



Gila River Indian Community Grant Application Grant Cycle 2025

Cover Sheet

Click field or use up/down arrow keys to move among fields

Municipality Information	
1. Date of Application: 3/19/2021	
2. Name of City, Town or County: Maricopa Arizona, Pinal County	
3. Mayor (City or Town) or Board of Supervisor's Chairman (County): Nancy Sith	
4. Mailing Address: 39700 W. Civic Center Plaza	
5. City: Maricopa	State: Arizona Zip Code: 85139
6. Acknowledgement of Submission by Authorized Municipality Representative: Typed Name/Title: Matt Kozlowski/Deputy CM, CFO Email Address: Matt.Kozlowski@maricopa-az.gov Signature:	
Applicant Information	
7. Department/Organization Name: Maricopa CAASA dba... Be Awesome Inc.	
8. Select Organization Type: 501c3 Non-Profit  If Non-profit please attach IRS Determination Letter	
9. Application Contact Person: Priscilla Behnke Title: Chief Executive Officer	
10. Phone Number: 520-428-7750	
11. Mailing Address: PO BOX 144 Maricopa AZ 8518	
12. City: Mariopa	State: Arizona Zip Code: 85138
13. Email Address: pbehnke@beawesomeyouth.life Website Address: www.beawesomeyouth.life	
Project Information	
14. Project Title: 347facts.com	
15. Purpose of Grant: Improve transportation to and from Maricopa	
16. Priority Funding Area	Transportation
17. Annual amount requested	\$7,300.00
18. Number of years that funding is requested	1
19. Total amount requested (annual amount x number of years)	\$7,300.00
20. Has your organization received past funding from GRIC? If yes, list each year and amount	No
21. Geographic area served	City of Maricopa Arizona in Pinal County

For Office Use Only:		
Data Entry	Receipt	Evaluation
<input type="checkbox"/> Approval – Amount/Term		<input type="checkbox"/> Denial



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Narrative

Please structure your proposal to provide the following information in the order indicated. Provide the narrative in paragraph form in the text field provided. Please be thorough but strive for brevity.

1. Briefly describe your organization's history, mission and goals.

Be Awesome is a nonprofit organization based in the City of Maricopa, dedicated to developing confident, connected, and successful youth through mentoring, education, and community programs. Founded seven years ago by two mothers who saw a need to address challenges facing youth, Be Awesome focuses on providing proactive strategies to prevent long-term issues such as drug and alcohol addiction, school dropout rates, delinquency, family conflict, and other concerns impacting youth and families.

In its relatively short history, Be Awesome has made a significant impact in the Maricopa community. The organization has:

- Provided school-based mentoring services for at-risk students.
- Delivered family management and parenting workshops.
- Hosted drug and alcohol prevention workshops for parents and community stakeholders.
- Facilitated after-school prevention clubs for 4th and 5th graders.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Be Awesome launched an after-school tutoring program to support students who had fallen behind academically due to school closures. This initiative contributed to one partner school achieving an "A" rating from the state that year.

Additionally, Be Awesome leads a youth coalition focused on reducing substance abuse in Maricopa, supported by an active teen subcommittee. This teen group has successfully developed community campaigns to educate peers about the risks of substance abuse and organized alternative recreational activities for local teens.

Be Awesome uses a data-driven approach, identifying and addressing risk and protective factors affecting youth in the Maricopa community. Recognizing that parental involvement is crucial, the organization has prioritized efforts to address commuting challenges on the SR 347, advocating for solutions that allow parents to spend more quality time with their families.

Through these efforts, Be Awesome remains committed to creating a healthier, safer, and more supportive environment for Maricopa's youth and their families.

2. To determine eligibility for this grant please select one item in the drop-down below.

Non-Profit



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If Municipal, please go to number 3 below.

If Non-Municipal or Non-profit, please describe how the services provided by your organization align with a government service of the supporting municipality. Explain how this project will support that service and describe the municipality's role in the project if applicable (beyond serving as a pass-through).

Be Awesome, Inc. is dedicated to developing confident, connected, and successful youth through education, mentoring, and community programs. However, the effectiveness of these services is significantly impacted by the congestion and long commutes caused by the limitations of State Route 347. The resulting time constraints place additional burdens on families, reducing opportunities for meaningful family engagement, increasing childcare challenges, and adding financial strain.

This issue aligns with the City of Maricopa's long-term vision for transportation improvements as outlined in the *2040 Vision Strategic Plan*. Specifically, Section C, "Transportation," Goal 1 states:

"Provide greater, more efficient mobility through multimodal transportation to and from Maricopa." (p. 11)

Additionally, the city's *Future Planning Document (2023)* reinforces this priority:

Trust 1: Transportation, Objective 1.1:

"To connect Maricopa to the surrounding region with safe and swift transportation that spurs economic growth, we will identify resources, seek opportunities, and support legislation to improve State Route 347."
(p. 1)

While SR 347 is essential for Maricopa's economic growth and quality of life, it falls under state jurisdiction rather than city control. To advance progress, Be Awesome seeks to support the city's efforts by mobilizing residents to advocate for improvements at the state level.

A billboard along SR 347 directing commuters to *347facts.com* would serve as a daily call to action, encouraging residents to contact state legislators, the governor's office, and the ADOT board. This initiative would complement the city's advocacy efforts by amplifying community voices, demonstrating public demand for improvements, and strengthening the case for securing critical funding and partnerships.

By investing in this strategic outreach effort, we can help ensure that Maricopa families have safer, faster, and more efficient transportation options—allowing them to spend less time in traffic and more time where it matters most.

3. Describe the proposed project, objectives, and your plan to implement.



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Funds from this proposal will be used to secure a three-month billboard advertisement along SR 347, strategically placed to maximize visibility among daily commuters. This campaign aims to drive engagement with *347facts.com*, a community-driven resource providing accurate, up-to-date information on SR 347 improvements while facilitating direct advocacy efforts with state legislators, the governor, and the ADOT board.

Be Awesome leadership actively participates in this resident-led initiative, which has already mobilized over 1,000 advocacy emails outlining concerns, complaints, and requests regarding SR 347. These collective efforts have contributed to ADOT elevating the highway to a top priority, with legislators outside Maricopa's district now proactively engaging with city leadership on the issue.

The primary goal of this project is to generate an additional 1,000 advocacy emails through *347facts.com* during the three-month billboard campaign.

Objectives and Implementation Plan

1. Billboard Design & Development (July 2025)

- Create a visually compelling design incorporating a QR code, website domain, and a clear call to action.
- Ensure messaging aligns with community advocacy goals and resonates with commuters.

2. Billboard Launch & Promotion (November 2025 – January 2026)

- Secure placement of the billboard on SR 347 for a three-month period.
- Leverage social media and community partnerships to amplify reach.

3. Tracking & Measuring Impact

- The *347facts.com* website designer will provide weekly email submission reports to track engagement.
- Progress will be monitored against the 1,000-email goal, with adjustments made as needed to maximize effectiveness.

By executing this strategic outreach effort, Be Awesome and its partners aim to sustain public momentum, reinforce advocacy efforts, and ultimately help secure long-overdue improvements to SR 347.

4. Describe how the proposed project satisfies one or more of the priority funding areas identified by the Gila River Indian Community.

The primary funding priority addressed by this project is **transportation**, specifically the urgent need for improvements to **State Route 347**. SR 347 is a critical transportation corridor for the City of Maricopa, yet the



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city has little to no jurisdiction over its funding, progress, or expansion timeline—despite being the community most impacted by its deficiencies. This project will help sustain engagement from key partners and decision-makers, ensuring that SR 347 remains a top priority for all stakeholders involved in its improvement.

Additionally, transportation directly influences **other key priority areas** outlined in this proposal, including:

- **Economic Development** – SR 347 congestion has negatively impacted the local labor market, making it difficult for businesses and essential institutions to attract and retain employees. Maricopa’s schools, hospital (which has reported challenges in maintaining key medical staff due to commute issues), and major employers such as Harrah’s Ak-Chin and Wild Horse Pass all rely on this roadway. Improved transportation infrastructure is essential for workforce stability and economic growth.
- **Education** – Parental involvement is a key indicator of student success. However, long commute times—often stretching to 10-12 hours per day—limit parents’ ability to participate in their children’s education, assist with homework, or engage with schools. Addressing SR 347 congestion would help alleviate this barrier to student achievement.
- **Healthcare & Emergency Services** – Quality healthcare cannot be effectively provided if hospitals and medical offices struggle to retain a qualified workforce due to transportation challenges. Additionally, emergency response times have been significantly impacted by SR 347 congestion, with first responders frequently delayed due to traffic bottlenecks and limited detour options.

By addressing transportation as the core issue, this project will have a ripple effect, improving economic opportunities, education outcomes, healthcare access, and emergency response times—all of which are critical to the well-being and sustainability of the Maricopa community.

5. Identify the needs/problems to be addressed, the target population and number of people to be served by the project.

Maricopa’s workforce faces significant challenges due to long commutes, with 69.8% of residents traveling 16 or more miles one way to work. Of these, 75% rely on SR 347 as their primary route, resulting in heavy congestion and extended travel times. These prolonged commutes have far-reaching effects on families and the broader community, particularly in terms of reducing protective factors like parental involvement and neighborhood attachment.

Parental involvement is a critical protective factor in preventing youth risk behaviors and fostering positive development. However, parents in Maricopa who return home late after long commutes often find themselves with



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limited time to engage meaningfully with their children. Dinner becomes rushed, homework help is squeezed into the few remaining hours before bedtime, and opportunities for deeper family connection are lost. For some families, evening grocery shopping begins as late as 7 or 8 PM, further compounding the lack of quality family time. This lack of parental engagement leaves youth unsupervised for extended periods, increasing vulnerability to risky behaviors and diminishing the sense of security that strong family connections provide.

In addition to impacting families, long commutes also erode neighborhood attachment, another key protective factor. Maricopa's unique infrastructure, including cinderblock fences and garage-oriented homes, already presents challenges to neighborly interaction. Extended commute times exacerbate this issue, leaving residents with little energy or opportunity to connect with their community. Many families retreat into their homes at night, closing their garage doors and unintentionally isolating themselves from their neighbors. This lack of social interaction undermines the sense of belonging and shared responsibility that strengthens neighborhoods and supports youth development.

Investing in solutions to reduce congestion on SR 347 will not only improve commute times but also create ripple effects that strengthen families and neighborhoods. Shorter commutes allow parents to be more present in their children's lives, participate in school and community events, and engage with their neighbors. Increased parental involvement and stronger neighborhood connections foster a safer, healthier environment for Maricopa's youth, ultimately building a more resilient community.

6. Define the project as a new or continuing program. Has GRIC previously funded this project?

This is a new and one time project.

7. Provide a brief timeline including start and finish dates. Indicate if the timeline is flexible.

The following project timeline based on the estimated timeline for fund disbursement.

- **November 2025** – Finalize and approve the billboard design, incorporating key messaging, a QR code, and a clear call to action.
- **December 2025** – Install the billboard along SR 347 in coordination with the advertising provider.
- **December 2025 – February 2026** – Billboard remains active for a three-month advocacy campaign, driving community engagement through *347facts.com*.

This timeline has been created in good faith based on the anticipated schedule for funding availability. However, Be Awesome remains flexible and prepared to adjust as needed should the timeline be expedited or delayed due to funding distribution or logistical considerations.



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8. Identify other organizations, partners or funders participating in the project and their roles.

The *347Facts* committee is a resident-driven coalition dedicated to advocating for the timely expansion and improvement of State Route 347. This collaborative effort brings together concerned community members, local leaders, and organizations to address the transportation challenges that impact Maricopa families, businesses, and the local economy.

Key partners and their roles in this project include:

- **347Facts Committee** – Leads public awareness efforts by providing accurate, up-to-date information about SR 347 improvements. The committee facilitates direct advocacy by equipping residents with the tools to engage state officials, ensuring their voices are heard in the decision-making process.
- **City of Maricopa** – While not the managing authority over SR 347, the city has prioritized its expansion in strategic planning efforts. City officials provide insight, amplify advocacy efforts, and engage with state legislators to push for funding and progress.
- **Be Awesome, Inc.** – As a community-focused nonprofit, Be Awesome supports the advocacy efforts of *347Facts* by leveraging its platform to engage families, businesses, and youth. Be Awesome leadership actively participates in the committee and contributes to outreach efforts, including the billboard initiative.
- **Website Developer & Digital Support Team** – Manages *347Facts.com*, tracks advocacy email submissions, and ensures accessibility for residents seeking to engage with state decision-makers.
- **Community & Business Supporters** – Various local businesses and organizations recognize the economic and quality-of-life impact of SR 347 congestion. Some have contributed funding, promotional support, or advocacy resources to further this effort.

This coalition-driven approach ensures that the *347Facts* initiative remains a powerful, community-backed movement advocating for real change.

9. Would you be able to implement the proposed plan if your organization received partial funding for this project?

Unfortunately, the proposed billboard campaign requires a minimum three-month contract, which must be secured in full to ensure the effectiveness of the initiative. As a result, Be Awesome would not be able to proceed with a reduced funding amount, as partial funding would not allow for the completion of the contracted term necessary for the project's success.



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10. Describe your plan for project financial sustainability beyond the grant period. If this is a program/project previously funded by the Gila River Indian Community, describe efforts made towards the previously described sustainability plan.

The proposed project is a one-year initiative designed to raise awareness and drive community action through targeted billboard advertising. As such, the project does not require ongoing financial support beyond the grant period. By the conclusion of the campaign, we anticipate achieving our goal of informing residents about the importance of advocating for the SR 347 expansion, equipping them with resources to effectively engage with state officials, and driving traffic to the 347facts.com website for accurate updates and advocacy tools.

This one-time funding will allow us to address the immediate need for public awareness, and the infrastructure created during the campaign—such as website enhancements, advocacy tools, and community engagement strategies—will continue to be utilized and supported by our partners without additional financial assistance.

We are confident this project will meet its objectives within the grant timeline and will not require further funding, ensuring it is both impactful and sustainable.

11. Describe your plan to document progress and results.

Be Awesome will track and document progress through a combination of meeting updates, contract milestones, and real-time advocacy engagement data.

1. Project Milestones & Implementation Tracking:

- Regular progress updates will be documented through committee meetings and meeting minutes, ensuring accountability and transparency.
- Key milestones, including the finalization of the billboard design, contract execution, and installation, will be recorded and reported to stakeholders.

2. Email Advocacy Tracking & Performance Metrics:

- James Singleton, the website developer for 347facts.com, will provide weekly reports on advocacy email submissions. These reports will include:
 - The total number of emails sent.
 - The number of bounced or undeliverable emails.
 - The timeline of email activity, allowing for an analysis of engagement spikes corresponding with the billboard campaign.



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- This data will help assess the effectiveness of the billboard in driving advocacy actions and reaching the goal of 1,000 additional emails.

By combining milestone documentation with measurable engagement analytics, Be Awesome will ensure that the project's impact is tracked, reported, and used to inform future advocacy efforts.

12. Indicate any application to and/or awards made by a tribe other than the Gila River Indian Community for state shared revenues for this and any other project for the past five (5) years.

There are no applications or awards made by a tribe for state shared revenues for this or any other project in the past five years.



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Project Budget

Budget Period: July 2025-June 2026

For each budget item listed, please provide a narrative description on the following Project Budget Detail page.

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
Proposed Budget Expense (list each budget item)	Amount requested from GRIC	Amount requested or secured from other sources	In Kind or matching contributions	Total Budget
1. Billboard Installation Fee	\$1050	\$0	\$0	\$1050
2. Billboard Monthly Fee	\$6250	\$5,000.00	\$0	\$11,250
3. Click here to enter text.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4. Click here to enter text.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
5. Click here to enter text.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
6. Click here to enter text.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
7. Click here to enter text.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
8. Click here to enter text.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
9. Click here to enter text.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
10. Click here to enter text.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
11. Click here to enter text.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
12. Click here to enter text.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
13. Click here to enter text.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
14. Click here to enter text.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
15. Click here to enter text.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Budget	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0



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Project Budget Detail

Please provide a narrative description for each of the project budget items listed on the previous page. Include the dollar figure and how it was attained.

1. Installation fee for billboard sign. One time fee of \$1,050
2. Monthly fee for billboard publication, $(\$3,750 \text{ p/m} \times 3 \text{ months}) = 11,250$ - \$5,000 pledged donation for the project from Global Water = \$6,250
3. Click here to enter text.
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Other explanation: Click here to enter text.

To ensure a complete application and proper submission please refer to the Grant Application Instructions.