support *Hood to the Wood*, which provides an opportunity for youth to learn to work together in adverse situations on a week-long outdoor adventure trip.
5020 Grand Avenue, Omaha, NE

Native Omaha Days Organizing Committee (Omaha Economic Development Corporation)

\$22,000 awarded to resolve debts and costs related to the 2021 Native Omaha Days Festival.
2221 N 24th Street, Omaha, NE

Parker Youth Inc.

\$10,000 awarded to support *Another Option* program, providing wrestling, mentoring, counseling, and educational direct to youth.
3034 Sprague Street, Omaha, NE

Police Athletics for Community Engagement (PACE)

\$5,000 awarded to support of the *North Omaha Baseball Prevention Program* at Miller and Kountze Parks.
5105 S 37th Street, Omaha, NE

RISE Academy

\$5,000 awarded to support the operational costs of the RISE Business Academy, which provides entrepreneurial training to formerly incarcerated Nebraskans.
3555 Farnam Street, Ste. 209, Omaha, NE

Union for Contemporary Art

\$15,000 awarded to support the Union's 2022 Exhibition and Performing Arts seasons.
2423 N 24th Street, Omaha, NE

UNTAMED

\$10,000 awarded to support Untamed Community Program, creating a safe and positive space to feed hot meals in the community.
4718 Kansas Avenue, Omaha, NE

24th Street Corridor Alliance*

\$10,000 awarded to support renovations to LeFlore's business.
1806 N 24th Street, Omaha, NE

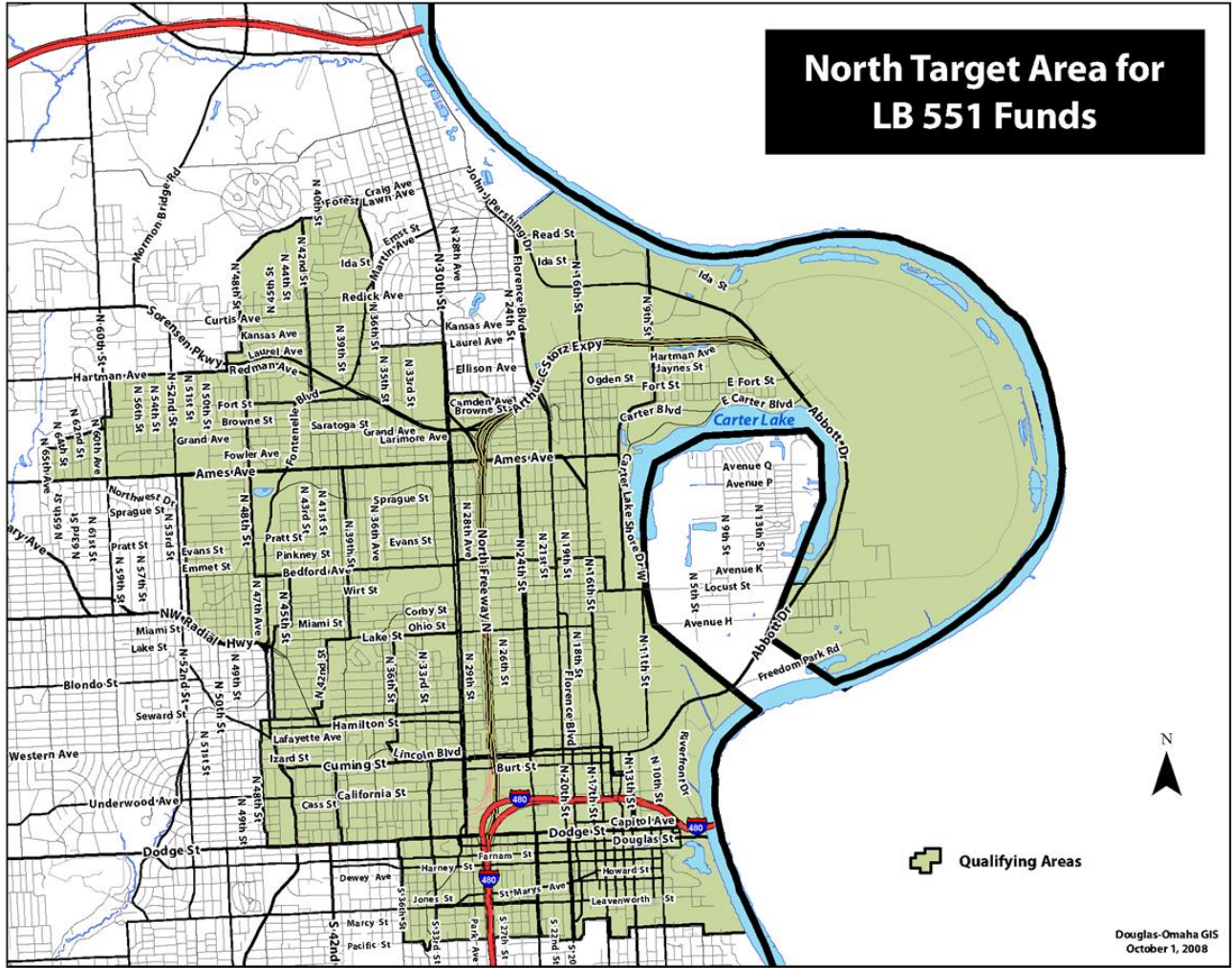
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2021-22 Award Summary (continued)

*This grant was not completed/expended as awarded and the grant amount was reallocated in the next (2022-23) grant cycle.

Note: Addresses listed are that of applicant organization, not necessarily where project activities took place. Funds are distributed to areas with a high concentration of poverty and recipients eligible for funding complete projects in the target area highlighted in the attached map on page 5.

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2021-22 Award Final Reports

Final reports submitted by 2021-22 grant recipients are available electronically via the following link:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Kuq-M3lqvzxw3uVyhUdbdi1_UXX_81kh?usp=sharing

North Omaha Turnback Tax Grant 2023 Report

Committee Strategic Plan

I. Purpose

Nebraska’s Convention Center Facility Financing Assistance Act provides that ten percent of the collected tax funds “turned back” to the City of Omaha from the State of Nebraska shall be equally distributed to areas with a high concentration of poverty. An “area with a high concentration of poverty,” is defined as an area within the corporate limits of a city of the metropolitan class consisting of one or more contiguous census tracts, as determined by the most recent federal decennial census, which contain a percentage of persons below the poverty line of greater than thirty percent, and all census tracts contiguous to such tract or tracts, as determined by the most recent federal decennial census. Census data designates two distinct geographic areas in Omaha that meet this definition: “North” and “South” regions, respectively. Per statute, each area shall establish a development fund and form a committee which shall identify and research potential projects to be completed in the target area and make final determinations on the use of the funds received for such projects. This document pertains specifically to the practices and strategies of the Turnback Tax Grant Committee serving the region in North Omaha.

Nebraska’s Convention Center Facility Financing Assistance Act further provides that funds shall be used for three purposes: to 1) showcase important historical aspects of an area with a high concentration of poverty, 2) assist with the reduction of street and gang violence in such areas, or 3) assist with small business and entrepreneurship growth in such areas.

The North Omaha Turnback Tax Grant Committee’s strategic plan documents the Committee’s practices, responsibilities, and planning to support its statutory charges and honor the purposes of the funds distributed in eligible areas in the community of North Omaha.

II. Roles and Responsibilities

The North Omaha Turnback Tax Grant Committee is responsible for soliciting, reviewing, and awarding grant applications and reports on an annual basis. Statute dictates the Committee’s membership to consist of four voting members and one non-voting member:

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A. 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 percent.

Councilmember Juanita Johnson, representative of District 2, has filled this appointment since her election to the City Council in 2021.

B. 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 percent.

Douglas County Commissioner Chris Rodgers, representative of District 3, has filled this appointment since his election to the County Board of Commissioners in 2005.

C. Two residents of the area with high concentration of poverty, appointed by the aforementioned two members of the committee, shall be appointed for four year terms.

Resident Committee Members were solicited in September 2021 and applications were accepted through October 12. Candidates were interviewed by committee members in a public meeting held on November 1, 2021. Ernest White and Rodney Johnson were selected to serve as resident members and public notice of the appointments was made November 12, 2021.

D. 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 percent.

Senator Terrell McKinney, representative of District 11, fills this nonvoting committee appointment.

Each member attends meetings of the North Omaha Turnback Tax Committee and participates in the review of grant applications, reports, and the planning and development of other activities and documents, as needed, in coordination with staff.

III. Historical Approach

Generally, the North Omaha Turnback Tax Committee prepares a grant application document to be released to the public in early fall, in conjunction with hosting a public hearing to solicit project ideas from the public. After applications have been received, committee members individually receive copies of each application for review and then gather as a group to make the final determination regarding the annual distribution of funding to such projects. Applicants are notified about their award status in

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winter and then staff process award payments for recipients. Recipients submit interim and final reports regarding their funded projects. Unique factors, including limitations to public gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic and the appointment of new members, have, on occasion, impacted the timeline of these annual activities.

Application documents have historically been submitted to the Committee in paper form and copies are divided and distributed in paper form to each committee member, while two sets of copies are retained for staff purposes. In 2023, grant applications were submitted online. Applicants completed fields in a web form and uploaded the completed grant application document and supporting documentation as attachments to the form. Applications were organized into a digital drive and Committee members received a direct link to the drive to review all materials submitted by applicants.

IV. 2023 – 2024 Approach

The committee has tentatively targeted August 28, 2023 to release the annual grant application and hold a public hearing. 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 recipients from the previous cycle. This hearing may be made available for virtual participation by members of the public.

Applications will be accepted until September 25, 2023 (tentatively). During that time, the application will be available online via the City and Douglas County websites.

Once the application period closes, the committee will review applications individually before publicly meeting on or about November 6, 2023 to review and make the final determination regarding the annual distribution of funding. This meeting will also be publicly noticed via *The Daily Record*, and the City and Douglas County websites and may be made available for virtual participation by members of the public.

After the final meeting, applicants will be contacted regarding the outcome of their application and official notice of award is anticipated to be issued by or during the week of December 11, 2023.

Recipient award amounts and applicant documentation will be provided to the City of Omaha's Finance Department for the preparation of award checks.

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This upcoming cycle the Committee is refining the content of the application, particularly in terms of gathering relevant information from small business applicants. The Committee is also taking steps to further move the application to a fully digital, web-based application form. The Committee is weighing considerations, including accessibility for prospective applicants, streamlined administrative activities and recordkeeping, and reduction of waste.

The volume of grant applications submitted to the North Omaha Turnback Tax Grant Committee has increased significantly in recent years (from 19 applications in 2020, to 37 in 2021, and 67 in 2022) and the Committee is examining processes to effectively and efficiently review applications and make awards. In particular, this year the Committee has discussed standardizing and clarifying application evaluation criteria to align with funding priorities and compliance with statutory eligibility. The Committee also continues to refine the reporting requirements of recipients in order to gather relevant detail regarding awarded project progress and outcomes.

V. Strategic Goals

The Committee 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. The Committee shall distribute appropriated funds in areas with a high concentration of poverty to showcase important historical aspects of such areas, to assist with the reduction of street and gang violence in such areas, and to assist with small business and entrepreneurship growth in such areas and shall observe statutorily dictated proportions of said funding distribution. The Committee shall ensure awards meet community needs by reviewing reports and maintaining regular communications with recipients and shall annually review recipients to determine whether consecutive funding limit has been reached and whether project is eligible for continued funding based on the statutory criteria. Additionally, the Committee shall conduct an annual review of any amendments to the Convention Center Facility Financing Assistance Act and Committee members shall be (re)elected and (re)appointed, according to their election cycle and term limits.