



OMAHA CITY COUNCIL

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July 1, 2026

Clerk of the Legislature
Mr. Brandon Metzler, Clerk
State Capitol, Room 2018
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Dear Mr. Metzler,

Enclosed, please find the reporting for the 2025 South Omaha Turnback Tax Grant as required by Nebraska Revised Statute 13-2610:

- i. A description of the projects funded during the most recently completed calendar year – pp. 3 – 8
- ii. A description of where such projects were located – pp. 3 – 8
- iii. A description of the outcomes of such projects – pp. 3 – 8
- iv. A ten-year strategic plan on how the committee plans to meet the goals described in subdivision (3)(a) of §13-2610 – pp. 9 – 11

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns. Committee members can be reached via phone at 402-444-5547 or email sarah.lara-toney@cityofomaha.org.

Respectfully,

Roger Garcia
Douglas County Commissioner
District 1

Ron Hug
Omaha City Councilman
District 4

Sarah Dragon
Resident Committee Member

Garry Gernandt
Resident Committee Member

South Omaha Turnback Tax Grant Strategic Plan Report | Funding Cycle 2025

I. Purpose

The strategic plan will ensure that the South Omaha Turnback Tax Grant Committee can continue to manage Turnback Tax Grant application and awards in a sustainable way. It provides a framework for sustainability by describing the South Omaha Turnback Tax Grant Committee's approach, roles and responsibilities, and reporting practices. This sustainability plan will support the Committee's commitment to reviewing grant applications and making awards to nonprofit organizations and small businesses in the South Omaha Community.

Per the revised Nebraska Convention Center Facility Financing Assistance Act (the Act), ten percent (10%) of the funds received by the City of Omaha in "Turnback tax" from the State each year will be distributed to areas with a high concentration of poverty. Fifty-five percent of those funds are to be used to showcase important historical aspects of those areas or to assist with the reduction of street or gang violence in the target areas, while forty-five percent of funds will be used to assist with small business and entrepreneurship in such areas.

II. Roles and Responsibilities

The South Omaha Turnback Tax Grant Committee is responsible for soliciting, reviewing, and awarding grant applications and reports on an annual basis.

The committee consists of four (4) voting members and one (1) non-voting member:

1. The City Councilmember and County Commissioner whose districts include a majority of the census tracts which each contain a percentage of persons below the poverty line of greater than thirty (30) percent:

Councilman Ron Hug, District 4, was appointed to this role in September 2023 when he was sworn in to the City Council

Douglas County Commissioner Roger Garcia, representative of District 1 has filled this appointment since his election in 2021.

Both Councilman Hug and Commissioner Garcia were re-elected to their districts in 2025 and will serve on the committee through 2029.

2. Two (2) residents of the area with high concentration of poverty, appointed by the aforementioned two members of the committee, shall be appointed for four (4) year terms: Resident Committee Members Sarah Dragon and Garry Gernandt were selected in February 2026 from a total of eight (8) applicants residing within the target grant area. Their terms will expire in January 2030, at which time the application will be posted and public notice issued seeking new candidates for the positions.

3. The member of the Legislature whose district includes a majority of the census tracts which each contain a percentage of persons below the poverty line of greater than thirty (30) percent...shall be a nonvoting member of the committee.

Working with the City Planning Department, census reports were reviewed to determine that the State Senator representing District 7, fills this nonvoting committee appointment. Dunixi Guereca was elected to the seat in 2024, and has filled the position of non-voting member since that time.

Each committee member receives the following information:

1. General Information – a binder given to the member upon his/her appointment to the committee, includes target area map, the Act, applicants and award recipients from the previous two years, annual timeline of events, and other miscellaneous general grant information. This binder is updated periodically as new information is received.
2. Grant Applications – once the period has closed, all applications are tabbed in alphabetical order for committee members to review prior to the public award meetings.

Committee members review all applications prior to the public meeting/s to make award decisions. At the meeting/s, each member takes it in turn to summarize an application and requested amount, after which, the full committee has a discussion regarding potential award amount, including questioning the applicant as necessary. Grant awards may go through several rounds before being finalized based on the total amount available to award.

III. 2025 Grant Funding Cycle

As outlined in the Act, each area with a high concentration of poverty – North Omaha and South Omaha, respectively – shall establish a development fund and form a committee which shall identify and research potential projects to be completed in the area with a high concentration of poverty or in an area within close geographic proximity if the project would have a significant impact on the area itself.

The 2025 Funding Cycle application was available beginning August 26, 2024, and adhered to the following timeline:

August 26 th	Open 2025 Grant Application
September 30 th	Close 2025 Grant Application
October 4 th	Applications uploaded to Google Drive for Committee review
October 28 th	Committee score sheets emailed to staff in advance of award meeting
November 7 th	Public Award Meeting
November 14 th	Second Public Award Meeting
November 18 th	Press release announcing award recipients
December 11 th	Award checks ready for disbursement

Public notice was provided on August 12, 2024, in the Daily Record and on the City of Omaha and Douglas County websites that applications would be accepted August 26, 2024 through September 30, 2024. Public meetings were held on August 26, 2024, to open the application period, and again on November 7, 2024, and November 14, 2024, to review applications and make award determinations. Award letters were mailed on December 11th and a press release issued on November 18, 2024, announcing fifty recipients were awarded a total of \$237,573.00

Funded organizations are required to submit a grant report describing how the award was spent, along with receipts, in November of the funded year.

Reports submitted by 2025 grant recipients are available electronically via Google Drive: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1uH2QjMZNS8tOotcjCEcDS7PkSOTKJWKg?usp=drive_link

2025 Award Recipients – Reduction of Street or Gang Violence in South Omaha

Bannisters Leadership Academy | Family Navigator Program (\$7,500)

Program emphasizes family engagement, involving parents/guardians in supporting youth and creating stronger support systems to prevent initial or repeated contact with the juvenile justice system. The program also focuses on assisting adjudicated youth in their transition back into the community, reducing recidivism rates across all minority groups.

Barrientos Scholarship Foundation | BSF Student Success Program (\$8,500)

The program serves all Latino high school and/or college students in their pursuit of higher education degrees, and is made up of a cohort of seven top employers in the state who provide participants with guidance, mentorship, and scholarship opportunities to help reduce drop-out rates due to lack of funding or financial ability.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands | Community Based Mentoring in South Omaha (\$5,000)

Mentors are recruited, screened, and trained before being matched with youth in South Omaha. Program participants have reduced engagement in behavior, increased academic performance, and strengthened social-emotional outcomes.

Boys and Girls Clubs of the Midlands | Programming at South Omaha Boys & Girls Club (\$7,500)

Programs at the South Omaha Club promote healthy decision-making and avoidance of risky behaviors in order to gain critical skills and learn how to become productive, responsible members of the community during their formative years. Members are provided supplies, incentives, and staff support for the duration of their participation, often through the entirety of their academic K-12 career.

Completely KIDS | Afterschool Activities in South Omaha Middle Schools (\$5,000)

Programs provide individualized academic support, social-emotional learning, and leadership development – all key factors in preventing youth engagement in negative behaviors. Participants are mentored by adults sharing their cultural background, effectively building a community in which youth belong and thus keeping them off the streets.

DeLeon Youth Sports | Program Participation at DeLeon Youth Sports (\$4,500)

Funding allows the organization to lower the cost of participation for families living in South Omaha, providing athletes with uniforms and equipment for practices and games. Participation allows youth the opportunities to build skills such as teamwork and leadership, while playing basketball as part of a community team. Grant funds also supported web and marketing design costs, tournament and court fees, and referee stipends.

El Museo Latino | 2025 Latino Youth Arts Program (\$5,000)

Funds were used to create and implement after-school and weekend educational programs focused on the Latino arts and culture of Mexico, Central, and South America, throughout the year. Participants showcased their work through visual and performing arts workshops and classes.

Father Flanagan's Boy's Home dba Boys Town | Common Sense Parenting Program (\$4,000)

Program partnered with Project Harmony and Canopy South to offer parents of children enrolled in South Omaha schools Parent Cafes and Common Sense Parenting classes which addressed youth and familial protective factors associated with safety, permanency, and well-being with the goal of reducing negative behaviors and gang interactions.

Generation Diamond Corporation | Tattoo Removal Program (\$7,500)

Program offers tattoo removal as a pathway for individuals to distance themselves from gang affiliations and the stigma which comes with having visible, gang-related tattoos. The removal of physical markers of gang affiliation reduces the risk of participants being targeted by rival gangs, enables individuals to pursue employment, effectively decreasing the likelihood of recidivism into the gang community.

Girls Incorporated of Omaha | Eureka! Summer Camp for Girls (\$7,500)

Camp participants were given hands-on learning experiences, mentorship, and career exploration opportunities to build their confidence and fuel their aspirations. Girls engage in immersive STEM experiences designed to discover their interests, keep them engaged at school, and develop the skills and confidence to pursue STEM degrees and careers upon graduation from high school.

Heartland Hope Mission | Hunger and Homelessness Prevention (\$4,500)

Client Service Specialists provided food, clothing, diapers, hygiene items, and services to individuals/families in the community, allowing clients to make progress toward food security and financial stability, decreasing the likelihood of turning to gangs for survival, a sense of belonging, and having basic needs met. Programs maintain an emphasis on education and positive activities to build leaderships skills and life skills in youth participants.

Latino Center of the Midlands | Pathways to Success: 2025 Career Exploration (\$7,500)

The Pathways to Success program is a comprehensive support system for students experiencing chronic absenteeism and failing grades. A partnership with South Omaha middle and high schools combines mentoring, academic support, leadership development, and family engagement, keeping students engaged in productive pursuits during school breaks.

Mendez & Associates | Project Public Service (\$4,000)

The Public Service project recruits and trains youth in South Omaha for careers in public safety, specifically security and law enforcement. Funds are used to provide skills-based classes such as CPR, first aid, AED training, and patrol procedures, with the goal of certifying participants in preparation to attend Public Safety Academy and have law enforcement careers in the South Omaha community.

The Simple Foundation | Safe Place to Play and Learn (\$7,500)

The project is a comprehensive initiative designed to provide underserved youth, with a particular emphasis on refugee and immigrant populations, a secure environment where they can engage in positive activities that foster personal growth, build resilience, and promote community integration by keeping youth engaged, supported, and connected to their community.

Victory Boxing Club | Victory Boxing Club & Community Center Youth Program (\$20,000)

VBCCC provides at-risk youth in South Omaha with a year-round program to do the following: (1) Teach Christian principles through the art of boxing, (2) building relationships with the youth of Omaha and their families, (3) partnering with the City of Omaha in improving juvenile behavior, (4) diminishing the school truancy rate, (5) decreasing juvenile behavior, and (6) increasing personal growth through mentorship.

2025 Award Recipients – Showcase Important Historical Aspects of South Omaha

Casa de la Cultura | Celebrating 105 Years of Mexican Festivals (\$7,415)

Project staff documented and showcased the significant historical impact that Mexican festivals have had on the South Omaha community for the past 105 years. Utilizing interviews and photography, the organization displayed the work of the families who built the tradition of Mexican festivals in Omaha.

Kawa Co. dba Johnny's Café | Elevator Project at Johnny's Café (\$15,000)

Funds will be applied to the major repair of the restaurant elevator, the functionality of which is crucial to daily operations at Johnny's Café.

Mexican American Historical Society of the Midlands | The Families of South Omaha – National Family Month 2025 (\$2,750)

Partnering with South Omaha educational facilities, the project facilitates a series of workshops focusing on family history and heritage. Participants record information including family tree, historical meaning of surnames, and family history, and the results are placed on exhibit at the South Omaha Museum of Immigrant History during Cinco de Mayo festivities.

2025 Award Recipients – Assist with Small Business and Entrepreneurship Growth in South Omaha

Azares, LLC | Square Loyalty Program (\$1,940)

Implement a rewards based loyalty program with the goal of increasing customer engagement and retention, and attract new customers.

Build Mas, Inc. | Bilingual Business Platform for South Omaha Contractors (\$3,000)

Funds were used to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy that includes brand development, digital marketing, social media outreach, and community engagement. These efforts ensured that Build Más was able to reach Hispanic contractors in South Omaha and surrounding areas, educating them about the platform and convert them into active users.

California Produce dba Isla Del Mar Restaurante | La Michoacana Plus (\$6,842)

Addition of an ice cream shop inside the restaurant to provide employment and enhance customer dining experience.

Camara de Comercio Hispana (SOBA) | Gift Shop Employment & Operations (\$1,950)

Funds will add computers and business software to improve daily operations, pay for store advertising in the community to increase business, and create jobs which will be filled with local youth to add employment opportunities in the community.

Cecy's Deoraciones | Store Security Enhancements (\$1,940)

Funds will purchase exterior lights and security cameras along with upgraded software for enhanced security at the store, which will ultimately enhance the customer experience, especially during the fall and winter months.

Creaciones Deianny | Store Operations (\$1,940)

Funds will assist with inventory maintenance of services and products which cater to the unique needs of the Hispanic community in South Omaha. Maintaining inventory will foster economic stability of the store employees and cultural preservation of the community.

Credit Advisers Foundation | Small Business Credit 101 (\$1,843)

Funds will be used to create a cohort of existing and potential small businesses in the South Omaha community with the objective of introducing and mastering credit concepts so each participant can grow their business. Participants will learn to use mainstream financial products, identify interest rates and banking information, and apply for business lines of credit.

Cye Painting, LLC | Business Car (\$2,134)

Funds will purchase a car for the owner to do site visits and provide estimates, leaving the work van available for the crew to complete scheduled jobs.

Detailing Garage by Cruz | Business Tools and Supplies (\$3,492)

Funds will be used to develop online marketing to attract and expand customer base, while new tools will allow staff to offer varied services and products with improved efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Economic Empowerment Center dba Lending Link | Microbusiness Lending Pool (\$3,000)

Funding will allow the business to offer financial support to established small businesses and start-ups in the South Omaha community, specifically minority and women-owned businesses which historically have a harder time securing start-up capital and funding.

Estética Barbaras | Operational Costs and Business Supplies (\$1,940)

Funds will purchase more work chairs to account for an increased customer base.

Estética Tammy's | Business Remodel (\$5,820)

Funds will purchase upgraded equipment and salon tools to provide an improved customer experience with new seating, lighting, and private service areas. Funds will also go toward staff training and professional development.

Flor Imperial, LLC | Food Truck Expansion (\$2,716)

Funds will allow the business to expand into a physical location, create a new and improved menu, and expand advertising efforts to increase their customer base.

Howard's Charro Café | Youth Mariachi Group (\$6,842)

Owner will provide free mariachi classes once a week for two hours to local youth, with funds being used to pay teachers, purchase instruments, and provide snacks for participants.

HR Beauty Salon | Business Expansion (\$1,164)

Funds will allow the business to move into a larger location to accommodate a growing clientele, and offer reduced pricing on services.

Jeffers Unlimited, LLC | Driveway Repair (\$1,746)

Funds will be used to repair the driveway at a new business location which will visually improve the look of the neighborhood overall, as well as allow the tenant to use the driveway.

Joyería 3 Hermanos | Inventory Support (\$1,940)

Funds will purchase jewelry machines and tools, specifically a laser engraver, polisher, and ultrasonic cleaner, thus enhancing the customer experience.

La Fuente Business Center | Entrepreneurship Training for Immigrant and Refugee Women (\$5,820)

La Fuente provides financial education, business training and mentoring, financial literacy classes and coaching, and business training including opening, operating, and growing a small business, and microloans to women as working capital, allowing them to be successful business owners in the South Omaha community.

Latino Economic Development Council | South Omaha Planters (\$5,820)

Funds will purchase a Gator Utility Vehicle and the equipment needed to install a water tank and hose with pump system on the back. The vehicle will improve LEDC's ability to maintain the planters installed by the South Omaha BID along the commercial corridor, increasing employee efficiency and decreasing labor costs.

Lorenzo's Auto Repair, LLC | Auto Shop Repairs (\$2,328)

Funds will be used to make repairs to the auto shop, which will allow the owner to focus on business growth and providing more employment opportunities with expanded services.

Loretta's Boutique, LLC | Work Tools (\$3,880)

Funds will purchase sewing machine, embroidery machine, and printers in order for owner to expand offered services and increase client satisfaction.

Magy's Daycare, LLC | Business Improvements (\$4,656)

Funds will purchase a fence and shade for the outdoor area of the business, thereby allowing full use of the site – both indoor and outdoor – by children and staff.

Manny Construction, LLC | Business Infrastructure Improvements (\$1,746)

Funds will allow owner to purchase new tools, which will allow more youth to be hired as part-time workers as well as expand business clientele throughout South Omaha.

Master Beauty Salon | Marketing and Operations Opportunities (\$1,552)

Funds will allow for the creation and maintenance of a website for the salon to increase marketing opportunities and an online appointment system for booking appointments.

Neveria el Buen Sabor | Freezer Purchases (\$2,134)

Funds will purchase two ice cream freezers which will assist the owner in growing the business by offering more flavors and expanding client base.

Nitzia Boutique & Sport | Business and Inventory Expansion (\$3,880)

Owner will open a second location which will offer workshops where participants will produce Mexican handicrafts and learn about the culture behind the country of origin(s) of the items.

Rosmary Novedades, LLC | Operational Support (\$5,820)

Owner used funds to purchase software which improved her ability to ship nationwide for online purchases, and radio advertising to expand client base.

Salud Y Belleza by Lili, LLC | Marketing Opportunities (\$1,164)

Owner will develop an online store to appeal to current and new customers with a projected sales increase of twenty percent due to new marketing efforts.

SOVACC/GI Forum | Bathroom/Concession Stand (\$6,897.65)

Funds continue to support the construction of an outdoor restroom and concession stand of the South Omaha Veterans and Community Center/GI Forum's outdoor event space which is used to host events to raise money for educational scholarships.

Tacos Celaya G.T.O., LLC | Operational Support (\$1,164)

Owner will purchase promotional marketing for an improved menu and tables and chairs to improve and grow customer experience, which in turn will allow for expanded employment opportunities.

United Hispanic Contractors Association | Business & Contractor Academy (\$6,897.65)

The Business and Contractor Academy offers technical skills training and business classes to Hispanic individuals who want to start a small business, resulting in a skilled and innovative workforce which strengthen the South Omaha community.

IV. 2026 Funding Cycle

The 2026 Funding Cycle application was available beginning September 22, 2025, and adhered to the following timeline:

September 22 nd	Grant application opens online
October 1 st	Public meeting to open grant application and receive public comments
October 24 th	Grant application closes online
October 27 th	Committee receives applications for review
November 1 st	Public meeting to review applications and determine awards
November 3 rd	Press Release announcing award recipients
November 7 th	Applicant materials to Finance for award processing
December 2025	Award checks available for disbursement

V. Strategic Plan

A. Process

The grant period takes place September – December annually. The committee will hold a public meeting in September, approximately one week after the application goes live, to accept application attachments, and answer questions from applicants. Applications will be accepted for a period of four (4) weeks, with the application being available online via the City and Douglas County website. The public will be made aware of the meeting and application availability via notice in The Daily Record, posted notices on the City and Douglas County websites, and an email to previous applicants.

To ensure award distribution by late December 2026, the 2027 Funding Cycle will follow this timeline:

August 31 st	Open 2027 Grant Application
September 3 rd	Public Meeting to open the funding cycle and receive applicant questions at MCC South Omaha Campus
October 2 nd	Application submission ends; all submissions uploaded to Google Drive for Committee review
October 5 th – 16 th	Committee reviews applications and prepare score sheets in advance of the public award meeting
October 17 th	Public Award Meeting at MCC South Omaha Campus
October 19 th	Press release announcing award recipients
November 1 st – 9 th	Award recipient information sent to Finance Department for check processing
December 2026	Award checks ready for disbursement

Once the application period closes, the committee will have approximately two (2) weeks to review applications individually before publicly meeting to review and make award decisions. Each meeting will be publicly noticed via The Daily Record, and the City and Douglas County websites, allowing applicants and the general public to attend and participate.

After the October 17th award meeting, recipient award amounts are delivered to the Finance Department, along with a copy of the application and W-9, for check processing. This takes approximately fifteen days, during which time award letters are processed and prepared for mailing upon receipt of checks from Finance.

Committee members will be (re)elected and (re)appointed in the following years, according to their election cycle and term limits:

- 2028, November – Douglas County Commissioner, District 1; NE State Senator, District 7
- 2029, May – City Council, District 4 Councilmember
- 2030, February – Resident Committee Members;

Additionally, the Committee will conduct an annual review of any amendment to the Act.

B. Goals

A committee formed under subdivision (3)(b) of the Act shall solicit project ideas from the public and shall hold a public hearing in the area with a high concentration of poverty. The committee shall research potential projects and make the final determination regarding the annual distribution of funding to such projects. Short- and long-term goals shall include:

- the solicitation and review of such applications for funding;
- annual review of recipient award reports to ensure effectiveness of award and consistency with Act guidelines;
- review of short- and long-term goals as needed to meet community needs

C. 2025 – 2035 Action Plan

1. Seek community feedback regularly to assess and prioritize community needs
2. Ensure awards meet community needs by reviewing reports and maintaining regular communications with recipients
3. Annual review recipients to determine:
 - a. consecutive funding limit has been reached under subdivision (3)(f) of the Act,
 - b. determine whether project is eligible for continued funding based on the criteria listed under subdivision (3)(f)i-iii.
4. track award recipient residency within target area at time of funding for three consecutive years beginning with 2027 award recipients
5. Include consecutive funding limit on spreadsheet for committee review
6. Provide committee with application summary for quick review at public meetings, including comprehensive spreadsheet and one-page summaries
7. Provide tracking of review spreadsheet to increase committee accountability and transparency
8. Update application to reflect required information, including signature by applicants of reporting deadlines
9. Solicitation of Resident Committee members for 2031 – 2034 funding cycles
 - a. Process will need to take place in the first quarter 2030 to ensure committee is in place and briefed on processes prior to the 2031 Funding Cycle opening in the fall
10. Ensure interpreter is present for all public meetings

- a. Schedule once timeline is approved by the committee
- 11. Ensure all materials – application, W-9, public notices, press releases – are available in Spanish and English
- 12. Schedule Finance Dept. to be present at public meetings to assist with W-9 completion to avoid delays at award processing.