

INTRODUCED: June 9, 2025

AN ORDINANCE No. 2025-142

To amend Ord. No. 2024-099, adopted May 13, 2024, which adopted the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 General Fund Budget and made appropriations pursuant thereto, to (i) create certain new line items in the Non-Departmental agency, (ii) transfer \$250,000.00 from the Office of Sustainability, and (iii) appropriate such \$250,000.00 to such new line items in the Non-Departmental agency, all for the purpose of providing grants to certain entities to facilitate the implementation of neighborhood climate resilience projects.

Patrons – Mayor Avula, Ms. Abubaker and Vice President Jordan

Approved as to form and
legality by the City Attorney

PUBLIC HEARING: JUN 23 2025 AT 6 P.M.

THE CITY OF RICHMOND HEREBY ORDAINS:

§ 1. That Article I, Section 1 of Ordinance No. 2024-099, adopted May 13, 2024, which adopted a General Fund Budget for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025, and made appropriations pursuant thereto, is hereby amended by:

- (a) Creating the following new line items in the Non-Departmental agency:
 - (1) OOS – FLIPP Inc – Workforce Development Program;
 - (2) OOS – Future Habitats LLC – Restoring Habitat at Pine Camp;

AYES: 8 NOES: 0 ABSTAIN: _____

ADOPTED: JUN 23 2025 REJECTED: _____ STRICKEN: _____

- (3) OOS – ProFarms Gateway – Urban Gardening Initiative;
 - (4) OOS – Second Baptist Church;
 - (5) OOS – Reedy Creek Coalition – Non-native Plant Removal;
 - (6) OOS – Richmond Community Toolbank – Building Accessible Park Furniture; and
 - (7) OOS – Studio Two Three – Creating Greenspace,
- (b) Transferring \$250,000.00 from the Office of Sustainability; and
- (c) Appropriating these transferred funds to the following new line items in the Non-

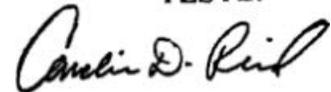
Departmental agencies created by subsection (a) of this section in the following amounts:

- (1) OOS – FLIPP Inc – Workforce Development Program.....\$49,999.00;
 - (2) OOS – Future Habitats LLC – Restoring Habitat at Pine Camp.....\$25,000.00;
 - (3) OOS – ProFarms Gateway – Urban Gardening Initiative.....\$48,503.00;
 - (4) OOS – Second Baptist Church.....\$49,999.00;
 - (5) OOS – Reedy Creek Coalition – Non-native Plant Removal....\$1,500.00;
 - (6) OOS – Richmond Community Toolbank – Building Accessible Park Furniture.....\$25,000.00;
- and
- (7) OOS – Studio Two Three – Creating Greenspace.....\$49,999.00,

all for the purpose of providing grants to certain entities to facilitate the implementation of neighborhood climate resilience projects.

§ 2. This ordinance shall be in force and effect upon adoption.

A TRUE COPY:
TESTE:



City Clerk

DATE: June 2, 2025

EDITION: 2

TO: The Honorable Members of City Council

THROUGH: The Honorable Dr. Danny Avula, Mayor

THROUGH: Sharon L. Ebert, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Laura Thomas, Director of the Office of Sustainability

RE: Office of Sustainability Neighborhood Climate Resilience Grant Program
(\$250,000.00) | Supporting Climate Resiliency Projects in the City of Richmond

PURPOSE: To authorize the transfer \$250,000 from the Office of Sustainability for the purpose of providing grants through the Neighborhood Climate Resilience Grant Program.

REASON: As the City of Richmond and the Office of Sustainability implement the RVAgreen 2050 Climate Equity Action Plan, which was adopted by City Council, action item C.2.1(ii) focuses on identifying funding sources and distributing funds regularly. This action supports efforts to promote climate resilience and equity across Richmond. Establishing consistent funding mechanisms is essential for supporting local initiatives and ensuring long-term progress in achieving the goals outlined in the RVAgreen 2050 plan.

RECOMMENDATION: Move funds from the General Fund Budget and made appropriations pursuant thereto, to (i) create certain new line items in the Non-Departmental agency, (ii) transfer \$250,000 from the Office of Sustainability, and (iii) appropriate such \$250,000 to the new line items in the Non-Departmental agency, all for the purpose of providing grants to certain entities to facilitate the implementation of neighborhood climate resilience projects, to modify certain new line items and create a new line item in the non-departmental agency

BACKGROUND: The Office of Sustainability officially announced the Neighborhood Climate Resilience Grant Program in 2023, and it was included in the FY 2024 Budget with an allocation of \$250,000. This initiative supports projects that enhance climate resilience in frontline communities across Richmond. Since its launch, the program has garnered significant interest. In total, we received 41 applications, with 36 completed submissions requesting a combined amount of \$1,433,856—far exceeding the initial funding available. To be eligible for funding, applicants were required to meet the following criteria:

- Serve the Richmond community in areas of equitable climate change, climate action, and climate resilience.
- Demonstrate alignment with the RVAgreen 2050 Climate Equity Action Plan.
- Submit a completed application with all required documents, including a detailed scope of work and project budget

The application window opened on **July 1, 2024**, and the review process involved independent evaluation and scoring by a diverse panel of city staff members and Sustainability Resilience Commission leadership. The review panel included:

- Michael Smart | Project Manager | Sustainability Engagement Coordinator | Office of Sustainability
- Jackson Iglehart | Sustainability Engagement Specialist | Office of Sustainability
- Daniel Hart | Chair | Sustainability Resilience Commission
- Victor Cruz | Co-Chair | Sustainability Resilience Commission

This collaborative effort highlights the city's ongoing commitment to fostering climate resilience and addressing climate equity challenges in our most vulnerable communities.

Project Summaries

The projects listed below represent all of the organizations we look to support in the full amount of the grant totaling \$250,000.

1. ProFarms Gateway

- Funding Request: \$48,503
- Overview: Established in 2022, ProFarms Gateway (PFG) is a Virginia-based 501(c)(3) organization focused on regenerative agriculture and climate resilience. Operating in both Ghana and Richmond, PFG specializes in sustainable farming, agripreneurship, agritech, and agricotourism, with a strong emphasis on capacity building. Co-founded by Dr. Jacqueline McDonnough and Steven McDonnough, the organization leverages their expertise to create impactful solutions for underserved communities.
- Project Details: PFG will partner with RVA Adult Autism Services (RVA AAS) and 100 Gardens Aquaponics to engage low-income community members and provide inclusion opportunities for adults on the autism spectrum.
- Timeline: The project will take place in the 3rd District and is estimated to be completed within 12 months of funding approval.

2. Second Baptist Church

- Funding Request: \$49,999
- Overview: Founded in 1881 by members of First Baptist Church seeking a closer place of worship, Second Baptist Church of South Richmond quickly grew into a thriving congregation under the leadership of dedicated pastors and community members. Over the decades, the church expanded its ministries, built new facilities, and supported initiatives in music, education, social justice, and community outreach—including scouting programs, gospel theater, and environmental projects. Under the leadership of Rev. Ralph S. Hodge since 2003, the church has continued to grow, moving into a new sanctuary in 2008, launching new ministries, and receiving recognition for its service during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Project Details: This funding will primarily support the walking for fresh fruits and veggies plus supplies and promotion. Taken-A-Lap exercise and nutrition incentive program to increase purchasing power for fresh fruits and vegetables and to encourage healthy eating and exercise, and promoting a healthier, more sustainable community.
- Timeline: The project will take place in the 9th District and is estimated to be completed within 9 months of funding approval.

3. FLIPP Inc.

- Funding Request: \$49,999
- Overview: Founded in 2020, FLIPP Inc. provides employment training for marginalized communities, including the formerly incarcerated, veterans, BIPOC individuals, and women. Led

by Army veteran Raye Elliott, the organization focuses on renewable energy and entrepreneurship training.

- Project Details: The Climate Resilient Energy Education for the Disadvantaged - Richmond, VA (CREED-RVA) program offers a two-week intensive training for renewable energy certifications. Training includes OSHA 10, NFPA 70E, and NABCEP PV Associate courses to reduce barriers to entry in the renewable energy sector.
- Timeline: Open to all Richmonders, this project is expected to span 11 months from funding receipt.

4. Studio Two Three

- Funding Request: \$49,999
- Overview: For over 15 years, Studio Two Three (S23) has served as a hub for arts, civic voice, and social justice in Richmond, empowering artists to use their work for personal and social change.
- Project Details: S23 will convert the lawn at 109 W. 15th Street into a green space featuring community food resources, a native wildflower garden, and shaded seating. The project aims to combat food insecurity and enhance public green space in Manchester.
- Timeline: The project will take place in the 2nd District and is estimated to be completed by October 1, 2025.

5. Reedy Creek Coalition

- Funding Request: \$1,500
- Overview: Reedy Creek Coalition, an all-volunteer organization, is dedicated to the health of the Reedy Creek Watershed. They promote water conservation and environmental education to foster a sustainable community ecosystem.
- Project Details: The coalition plans to restore a 17-acre park canopy by using goats and sheep for eco-friendly removal of invasive plants like English ivy. Natural regeneration will follow, supported by native seeds in the soil.
- Timeline: The project will take place in the 5th District and is expected to be completed within 12 months of funding approval.

6. Future Habitats LLC

- Funding Request: \$25,000
- Overview: Founded in 2021, Future Habitats is a conservation landscaping business rooted in urban farming and community organizing. The organization is committed to creating native landscapes and cultivating a conservation-focused workforce.
- Project Details: The Pine Camp Urban and Community Land Restoration initiative will transform a former hospital campus into native forest and prairie habitats. This project will also enhance the Art Loop as an educational and wellness resource for the community.
- Timeline: The project will take place in the 3rd District and is expected to be completed by Fall 2025, contingent on funding.

7. Richmond Community ToolBank

- Funding Request: \$25,000
- Overview: Since 2015, the Richmond Community ToolBank has provided affordable tool access for community projects, saving local organizations millions in equipment costs.
- Project Details: In collaboration with PRCF, ToolBank will design and prototype inclusive park furniture that meets accessibility standards and community needs. The project will involve community engagement and prioritize accessibility.

- **Timeline:** The project will impact multiple districts and is estimated to be completed by Spring 2025, contingent on funding.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Our office conducted two virtual informational sessions to address questions about the grant program and engaged directly with 20 organizations to provide additional guidance. We promoted the program through our monthly newsletter and social media platforms, ensuring broad outreach. Additionally, we collaborated with City Council members and their liaisons, requesting their assistance in sharing information about the program with their constituents and community networks.

FISCAL IMPACT: A \$250,000 transfer from the Office of Sustainability to create a new line item in the Non-Departmental agency. This transfer, sourced from the FY 2025 budget, will have no fiscal impact to the city's budget for this or future fiscal years, as no budgetary implications are from the grant program.

DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE: upon adoption

REQUESTED INTRODUCTION DATE: June 9, 2025

CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING DATE: June 23, 2025

REQUESTED AGENDA: Consent

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL COMMITTEE: Finance & Economic Development

AFFECTED AGENCIES: N/A

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING ORD. OR RES: Ord. No. 2024-099

ATTACHMENTS: Internal Memo: Neighborhood Climate Resilience Grant Program Update

STAFF: Laura Thomas – Director for the Office of Sustainability; Michael Smart – Sustainability Engagement Coordinator for the Office of Sustainability

Internal Memo: Neighborhood Climate Resilience Grant Program Update

The Office of Sustainability officially launched the Neighborhood Climate Resilience (NCR) Grant Program in 2023. It was included in the FY 2025 Budget with an allocation of \$250,000 to support projects that enhance climate resilience in frontline communities across Richmond. Since its launch, the program has received substantial interest. A total of 41 applications were submitted, with 36 completed submissions requesting a combined total of \$1,433,856.

Applicant Eligibility Criteria: To be considered for funding, applicants were required to:

- Serve Richmond communities in areas of equitable climate change, climate action, and climate resilience.
- Demonstrate alignment with the RVAgreen 2050 Climate Equity Action Plan;
- Submit a complete application with all required documentation, including a detailed scope of work and project budget.

Application Process: The application window opened on July 1, 2024. All submissions were reviewed and scored independently by a diverse panel composed of city staff and members of the Sustainability Resilience Commission:

- **Michael Smart** | Sustainability Engagement Coordinator, Office of Sustainability
- **Jackson Iglehart** | Sustainability Engagement Specialist, Office of Sustainability
- **Daniel Hart** | Chair, Sustainability Resilience Commission
- **Victor Cruz** | Co-Chair, Sustainability Resilience Commission

Outreach and Technical Support: The Office hosted two virtual information sessions to answer applicant questions and conducted direct outreach to 20 organizations for additional guidance. Program promotion was conducted through our monthly newsletter, social media platforms, and in collaboration with City Council members and their liaisons to ensure broad and equitable outreach.

Review Integrity and Documentation: All reviewers confirmed that they had no conflicts of interest with any applicants, and any conflict checks were documented and retained per applicable records retention laws. Reviewer scoring sheets, notes, and evaluation materials have also been properly archived in accordance with those same requirements and ensured the scores given correlated with the intent of the program.

The Office of Sustainability followed all frameworks, deadlines, and requirements outlined in the NCR Grant Program's policies and procedures. Awards were made to the highest-scoring applications. In the event an organization declines funding, the next highest-ranked application will be selected for award. Any deviation from standard procedures must be supported by clear documentation, justification, and formal approval to ensure transparency and accountability. We did reach out to the City Auditor but due to the time constraints they did not have the capacity to audit our process.

Selected Grantees: Pending final approvals, the following organizations are recommended for funding and had the highest scores per the applications they submitted:

- **ProFarms Gateway Inc.** – \$48,503
- **Second Baptist Church South Richmond** – \$49,999
- **FLIPP Inc.** – \$49,999
- **Studio Two Three** – \$49,999
- **Reedy Creek Coalition** – \$1,500
- **Future Habitats** – \$25,000
- **Richmond Community ToolBank** – \$25,000

These grantees represent a diverse cross-section of community organizations dedicated to advancing resilience, equity, and sustainability in Richmond.