



STAFF REPORT
9/21/2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Kendra Reif, Community Development Director

PREPARED BY: Anahi Fernandez, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: Coachella Resident Engagement Academy

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council review the proposed 2027 Coachella Resident Engagement Academy (Academy) plan and provide staff with feedback.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Coachella General Plan identifies active community engagement as a high priority and includes implementation actions with a short-term timeframe of two to four years following General Plan adoption. The General Plan encourages the City to collaborate with partner agencies to create minimum protocols for community outreach and engagement processes for various types of municipal decisions so community members can easily learn about input opportunities and know how to best contribute in the City.

In 2023, the City implemented the Coachella Resident Engagement Academy, providing residents with an opportunity to learn about the City's decision-making process, functions, and operations. Through the program, residents learn about the importance of their contributions and the various opportunities available for continued involvement in the City.

Evaluation survey responses from last year's Academy indicated that the majority of participants reported a high level of knowledge about the City after completion of the program and a high likelihood of taking on a volunteer role after participating in the Academy. Previous Academy participants have gone on to participate, or are currently participating in City commissions, committees, and City Council, as well as remaining active participants in community events. The Academy has successfully educated Coachella residents about City operations, while encouraging continued civic engagement and leadership.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

Staff proposes to establish a 2027 Coachella Resident Engagement Academy to continue

implementation of the City's General Plan and provide Coachella residents with an opportunity to learn about the City's roles, responsibilities, functions, and decision-making processes. The goals and purpose of the Academy are as follows:

1. Inform the community about City government and the municipal decision-making process.
2. Provide residents with opportunities to participate and provide input.
3. Generate active citizens and promote civic leadership.

The Academy is proposed to commence on January 19, 2027, with a group of up to twenty-five (25) Coachella residents ages 16 and older. The program will include eight (8) weekly sessions. Outreach efforts are anticipated to begin in Fall 2026 through the City's social media platforms and flyer postings in both English and Spanish. The following Academy modules are proposed:

1. City Council and City Manager's Office
2. Engineering and Public Works
3. Utilities
4. Development Services
5. Economic Development and Finance
6. Public Safety
7. Coachella Business Corridor Transformation Plan
8. Graduation

City directors and managers will facilitate each module based on their respective areas of expertise. At the conclusion of the Academy, participants will take part in a closing ceremony and receive recognition for their participation. Participants who attend all eight (8) sessions will receive a \$250 stipend.

Staff seeks additional feedback and direction from the City Council regarding the proposed 2027 Coachella Resident Engagement Academy.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The provision of meals, shirts, recognitions, and stipends are included in the Fiscal Year 2026/2027 budget for the Development Services Department for a total of \$14,100. The program is designed to minimize the use of City resources and will be hosted in the conference rooms of the Coachella Library.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. General Plan Implementation Actions
2. 2027 Academy Application
3. 2026 Academy Survey Responses