

Policy Briefing Summary

City Council



Regarding:	Resolution to approve a Funding Agreement for the "LEAP 2025-26 Solar Readiness Program", a Minor Amendment to the City's Annual Action Plan, in the amount of \$18,576.72 in Community Development Block Grant ("CDBG") Funds" (previously approved by Council)
Staff Contact(s):	Anthony Warn, Grants Analyst, Taylor Harvey-Ryan, Grants Program Manager
Presenter:	Anthony Warn, Grants Analyst
Date of Proposed Action:	April 20, 2026

Issue

The Local Energy Alliance Program ("LEAP") is requesting additional time to complete their Solar Readiness project, a CDBG-funded activity that was previously approved by City Council on June 17, 2024, as part of the city's 2024-25 Annual Action Plan (#R-24-084). LEAP subsequently experienced difficulties in the implementation of this activity, notably federal actions to delay or cancel solar energy projects at the national level.

LEAP now reports they have developed a plan that should allow them to complete their original Scope of Work, thereby providing critical home rehabilitation services to three to four income-eligible homeowners that will allow these homeowners to participate in a subsidized solar panel installation project offered by Dominion Energy.

Background / Rule

The City of Charlottesville engages as a 'participating jurisdiction' ("PJ") in the Community Development Block Grant ("CDBG") program offered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD") and in that role is the periodic recipient of federal funds to support eligible community development, affordable housing and planning activities as identified by HUD's Office of Community Planning & Development ("CPD").

HUD allows PJs up to five (5) years for the expenditure of CDBG funds but imposes certain timeliness of expenditure requirements on these funds. Approval of this funding agreement will support the city's work to continue to meet these requirements.

Analysis

During the 2024-25 program year, City Council awarded \$18,576.72 in CDBG funds to LEAP to support their Solar Readiness program to provide income-eligible homeowners with critical roof repairs and associated improvements, such as upgrading electrical systems and circuit breaker panels, to enable these homeowners to participate in a subsidized solar panel installation project offered by Dominion Energy, with completion anticipated on or before June 30, 2025.

As housing and other heating and other energy-related costs continue to rise, managing these costs is an important priority for many homeowners. These technologies, however, are often out of reach for many homeowners due to their costs of acquisition and installation, and this burden is especially high for homeowners with limited and/or fixed incomes. The city has committed to helping income-eligible homeowners take advantage of these technologies in several ways, including through providing financial support to nonprofit community groups like the Local Energy Alliance Project ("LEAP").

Approval of this extension agreement will provide LEAP with the additional time (8 months) needed to implement several critical homeowner rehabilitations projects which are currently in the pre-development stage.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact to the City. As the funds referenced here have already been appropriated by City Council on July 17, 2024, and are drawn from federal funds allocated to the City by HUD and, as such, do not draw from the City's General Fund, no adverse impacts to the City's budget are anticipated.

Approval of this funding agreement will support the City's work to address important community needs while at the same time supporting the City's continued eligibility to participate in the CDBG and HOME programs.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the approval of the funding agreement proposed here as it provides LEAP with an additional eight (8) months to complete this work.

Recommended Motion (if Applicable)

I move that Council approve the RESOLUTION now before us to approve the proposed funding agreement for the LEAP 2025-26 Solar Readiness Program as presented here before us today.

Attachments

1. RESOLUTION - LEAP CDBG Grant Agreement
2. LEAP 2025-26 CDBG Solar Readiness Funding Agreement