



Cotati City Council Agenda Staff Report

Item type: REGULAR AGENDA (ACTION)
To: City Council
Subject: **APPROVAL OF 2025 COTATI CULTURAL GRANT
AWARDEES**
Date: January 28, 2025
Written by: Ashley Wilson, Recreation Manager

Recommendation

It is recommended that the City Council of the City of Cotati adopt a resolution approving the Cotati Cultural Event Small Grant Program awardees for the 2025 cycle year.

Background

At the September 24, 2024, City Council Meeting, the City Council approved the Cotati Cultural Event Small Grant Program. The purpose of the program is to encourage organizations and groups to host new and multicultural events in Cotati that promote an equitable, compassionate, and healthy community, that honor diversity as a source of strength.

Analysis/Discussion

This is the first year of the grant cycle and because of the timing of when it was approved, there was a shortened application period. In future year cycles, there will be a longer application period for groups and individuals to apply for the grant.

For the 2025 grant cycle, the City received seven applications. One application was disqualified for being incomplete. Below are short descriptions of each of the other six proposed events.

1. Dia De Los Muertos, Carlos Pena – Altars will be set up in La Plaza Park for community members and businesses, as well as live entertainment, cultural demonstrations, and a mix of art making experiences. The event hosts will collaborate with local artists, partnered food vendors, and other organizations, including SSU multicultural groups, business chambers, and Hispanic radio stations.

2. Cotati Accordion Festival, Scott Goree – This longstanding Cotati two-day music festival event has a polka tent, zydeco dance party, younger musician stage, and two main stages. There are eighty vendors, food, beer, and wine, and approximately 150 volunteers annually.
3. Day of the Dead, Girasol Collective – Altars will be set up centrally in the park for all to add their own items. Traditional Mexican music performances will take place including mariachi and folkloric, children's activities will include crafts and storytelling sessions for children to learn the history of the Day of the Dead, as well as creating sugar skulls and papel picado. Vendors will be local and offering handmade goods, art, crafts, and authentic Mexican food including tamales, pan de Muerto, etc.
4. Running Fence Run 10k, Liberty Cookies, Inc. – This run will be a 10k run from Liberty School to the Hub and a 5k run from the Hub to Railroad St. and is a celebration of the 49th anniversary of the Christo and Jeane-Claude's Running Fence art project. There will be a race day festival in the park after the run and there will be art displays in the park, inspired by the Running Fence.
5. Cotati Big-Time, Progressive Tribal Alliance – This event will feature Native American dancers, singers, food, and educational opportunities such as workshops, arts and crafts, interactive exhibits with displays of art, history, and artifacts, hands on activities, and storytelling for members of the native and non-native community, to celebrate and share Indigenous traditions.
6. Cotati Big Time, Common Space Community Land Trust – This Native American celebration will feature Indigenous dancers, speakers, vendors, food and indigenous crafts, and potentially educational signage with history. The event will also include partnerships with non-native organizations to promote restorative relationships and provide an accurate history of the first peoples of Cotati.

All applications were reviewed by a staff committee. Scoring was based on the following criteria:

- Creativity – Uses imagination and innovation to create a new, different, and/or unique and memorable experience for attendees.
- Diversity – Highlights the culture of one or more ethnic groups or communities of interest.
- Inclusivity/Access – Increases access to music, arts, history, culture, or heritage, for people who may not feel included in community life, including low-income residents, people with disabilities, and other special populations.
- Feasibility – The event can be delivered with the available resources, time, and skills, as proposed in the application.
- Sustainability – The event will continue past the grant period.
- Promotes Community Togetherness/Broad Community Appeal
- Cotati Local Resident/Business Owner

Based on the criteria and quality of applications, the City recommends awarding two applicants for the 2025 grant cycle, each with a \$5,000 award. The recommendation is to award The Progressive Tribal Alliance to host their proposed Cotati Big Time event and Girasol Collective to host their Day of the Dead event.

The Progressive Tribal Alliance (PTA) would bring a new event to Cotati, with a focus on creating an inclusive space where individuals from all backgrounds can come together to celebrate and learn from Native American cultures. Their intention is to continue the event after the grant cycle has ended and be an annual tradition. They have an established event framework with templates, volunteer coordination systems, and strong partnerships with local businesses and stakeholders. Given the event experience the PTA has and their connections and support, this applicant is well equipped to host a successful and safe event in La Plaza Park.

Girasol Collective would also bring a new event to Cotati, designed to honor and promote Latino traditions within the community through a family friendly celebration that highlights the rich heritage of Dia De Los Muertos, fostering cultural appreciation and understanding. The event is planned to be offered annually, with the organization becoming more financially stable through revenue streams, community support, and fundraising efforts. They have experience organizing cultural and community focused events, strong ties with local vendors and cultural advocates, and a network of volunteers. As an up-and-coming organization that specializes in event coordination, small business promotion, and digital marketing, while having a deep connection with the local Latino community, awarding Girasol Collective will provide them with the support they need to create a meaningful and impactful annual event in Cotati.

Since there were duplicate event applications for both awardee proposals, the City recommends that each recipient reach out and make reasonable efforts to collaborate with the other applicants proposing similar events.

Each event will come back to the City Council at a later date for approval on the special event permits, to include any street closure, sales, fee waivers, or other requests.

Financial Considerations

The financial considerations for the Cotati Cultural Event Small Grant Program awardees is \$10,000, which was approved at the September 24, 2024, City Council meeting. Funding would come from the City Council annual contributions budget through the City's General Fund. No additional appropriation is required.

Environmental Issues

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guideline section 15378.

