



**STAFF REPORT**  
**6/28/2023**

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members  
**FROM:** Anahi Fernandez, Management Analyst  
**SUBJECT:** City of Coachella Resident Engagement Academy

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the City Council authorize establishment of a Resident Engagement Academy for the City of Coachella and provide staff feedback.

**BACKGROUND:**

The City of Coachella General Plan encourages active community engagement with City of Coachella residents as a “high priority” with a short implementation timeframe of 2 to 4 years after Plan adoption. The General Plan encourages the City to work with partner agencies to create minimum protocols for community outreach and engagement processes for different types of municipal decisions so community members can easily learn about input opportunities and know how to best contribute in the City.

In 2013, the City of Coachella participated in the “Coachella Civic Engagement Academy” (CCA), which was a conceptual product that resulted from a 1-year collaboration between the City and partner organizations working on the City’s General Plan Update. The CCA focused on developing a system of community empowerment in the City, while also bridging traditional gaps between community and government. Although the concept was not implemented, the main purpose of the CCA was to:

1. To create a space where community members can have an opportunity learn about decision-making processes, local government functions and operations, and their impact on the public’s health, and
2. To develop an avenue for the City of Coachella’s leadership to communicate its roles and functions and to raise an objective awareness of civic participation’s barriers.

**DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:**

The establishment of a Resident Engagement Academy in the City of Coachella is fundamental as it plays a key role in the implementation of the City’s General Plan and has been in the works for the past 10 years. The academy is set to be an interactive civic education program for Coachella

residents that will develop an avenue for the City to communicate its roles and functions and increase civic engagement in the City. The goals and purpose of the Resident Engagement Academy are as follows:

1. Inform the community regarding city government and the decision-making process
2. Provide residents with input opportunities
3. Teach residents how they can contribute to the City
4. Generate active citizens with a sense of belonging

The Resident Engagement Academy would be scheduled to start in the fall of 2023 with a group of up to 25 Coachella residents. Outreach would begin in the Summer through the City's social media platform and flier postings in both English and Spanish. The following Academy modules are proposed and were identified discussion between local nonprofit, county and local government entities:

1. History of Coachella
2. Parks and Recreation
3. Wastewater and Water Utilities
4. City Finances
5. Land Use Planning/Building and Safety
6. Engineering and Streets
7. Community Health and Wellness
8. Community Engagement.

City Directors and Managers would facilitate each module based on their discipline, which will include a presentation and interactive group activity. At the conclusion of the Academy, participants would be presented with certificates at a closing ceremony in recognition of their participation. Staff has communicated with the Riverside University Health System to provide evaluation services for the program to determine the program's effectiveness in increasing civic engagement and awareness of City government.

Staff seeks additional feedback and direction from the City Council in the implementation a Resident Engagement Academy in the City.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The provision of meals is budgeted for each Academy meeting in the Fiscal Year 23-24 budget for the Development Services Department. 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. 2013 Coachella Civic Engagement Academy Report
2. General Plan Implementation Actions