

INDIAN WELLS CITY COUNCIL

March 6, 2025



To: City Council
From: City Manager Department
Prepared by: Christopher Freeland, City Manager
Subject: **Children’s Discovery Museum of the Desert One-Time Funding Request for Fiscal Year 2024-25**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Council **DISCUSSES** and **PROVIDES** staff direction on the Children’s Discovery Museum of the Desert one-time funding request of \$10,000 for Fiscal Year 2024-25; and

FINDS the project to be exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15060.

BACKGROUND:

The Children’s Discovery Museum of the Desert (Children’s Museum) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1986. It is a charter member of the Association of Youth Museums, which was established to ensure the highest standards of all aspects of education, discovery, public service, outreach, and operations of youth museums. The Children’s Museum is where youth, families, teachers, and the community collaborate and participate in joint projects and partnerships in learning and celebrating the rich cultural diversity of the Coachella Valley. The Children’s Museum has been a top attraction in the Coachella Valley for 30 years, with approximately 5,000 visitors per year. Indian Wells hotel partners promote the Children’s Museum as one of the amenities here in the Coachella Valley to attract families to stay at their properties.

The City of Indian Wells has been a long time and original supporter of the Children’s Museum. In 1991, the Cove Communities of Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, and Indian Wells established a \$1.6 million Building Trust Fund to get the initial building built. Since 1999, the City has awarded the Children’s Museum an additional \$448,639 through community assistance and grants to help fund programs at the Children’s Museum. The most recent contribution was in November 2022, when the City provided \$25,000 to help fund a remodel of the museum. The City’s contribution was utilized for a new 0–8-year-old exhibit.

BACKGROUND:

The Children's Museum is requesting the City of Indian Wells to consider its proposal to fund a new Weekly Science Nights at Children's Discovery Museum of the Desert that will run for six months. According to the Children's Museum proposal (**Attachment No. 1**), the Weekly Science Night Program will introduce children and families to the wonders of science through interactive experiments, demonstrations, and activities. Each week will feature a different theme, highlighting exciting areas of science such as chemistry, physics, biology, astronomy, and engineering. The program will be designed to be hands-on, engaging, and suitable for children ages 4-12, encouraging family participation and fostering a love for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math).

Staff requests Council provide direction on the process the Council wishes to consider the Children's Museum funding request. Historically, these requests are considered annually through the City's Grants-In-Aid program beginning in August, or by separate Council action, as was the case in 2022.

This funding request could also qualify under the City's Community Assistance Funding Policy (**Attachment No. 2**), which provides the Council with up to \$40,000 in annual discretionary funding for local non-profits.

OPTIONS:

The City Council has the following options:

1. Council approves the Children's Museum funding request;
2. Council denies the Children's Museum funding request;
3. Council directs staff to forward this matter for consideration to both the City's Marketing and Finance Committees for review and recommendation. Recommendations are to be brought back to the Council for consideration at a future meeting;
4. Council recommends the Children's Museum apply for funding through the City's Grants-in-Aid program in August;
5. Council directs staff to add the matter for discussion during the upcoming annual City budget discussion; or
6. Council provides an alternative direction.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Children's Museum funding request of \$10,000 is not included in the adopted Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25. However, if the Council wishes to fund the Children's Museum request, staff recommend the funds be allocated from the Council's discretionary Community Assistance Funding account.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA):

The action is not a project within the meaning of Section 15378 of the State of California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") Guidelines, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change in the environment, directly or indirectly; and that the action is nonetheless exempt from the requirements of CEQA in that the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. (14 CCR 15061(b)(3).)

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Funding Request Letter
2. City's Community Assistance Funding Policy