

Department Source: Housing & Neighborhood Services

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: January 20, 2026

Re: Annual report on volunteer hours; update on Love Your Block

Impacted Ward: Citywide

Executive Summary

Each year the City's Volunteer Program, part of the Housing & Neighborhood Services Department, provides a report on volunteer activities for the previous year. Staff is also providing an update on the Love Your Block Program.

Discussion

In FY25, volunteers shared 32,764 hours of service with eight City departments. Using the national value of an hour of volunteer service provided by Independent Sector - \$34.79 – this effort is valued at nearly \$1.14 million. Staff estimates that about 7,000 individual volunteers shared time with the City. Volunteer programs received 280 applications from those interested in serving with the City, a 52% increase from the previous year.

Parks & Recreation receives the greatest support from volunteers with 15,118 hours of service followed by Utilities with 9,063 and Housing & Neighborhood Services with 7,261. Volunteers make a significant impact with litter control. Volunteers report collecting 6,784 bags of litter along streets and trails, and in parks and streams, but staff believes the true number is much higher. A report of FY25 activities with additional details is attached.

Love Your Block Update: Love Your Block, a program of the Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation at Johns Hopkins, has provided the City a \$100,000 grant over two years to support projects in central and northeast Columbia. During the first year of the grant in 2025, 11 mini-grants were funded to support neighborhood projects primarily in Ward 1. The [attached map](#) shares details on the locations and work of those projects.

The second year Love Your Block is starting with the mini-grant application period opening on February 14 and closing March 15 with winners announced in early April. Approximately \$15,000 will be available for mini-grants to support neighborhood projects. The remaining \$5,000 will be used to support neighborhood litter pickups and composting efforts.

Staff will be holding office hours where those interested in applying for a Love Your Block mini-grant can ask questions and receive guidance. Details about office hours, along with the application and other information is available at www.CoMo.gov/volunteer.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: \$20,000 received in Love Your Block funds for neighborhood projects in FY26

Long-Term Impact: In FY25, volunteer service hours benefited the City an estimated \$1,139,873 - staff anticipants a similar indirect benefit from the value of volunteer service in future years

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan ImpactStrategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Organizational Excellence, Secondary Impact: Safe Community, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities, Secondary Impact: Not applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Legislative History

Date	Action
02/03/2025	R 18-25 Authorizing the City Manager to enter into "Love Your Block" grant agreements to support neighborhood activities and minor home repair.
09/03/2024	Authorizing a subaward agreement with Johns Hopkins University associated with the design and implementation of the Love Your Block program to support activities in central neighborhoods; amending the FY 2024 Annual Budget by appropriating funds.

Suggested Council Action

Acceptance of this report.