

CITY OF KINGSTON

Office of the Mayor

mayor@kingston-ny.gov



Steven T. Noble
Mayor

November 6th, 2020

Honorable Andrea Shaunt
President Common Council
420 Broadway
Kingston, NY 12401

Re: Funding Recommendations for CDBG-CV

Dear President Shaunt,

While this has been an incredibly difficult year, I am so proud of our community, which has continued to work together during this challenging time. Over seven months later and volunteers are still delivering food and other essential supplies to neighbors across our city. Residents and visitors are continuing to safely patronize our local businesses, and our youth service partners have rapidly developed small learning centers to support children participating in remote classes. Thanks to another round of CDBG-CV funding, we have the opportunity to support a variety of these critical initiatives. While each of the proposed projects would contribute to our community during this difficult time, as is always the case, the proposals far outpaced the resources available. During this round of CDBG-CV funding, I focused on four key priority areas - youth education, housing assistance, food access, and local business support. Below are my recommendations for this round. It should be noted that I strongly encourage all of the other applicants to consider reapplying during our regular CDBG application process, as many of the proposed projects align well with our annual and 5-year plan.

Funding Recommendations:

City of Kingston Office of Economic and Community Development - Community Development Block Grant

Administration - I have allocated 10% (\$25,638) of the grant award for this expense. It should be noted that I previously recommended waiving the administrative fee during the first round of CDBG-CV funding, but the Council ultimately decided to include the administrative fee, though at a lower rate than the typical 20% fee applied during the regular CDBG process. If the Council wishes to fund additional projects and reduce or eliminate the administrative fee during this round, I would support that decision.

City of Kingston Parks and Recreation Department - technology upgrades for Community Centers. Both the Rondout Neighborhood Center and Everett Hodge Community Center are open and serving children on-site to participate in the school district's remote learning program. While the district has worked to distribute chromebooks as quickly as possible to students, some students still do not have the reliable equipment they need. Further, the pandemic has quickly shown that access to free internet, printing/scanning, and video calling equipment will be vital for both youth and adults moving forward. I am recommending \$30,000 to purchase a total of 30 computers, 4 printers and the necessary materials to support this important work.

Business Alliance of Kingston - our local businesses have been hit hard by the pandemic and are in need of assistance to stay open. While the KLDC has offered a number of zero interest loans, many applicants were still unable to access this assistance due to financial barriers. I am proposing to allocate \$30,000 to be used to assist approximately 7 businesses with grants up to \$4,000 as well as the materials, supplies and program administration. The support is targeted to assist low to moderate income business owners who may not be able to access conventional lending options.

Boys and Girls Club - the Boys and Girls Club has been a key partner in our effort to provide safe spaces for young people to go to during the summer and now during remote learning days. The large building allows the Club to provide remote learning assistance and recreation in small groups to maintain safety and provide the support children need during this difficult time. I am proposing to allocate \$15,000 to support these important efforts.

Center for Creative Education - as described above, access to safe, supervised children's programs, with an emphasis on in-person remote learning support, is a top priority of my administration during this critical time. CCE's new facility allows a large number of children to participate in small, socially-distanced groups, and includes new technology and other supports essential for learning in this new era. I am asking the Council to consider funding this program with at least \$25,000 in support, particularly since the organization was not approved for any funding during the first round of CDBG-CV.

Family of Woodstock, Inc. - in addition to managing the day to day operations of the Hodge Center's youth program and remote learning support, Family has been offering an extensive meal program, serving breakfast and lunches to youth on-site at the Hodge Center, as well as at the Rondout Neighborhood Center, Boys and Girls Club, and Center for Creative Education. The agency has been preparing meals for individuals and families in need through the Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative since its inception. I have allocated \$15,000 to support this critical meal program.

Legal Services of the Hudson Valley - while the moratorium on evictions has helped many individuals and families stay in their homes during the pandemic, we know that this halt is temporary and that it is likely that some of our residents will be facing eviction in the coming months. LSHV plays a critical role in supporting community members during the legal process, which can be overwhelming and confusing. While we do not have enough funding to support the full request, the City was able to support LSHV significantly during the first round of CDBG CV funding. I am allocating \$20,000 to continue to support this effort.

People's Place - this organization has distributed hundreds of thousands of meals throughout the pandemic and is still maintaining its holiday distribution programs, a critical resource for so many of our families in Kingston. I am recommending \$15,000 to support their request to pay for the costs of staffing needed to maintain safety protocols so they may continue to provide their essential services.

Read and Write - this organization has been a key partner with the Parks and Recreation Department at the Rondout Neighborhood Center. Under this partnership, staff from the Department and Read and Write have been working as one team in order to reopen the doors at the Rondout Center and assist youth in our downtown neighborhoods with remote learning. I am allocating \$10,000 to support their request.

Ulster County Community Action Committee - UCCAC is an anchor organization in our downtown community and has facilitated the distribution of thousands of meals to community members. In order to continue these essential services, I am recommending \$10,000 to support their food pantry program.

Ulster Immigrant Defense Network (UIDN) - this organization has been working to assist our vulnerable immigrant neighbors with essential needs such as food, diapers and personal hygiene items. I am allocating \$15,000 to support this important effort, which I believe is reaching community members who otherwise may not be able to easily access these basic necessities.

Housing Assistance - I am recommending the remainder of the funds (\$45,738) to be set aside to assist individuals and families in the coming months with housing needs. As you will recall, the Council authorized the reallocation of funding during the first round to be used for rental assistance, which I expect will be a great need in early 2021. I believe it is prudent to continue to dedicate resources to this area in preparation for the worsening housing crisis.

Virtually all of the applicants proposed worthy projects and it was incredibly difficult to make these recommendations. I thank all of the organizations for their contributions to our community and commitment to public service. If the Council has any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,



Steven T. Noble
Mayor