

**CITY OF WORCESTER
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT**

**FIFTH YEAR ACTION PLAN / PROGRAM YEAR 45
SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENT #5
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020**

DRAFT



July 5, 2022

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Pursuant to recent US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidance, *The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act* (CARES Act) Public Law makes available a total of \$5 billion in supplemental Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to be allocated across federal entitlement communities in the United States for the prevention, preparation, and response to, coronavirus impacts (CDBG-CV grants).

As per HUD guidance, through several amendments to its Consolidated Submission for Community Planning & Development (2015-2020), Fifth Year Action Plan, the City of Worcester has allocated \$4.7 million in HUD supplemental CDBG-CV funds to activities including \$800,000 for Small Business Resiliency Assistance, \$1,000,000 in Housing Rehabilitation programs, \$1,762,200 in Emergency Rental Assistance, and \$921,273 in Public Services.

SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENT POLICIES

Title 24 Section 91.505 of the Code of Federal Regulations stipulates that participating jurisdictions shall amend their approved action plans whenever they make one of the following decisions:

1. To make a change in its allocation priorities or a change in the method of distribution of funds;
2. To carry out an activity, using funds from any program covered by the Consolidated Plan (including Program Income) not previously described in the action plan; or
3. To change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.

The Regulation (CFR 91.505) further requires that a jurisdiction identify in its Citizen Participation Plan the criteria they use for determining what constitutes a substantial amendment. Consistent with these requirements, the Citizen Participation Plan adopted by the City of Worcester as a component of its 2015-2020 Consolidated Five Year Plan identifies three criteria that will require a substantial amendment:

1. To make a change in its allocation priorities or a change in the method of distribution of funds;
2. To carry out an activity, using funds from any program covered by the Consolidated Plan (including Program Income) not previously described in the action plan; or
3. To change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.

PROPOSED SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENT

The City of Worcester is now proposing to substantially amend its Consolidated Submission for Community Planning & Development (2015-2020), Fifth Year Action Plan, July 1st, 2019 – June 30th, 2020, in order to additionally fund the following activities and programs through the transfer of unused balances from allocations as itemized below and further described in this amendment document on the following pages:

Proposed CDBG Program Funding Reallocations

Project Name	Original Year 45 Funding Allocation	New Allocation	Funding Change
Housing Rehabilitation – COVID Lead Abatement	\$100,000.00	\$0	-\$100,000.00
Housing Rehabilitation – COVID Owner Occupied Rehab - WHN	\$95,600.00	\$0	-\$95,600.00
Housing Rehabilitation – COVID First Time Home Buyer	\$25,000.00	\$0	-\$25,000.00
Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Center, Inc. – Case Management Program	\$0	\$40,000.00	+\$40,000.00
Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Mass., Inc. – Employment Preparedness and Education Program	\$0	\$69,476.02	+\$69,476.02
United Way of Central Massachusetts, Inc. – YouthConnect 2022 Summer Youth Program	\$0	\$110,885.04	+\$110,885.04
TOTALS/DIFFERENCE:	\$220,600.00	\$220,361.06	\$238.94 (balance of funds)

This proposed amendment will allow the City of Worcester to fund the following activities and programs utilizing new and supplemental funds and guidance from the U.S. Department of Housing HUD related to the *The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)* Public Law. The following, as generally described herein, will be funded by amending the approved Fifth Year (2019-2020) Action Plan. The proposed projects, programs and activities are as follows:

CDBG-CV: \$220,361.06 (funded from transfer of unused balances from Housing Rehabilitation COVID Lead Abatement, COVID Owner Occupied Rehab, and COVID First Time Home Buyer programs)

1. Refugee Case Management Program: \$40,000.00

- Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Center, Inc.

Individuals and families most likely to be negatively impacted by COVID experience high levels of homelessness, over-crowded housing, unemployment, poverty, food insecurity and poor health (emotional and physical) issues. Refugees from Afghanistan experience conditions that typify those most at risk from the effects of COVID because they are fleeing conflict and oppression in their home country.

They have been transported to the United States with a minimum of personal goods, poor or no access to health care, housing, or employment with linguistic and cultural barriers the often prohibit them from successfully integrating into mainstream society. They also do not qualify for traditional government assistance programs such as TANF, SSI or Medicaid.

The Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Center, Inc. (RIAC) will assist the above named Afghan Refugees by delivery of a Case Management system that provides intake, assessment, translation and safety net services to address their personal issues and systematic barriers of transitioning to life in a foreign country. RIAC will deliver individual, refugee resettlement case management services to approximately 150 unduplicated clients (individuals or families) from September 1, 2021 to December 31, 2022, 57 of which will be supported by CDBG funds, in order to achieve at least two or more of the following outcomes through its Case Management program for each client: housing placement into a safe, permanent unit, acquire and maintain legal immigration status, enrollment in an education program, access to health care, receive eligibility for workforce training and/or employment, receive household goods and any other immediate basic unmet social service needs.

2. Employment Preparedness and Education Program: \$69,476.02

- Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Mass., Inc.

The mission of the Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Mass. (SEAC) is to help refugees, immigrants and long-term residents from Southeast Asia and Arabic speaking countries and other refugees in Worcester, especially from low / moderate income communities, meet their basic needs, and achieve economic viability. Individuals and families most likely to be negatively impacted by COVID experience high levels of homelessness, over-crowded housing, unemployment, poverty, food insecurity and poor health (emotional and physical) issues.

SEAC will serve 56 low- and moderate income persons through an employment preparedness and education program that provides job preparedness case management services and improves access to jobs and advancement opportunities. The Subrecipient will provide 56 clients with 64 hours of work-place ESL (English as Second Language) instruction, help with resume preparation, improve interview skills, provide job applications, and train 28 clients for internet use for job searches. The Subrecipient will assist 56 clients apply for jobs, 42 of whom will be interviewed by employers, 35 will be employed, and 14 who are not employed will receive further assistance to follow up with employers for a second chance or try new employment opportunities. This program will operate from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

The goal of this program is to increase client self-sufficiency and economic viability by improving their employment readiness and helping them access jobs and advancement opportunities.

3. YouthConnect 2022 Summer Youth Program: \$125,720.00

- United Way of Central Massachusetts, Inc.

City of Worcester youth from low- and moderate-income households have experienced a scarcity of in-person, recreational programming and activities owing to the COVID-19 pandemic during the last two

years and a half as a result of closed and limited access to recreational and cultural venues. United Way of Central Massachusetts shall address this scarcity by providing recreational, educational, and cultural activities for 200 economically disadvantaged youth ages 11 – 17 from the City of Worcester at facilities offering them recreational opportunities (e.g., Boys & Girls Club, YMCA of Greater Worcester, YWCA of Central Mass, Friendly House, Worcester Youth Center, etc.) from July-August 2022.

The YouthConnect program will provide recreational, educational, and cultural activities for youth Monday through Friday from 4:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Youth participants eligible for reimbursement through this contract are those who attend schools in which the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education classify a majority of the students as Economically Disadvantaged. The goal of the summer youth program is to decrease negative or risky behaviors among at-risk youth by providing them access to cultural and recreational venues during summer afternoons and early evenings.

Contracts, or contract amendments, for all above activities will be executed once formal scopes of work have been reviewed and determined to be cost reasonable per 2 CFR 200.00 et. seq. (entitled “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Federal Awards”) for requirements formerly set forth in O.M.B. Circular A-122 as well as full satisfaction of additional program eligibility criteria, including completion of Environmental Reviews per 24 CFR Part 58.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

In accordance with 24 CFR 91.105 (c) (3) for local governments, this proposed Draft Substantial Amendment for use of Community Development Block Grant funds, is being made available for a 30-day citizen review and comment period from July 5, 2022 through August 4, 2022 as was published in the Worcester Telegram & Gazette on July 5, 2022. The Draft Substantial Amendment (contained herein) is available during regular business hours between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday at the following locations:

- The City of Worcester Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development website- Main Page: <http://www.worcesterma.gov/housing-neighborhood-development>
- The City of Worcester’s Community Development website, Policies & Procedures Page: <http://www.worcesterma.gov/housing-neighborhood-development/community-development-block-grants/policies-procedures>

A public hearing will also be held at 5:30 PM, Thursday, July 28, 2022 by the Executive Office of Office of Economic Development to discuss the Draft Substantial Amendment (contained herein). The hearing will be held in City Hall Room 310B, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 455 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01608.

Public input, comments, and inquiries may be directed to the City of Worcester’s Executive Office of Economic Development as follows:

- By E-mail: Development@worcesterna.gov
- By Phone: (508) 799-1400

Anyone wishing to provide comments should provide their full name and contact information. The final day for accepting public comments will be Thursday, August 4, 2022.