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September 15, 2016

RECEIVED

SEP 15 2016

Matthew Walsh
City Hall
41 Green Street
Concord, NH 03301

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
CONCORD, NH

Attn: Community Development Advisory Committee

Dear Matt;

The Concord Family YMCA is submitting an application for a Community Development Block Grant. This proposal is for the purpose of making improvements to our facility (aka the Fire House Building) located at 44 Warren Street, Concord. These improvements will include converting the building from steam to a gas-fired burner, extensive interior renovations and repairs, exterior repairs, a repair of the elevator, and an upgrade for the Playground.

Building History

The Fire House Building was built as a City of Concord Fire Station in 1875. It was sold to a local developer in 1980 and the Concord Family YMCA acquired it in 1998. In 2014 the Y qualified for an Emergency CDBG Grant to replace the failing HVAC system. It currently is listed on the National Register as part of the Downtown Concord National Register District (listed in 1999).

Need

The Fire House Building currently houses the Concord Family YMCA's Child Development Center Pre-School Program and is the home-base for one of the Y's six Kystop Afterschool program sites. Currently, nearly 57% of the children enrolled in the programs based in the Fire House Building qualify as low income.

The facility is heavily used. On average, 155-180 children and adults are housed in the building daily (135-150 kids and 25 teachers and staff). In addition, parents/guardians of the children are in the building at least twice daily to drop off and then pick up their children creating traffic that amounts to well over 300 people daily.

Structurally, the facility is in excellent condition; however, there are significant renovations and improvements needed. These include:

- a) Convert from steam generated energy to gas-fired boilers - The Concord Family YMCA is a Concord Steam customer. The Y will complete a conversion to gas-fired steam boilers in our Main Building at 15 N. Main Street by the end of September 2016. The Main Building steam usage accounts for 95% of the Y's steam expense. Due to the significant cost, our intention was to address the Fire House Building conversion at a later date. Even with rate increases, the \$8,000 cost for steam in the Fire House Building



was more than offset by the projected \$75,000+ savings due to the Main Building conversion. However, Concord Steam's impending closure will require us to find a new source of energy for the Fire House Building much sooner than we originally intended.

- b) Interior and exterior renovations and improvements - As previously mentioned, the Fire House Building is heavily used and shows that wear. The facility needs new flooring throughout the building, painting for the walls, ceilings, etc.; energy efficient lighting fixtures; exterior painting; new exterior doors and door jams; exterior stairwell repairs; and insulation. Some of the flooring dates back the early 1980's and it is impossible to make it look clean. Most of the lighting fixtures are older and are not efficient by today's standards.
- c) Elevator Repairs – The Fire House Building has a three-level elevator, however, due to the high cost of repairs it was disconnected and taken off-line in the spring of 2016. Although we can accommodate individuals with mobility issues on our second level, the lack of an elevator limits accessibility to both the lower and upper levels of the building.
- d) Playground Renovations and Improvements – The Playground features, flooring, and fencing date back to the late 1990's. They are heavily worn and for safety reasons must be replaced in the near future. The outdoor playground is a critical component of the Child Development Center pre-school program. It is used on a daily basis and plays an important role in the healthy development of pre-school children. It not only provides an opportunity for physical activity, but it also helps children learn appropriate social skills.

Programming Information

The Concord Family YMCA's Child Development Center Pre-School and Kydstop Afterschool Programs provide affordable, high-quality childcare and afterschool programming.

A central component of both programs is that we ensure that children from low income, vulnerable families have access to high quality, accessible education from early childhood to adulthood. This helps these children have access to high quality, affordable pre-school childcare, that will help them develop the skills and capabilities so that they are more likely to be better prepared to enter school, develop age-appropriate social skills, and, ultimately, be more likely to graduate from high school.

For the low income, vulnerable families of children in our Afterschool program we provide access to high-quality supervised, structured out-of-school activities and programs. This program will make it more likely that these students will experience improved academic performance, higher graduation rates, strong social skills, and higher incomes as adults. As was detailed previously, over 57% of the children based in the Fire House Building live in families that qualify as low income

A secondary benefit related to both programs is that they help low-income families become employed or maintain full employment enabling them to provide financial stability and support for their children's learning. *Child Care in New Hampshire: An Economic Impact Report* emphasizes the economic impact generated by the large number of New Hampshire parents who are able to work because of the existence of child care. Based on 2007 figures from the U.S. Census Bureau's *American Community Survey*, it was estimated that 57,073 of New Hampshire's preschool children needed care because either one parent (in single-parent households) or both parents (in two-parent households) were working.

As the Report concludes, "Quality child care is a positive factor to children with respect to educational success and attainment, employment, and lifetime earnings. Parents are given the

opportunity to choose to continue their career and give their children a good life start, and not compromise one or the other. Employers benefit from increased employee retention, reduced absenteeism, and a more highly educated workforce. It is obvious that quality child care contributes not only to the state's economic well-being but also to the future quality of life for all (see page 19).

The Concord Family YMCA Child Development Center and the Kystop Afterschool Programs are *License Plus* childcare providers. *License Plus* is a certification established by the NH Bureau of Childcare Licensing that is representative of a higher level of quality. The Concord Family YMCA Child Development Center is only one of about 11% of the nearly 1,200 licensed childcare providers in New Hampshire that have achieved *License Plus Certification*.

The value of these programs, especially for low income children, is only becoming more important. Award winning authors Robert Putnam (bestselling author of *Bowling Alone*) newest book, *Our Kids: The American Dream In Crisis* 2015, and Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman's book published in 2012, *Giving Kids a Fair Chance*, argue that fewer opportunities for upward mobility exist today creating an "opportunity gap" (Putnam) and that children born into disadvantage are, by the time they start kindergarten, already at risk of dropping out of school, teen pregnancy, crime, and a lifetime of low-wage work (Heckman). Both agree that early childhood intervention, such as high quality pre-school childcare, in particular center-based care, is an important strategy to improve the life chances of children from low-income families.

The value and importance of high quality afterschool programming is equally important but in a bit of a different way. The importance of afterschool programs has been well documented. "On school days, the after school hours between 3:00 - 6:00 pm are the peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and sex. In fact, these behaviors nearly triple during the afterschool time frame, when children are left unsupervised. In New Hampshire, an estimated 23% of kids/teens from kindergarten through high school go home alone every afternoon. Research has repeatedly proven that effective after school programs keep kids safe, help working families, and inspire learning." (Plus Time NH). In the long-term, the external benefits to society include lower use of welfare, reduced crime costs, higher wages, and as a result, increased tax revenue, higher labor force participation rates, and higher lifetime earnings.

Within New Hampshire a nonpartisan group, Our Kids NH, co-chaired by Steve Duprey and Lew Feldstein, has been formed based on Robert Putnam's book and research with the goal of helping to educate, facilitate discussion, and begin finding solutions to the "opportunity gap" in NH communities. If approved the CDBG application will enable the Y to avoid diverting financial resources to improve the Fire House building's functionality and efficiency and use those resources to ensure that the children of low income families will have access to high quality pre-school childcare and afterschool programs that are a hedge against the "opportunity gap" in the greater Concord community.

National & State Objectives

Our proposal addresses the following national and state objectives:

National Objective

- 1) Direct benefit to low income person or households - 57% of the facilities population qualifies as low income.

State Objectives

- 1) Projects that solve community problems, generate long-term benefits, and incorporate innovative solutions – the childcare programs the facility houses are represented by authors Putnam and Heckman as important strategies for improving the life chances of children from low-income families.
- 2) Preservation, renovation, or creation of housing or public facilities, which benefit low income individuals and households - 57% of the facilities population qualifies as low income.
- 3) Protection and preservation of historically and culturally valuable structures and site – The Fire House Building is listed on the National Register as part of the Downtown Concord National Register District.

Use of CDBG Funds

We estimate the entire project will cost approximately \$650 - 700,000. The CDBG funds are being requested to pay for a portion of this project including the following upgrades and improvements:

- 1) Steam Conversion/ estimated cost - \$125,000 – purchase and install a gas-fired steam boiler system
- 2) Building Renovations and repairs / estimated cost \$375,000
 - a) Replacement of exterior doors and jams
 - b) Remodeling of the front and rear lobbies
 - c) Replace the bathroom partitions, counters, and plumbing (as necessary)
 - d) Replace flooring in all common areas, hallways, and classrooms
 - e) Interior painting of all common areas, bathroomrooms, classrooms, and hallways
 - f) Install new energy efficient lighting throughout the facility
 - g) Resurface existing exterior stairs
 - h) Exterior painting of all wood surfaces (mostly eaves and trim)
- 3) Elevator Repair / estimated cost \$60,000

Concord Family YMCA Match

The Concord Family YMCA will provide matching money for this project. The Y will be fully responsible for all improvements and upgrades for the Playground portion of the project. In addition, the Y will seek additional funding sources to offset the cost of the project including energy rebates, grants, fundraising, and low-interest loans (i.e. NHHEFA*, BFA*, City of Concord Revolving Loan Fund, etc.).

*The Y currently has 1% interest loans from both the NHHEFA (Direct Loan Program) and the BFA (Business Energy Conservation Revolving Loan Fund). The Y is in good standing with both organizations and would be eligible for additional funding.

Best regards,


James S. Doremus
Chief Executive Officer