



STAFF REPORT
7/24/2024

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council review the 2024 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 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.

On October 3, 2023, the City of Coachella implemented its first Coachella Resident Engagement Academy, in which the City created a space where residents had the opportunity to learn about the decision-making process and the City’s functions and operations. The Academy consisted of seven (7) sessions for seven (7) weeks with twenty-three (23) residents successfully completing all sessions. Residents were 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 playing a volunteer role in the City after participating in the Academy. The first Academy 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 2024 Resident Engagement Academy in which the City can continue the implementation of the General Plan and keep 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 October 1, 2024 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 in discussion between local nonprofit, county and local government entities:

1. City Manager's Office and Economic Development
2. Public Works and Engineering
3. Wastewater and Water
4. Development Services
5. Finance and Public Safety
6. Community Health and Wellness
7. Community Engagement.

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 seven (7) sessions will receive a \$250 stipend. The Riverside County Department of Public Health will 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 for the 2024 Academy.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The provision of meals, shirts, and stipends are included in the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 budget for the Development Services Department for a total of \$8,450. An additional \$1,550 for recognitions will be appropriated from the General Fund. 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. Academy Application
3. 2023 Academy Photos