



AGENDA REPORT



TO: Honorable Mayor and
members of the City Council

FROM: Councilmember Kaplan
At-Large District

SUBJECT:
Accepting and Awarding State
Grant Funds and Entering into
Agreements with UnCommon
Law

DATE: February 15, 2024

RECOMMENDATION

Councilmember Kaplan recommends that the City Council adopt a

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING AND APPROPRIATING GRANT FUNDS IN AN AMOUNT UP TO \$1,000,000 TO BE AWARDED TO THE CITY OF OAKLAND FROM THE 2023-2024 CALIFORNIA STATE BUDGET AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE GRANT AGREEMENTS WITH UNCOMMON LAW IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$1,000,000.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Budget Act of 2023, an act making appropriations for the support of the government of the State of California and several public purposes by the provisions of Section 12 of Article IV of the Constitution of the State of California, relating to the state budget, awarded grant funds in an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000 to the City of Oakland (hereinafter the “City”) to allocate \$1,000,000 to UnCommon Law. This resolution authorizes the City Administrator to execute grant agreements with UnCommon Law, an organization providing pro bono legal representation to clients navigating California's parole process through trauma-informed legal representation, mental health counseling, legislative and policy advocacy, and in-prison programming, in an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

In 2019, the City, as part of the Budget Act of 2019, entered into grant agreements with the State of California, not exceeding \$4,000,000, to help fund UnCommon Law's work combating recidivism. According to a 2018 Bureau of Justice Statistics report, five out of six state prisoners were rearrested one or more times in the nine years following their release. In the Budget Act of 2019, California State Senator Nancy Skinner secured funds to support our formerly incarcerated residents with these services. California Assembly Bill No. 74 (Budget Act of 2019) awarded four million dollars to the City to prepare incarcerated people serving sentences of life with the possibility of parole for parole hearings with therapeutic counseling.

The 2019 Resolution stated that the City Council accepts appropriate funds awarded by the State for up to \$4,000,000 to UnCommon Law and that the City Administrator or designee is authorized to enter into grant agreements.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Accepting grant funds from the State of California and authorizing the City Administrator to enter into a grant agreement with UnCommon Law, to which UnCommon Law, as the grantee, can be strengthened through this grant agreement and render legal and mental health services free of charge.

FISCAL IMPACT

This resolution has no fiscal impact on the City's budget.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

This report did not require public outreach other than the posting of this report on the website.

COORDINATION

Because of this resolution, the At-Large office worked alongside the City's finance department to ensure no impact on the City's budget.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: This resolution has no impact on the City's budget.

Environmental: There is no environmental impact because of this resolution.

Social Equity: UnCommon Law focuses on legal services for individuals reentering society through the parole system. Historically, the mass incarceration of people has disproportionately impacted minority and poor communities. Resolutions, such as the one being proposed, help organizations such as UnCommon Law correct historical inequalities brought on by mass incarceration.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Councilmember Kaplan recommends that the City Council adopt a

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING AND APPROPRIATING GRANT FUNDS IN AN AMOUNT UP TO \$1,000,000 TO BE AWARDED TO THE CITY OF OAKLAND FROM THE 2023-2024 CALIFORNIA STATE BUDGET AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE GRANT AGREEMENTS WITH UNCOMMON LAW IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$1,000,000.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Michael Alvarenga, Legislative Analyst, at malvarenga@oaklandca.gov

Respectfully submitted,

Councilmember Kaplan
At-Large District

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