



CITY OF CONCORD

REPORT TO MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Matthew R. Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services and Special Projects

DATE: June 13, 2022

SUBJECT: Community Development Block Grants – Status Report Public Hearing

Recommendation:

- 1) Accept this report; and,
- 2) Conduct a public hearing on July 11, 2022 concerning status reports on the following Community Development Block Grant Projects:
 - a) Covid-19 Community Development Block Grant: \$499,899
 - b) Concord Makerspace: \$25,000

Background:

The New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority (NHCDFFA) is the state agency responsible for administering the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's (USHUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program in New Hampshire.

NHCDFFA rules require grant recipients to conduct a public hearing during the course of a CDBG project for the purpose of updating the community about CDBG funded projects.

Discussion:

- 1) Covid-19 Community Development Block Grant: On November 24, 2020, the NHCDFFA awarded the City \$499,899 of special Covid-19 Pandemic CBBG funds. The funds were sub-granted to the following entities. Status reports for each entity are as follows. This grant sunsets on December 31, 2022. Any unused funds will be forfeited to the NHCDFFA.
 - a) Concord Coalition to End Homelessness (\$178,905): Approximately \$137,313 (77%) has been spent to date. Funds have been primarily spent on staffing at the Homeless Resource Center and Winter Shelter. These facilities were heavily staffed with volunteers prior to the Pandemic; however, that staff modeling became obsolete at the height of the Pandemic. Funds have also been used on enhanced cleaning services and equipment necessitated by the Pandemic.
 - b) Family Promise (43,200): Approximately \$37,908 (87%) has been spent to date. Funds have been utilized on supplies and temporary lodging for individuals experiencing homelessness during the Pandemic.

- c) The Friends Program (\$83,599): Approximately \$12,027 has been spent to date on temporary housing for individuals during the Pandemic, as well as supplies and materials for their senior program (primarily grocery shopping for homebound seniors) and youth reading program (to address learning gaps created by stay at home learning during the height of the Pandemic).
 - d) The Friendly Kitchen (\$115,810): Approximately \$64,946 (56%) has been spent to date. Funds have been spent on equipment to help respond to the Pandemic, as well as take out service. In addition, the Kitchen has started supplying meals to food insecure families via partnerships with the Boys and Girls Club of Central New Hampshire, Merrimack Valley Day Care, and Senior Residences at Horseshoe Pond Place.
 - e) City Human Services Department (\$53,385): Allocation was intended to support temporary housing for individuals during the Pandemic, as well as rent support. Due to other programs enacted by the State and Federal government during the pandemic, as well as conflicts between State privacy laws for welfare recipients and CDBG reporting requirements for beneficiaries receiving temporary housing support from these funds, these moneys have not been expended.
- 2) Makerspace Planning Study (\$25,000): On November 4, 2021, the NHCDDFA awarded the City a \$25,000 CDBG Planning Grant funds. The funds were sub-granted to Concord Makerspace for the purpose of hiring a consultant to conduct a needs assessment and feasibility study concerning technical assistance services for entrepreneurs in the Capital Region.

The study will identify the number of micro-enterprise and small businesses within the region, current technical assistance resources and support systems for said businesses and gaps associated therewith, as well as develop a feasibility study / business plan to address identified gaps in technical support services for these businesses.

Subject to the results of the study, Concord Makerspace intends to partner with the City, or another eligible organization, to apply for CDBG Microenterprise Funds to finance technical support services and related resources for low and middle-income entrepreneurs and small businesses owners in the Capital Region. To make any such program viable, the City and Concord Makerspace anticipate said funds would be secured annually on a long-term basis from the NH Community Development Finance Authority.

If determined to be viable, Making Matters NH's entrepreneurial and business technical support program would likely serve to implement some of the concepts and recommendations contained within the 2011 Arts Incubator and 2017 Business Incubator studies.

The study is nearly complete. The consultant preparing the study has conducted several interviews with the Makerspace's staff and users, as well as area entrepreneurs. A survey of the project's target audience was also initiated. Data has been collected regarding the identified service gaps and opportunities associated therewith within the Concord region, and potential models to address identified gaps have been compiled for review. A draft of the study will be released shortly for stakeholders to review, following which the study will be finalized and made available to the public.