



STAFF REPORT
9/10/2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Anahi Fernandez, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: Coachella Resident Engagement Academy

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council review the 2026 Coachella Resident Engagement Academy (Academy) plan 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 collaborate 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 2023, the City implemented the Academy, providing residents the opportunity to learn about the decision-making process and the City’s functions and operations. The Academy consists of eight (8) sessions for eight (8) weeks with a selection of (25) Coachella residents. Residents are informed of the importance of their contributions and how they can continue their involvement in the City. Evaluation survey responses from last year indicated that the majority of participants had a high knowledge level of the city after completion of the Academy and a very high likelihood of taking on a volunteer role in the City after participating in the Academy. The Academy has fulfilled its mission in educating Coachella residents on City operations and encouraging them to be more engaged in the City.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

Staff plans to establish a 2026 Resident Engagement Academy in which the City can continue the implementation of the General Plan and continue informing Coachella residents of the City’s roles and functions, ultimately increasing civic engagement in the City. The goals and purpose of the Academy are as follows:

1. Inform the community regarding City government and the decision-making process.

2. Provide residents with input opportunities.
3. Generate active citizens and promote civic leadership.

The Academy will commence on January 20, 2026 with a group of up to 25 Coachella residents. Outreach would begin in the fall through the City's social media platforms and flier postings in both English and Spanish. The following Academy modules are proposed:

1. Introduction and City Manager's Office
2. Engineering and Public Works
3. Utilities
4. Development Services
5. Economic Development and Finance
6. Public Safety
7. KDI – Displacement Avoidance Plan
8. Graduation

City Directors and Managers will facilitate each module based on their discipline, which will also include a cooperative project among residents and staff. At the conclusion of the Academy, participants will receive a closing ceremony and an award in recognition of their participation. Participants who attend all eight (8) sessions will receive a \$250 stipend.

Staff seeks additional feedback and direction from the City Council for the 2026 Resident Engagement Academy.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The provision of meals, shirts, recognitions, and stipends are included in the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 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. 2026 Academy Application
3. 2024 Academy Photos