



Edward M. Augustus, Jr.
City Manager

CITY OF WORCESTER

cm2022apr22085646

Attachment for Item #

9.41 A

April 26, 2022

TO THE WORCESTER CITY COUNCIL

COUNCILORS:

The below communication relative to the appointment of ad hoc committee members for the community allocation of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding, public dashboard and timeline for the grant-making process is forwarded for the information of your Honorable Body.

ARPA was signed in March of 2021 to provide support to state, local, and tribal governments in their efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, repair economic damage caused by pandemic-related conditions, and help governments recover from the financial impacts on revenues. A key focus as outlined by the U.S. Department of the Treasury is consideration for the disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency on those hardest hit by the pandemic, especially low-income families and communities of color. The City of Worcester received approximately \$146M, with approximately \$110M coming straight from the Federal government and \$36M coming via the Commonwealth. In order to ensure that our community-based investments were targeted to those needs, we put out a call for volunteers to assist in the prioritization and representation of needs within key areas such as creative economy, mental health, business assistance, community programs, and housing. These individuals will both help set priorities for funding within key areas and, depending on privacy considerations for applicants, be involved in the review and ranking of applications.

Of the 148 applications received, 36 committee members have been selected for appointment to one of the 5 advisory committees (7 members per committee; 8 members on the Affordable Housing Trust Fund). City of Worcester staff and external partners interviewed every eligible applicant collaboratively using a uniform scoring rubric removing potential bias from the process, along with trying to balance demographic and geographic representation (Council District*).

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Committee assignments are as follows:

CREATIVE ECONOMY

Phyllis Macharia
Utsav Shrestha
Jesse Gibson
Matthew Freijie
Alissa Briggs
Roseanne Fitzgerald
Charlie Washburn

MENTAL HEALTH

Alex Mooradian
Zhani Lito
Kerry Whiterell
Chantel Bethea
Kathleen Gervais
Lisa Brennan
Ethan Belding

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

Ivette Olmeda
Jennifer Marble
Jessica Velez
Tony Adade
Sandy Webb
Margie Breault
Mary Piecewicz

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Meg Coffin
Eliana Agudelo
Scott Galbraith
Darshia Diaz-Lugo
Tariana Nguyen
Moses Dixon
Joel Wallen

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND

Jackson Restrepo
Johanna Hampton-Dance
Gabriel Rodriguez
Xaulanda Thorpe
Lucelia DeJesus
Benetta Kuffour
Victor Agudelo-Ortiz
Keith Krikorian
James Brooks (City Manager Designee)

The Affordable Housing Trust Fund nominees include more than the required two

individuals with current or past-lived experience in affordable housing as well as at least one individual with housing development or housing finance experience.

Committee Demographics – highlights

Race/Ethnicity: 19% Latino, 28% Black, 47% White, 3% Asian, 3% Two or More

Gender Identity: 42% Male, 56% Female, 1% Otherwise Identified

Council District: D1- 25%; D2- 8.3%; D3- 13.8%; D4- 11.11%; D5- 41.6%

*Council district representation of the appointees is representative of overall percentage of total applicants.

Committees will receive an on-boarding orientation and will review RFPs and grant recommendations from City Administration and the Worcester Together logistics committee for awards within their respective subject areas.

The timeline is as follows (subject to minor adjustments):

- Early May:** Committee on-boarding/training
Committee meetings commence staffed by City personnel overseeing funding categories
Committees to review grant application/RFP prior to public launch
- May-June:** First round of grant applications/RFPs published
Workshop/tutorials in each funding category scheduled. **RFPs will be released on a rolling calendar as they become available**
- June-July:** Grant application review and scoring. Committees will review applications using a scoring rubric.
- July:** Recipient recommendations made to City Manager
- July-August:** Recipients notified of award – Grant agreements sent to recipients
- Ongoing:** RFPs released to the public as available (all funds must be encumbered by close of 2024)
Dashboard updated once a month
Committee review of reports from grant recipients
Periodic reports to City Council

Through the collaborative efforts of the Budget Office and Office of Urban Innovation, a dashboard is now available representing the entire \$146M allocations which includes the \$50M in community-based initiatives that the ad hoc committees are being mobilized to assist with. This dashboard will be updated on a monthly basis to reflect

the ARPA budget and cumulative expenditures that have been incurred against the City's ARPA awards (both federal and state pass-through). The intent of the dashboard is to provide the Worcester community with accurate and easily accessible information on how these funds are being spent throughout the City. The dashboard also breaks down the spending categories in a format that easily identifies the funding categories that are eligible under ARPA. To date, expenses have largely focused on municipal revenue recovery, investments in health infrastructure including the DCU Center – the City's emergency hospital for the pandemic, and technology investments to allow the City to function in a remote environment. Spending for community-based initiatives has awaited the establishment of the ad hoc committees and the RFP process for organizations, businesses, and individuals to apply for ARPA funding to support their projects and programs. We anticipate expenditures to increase over the coming months as grant funds are awarded and distributed throughout the Worcester community.

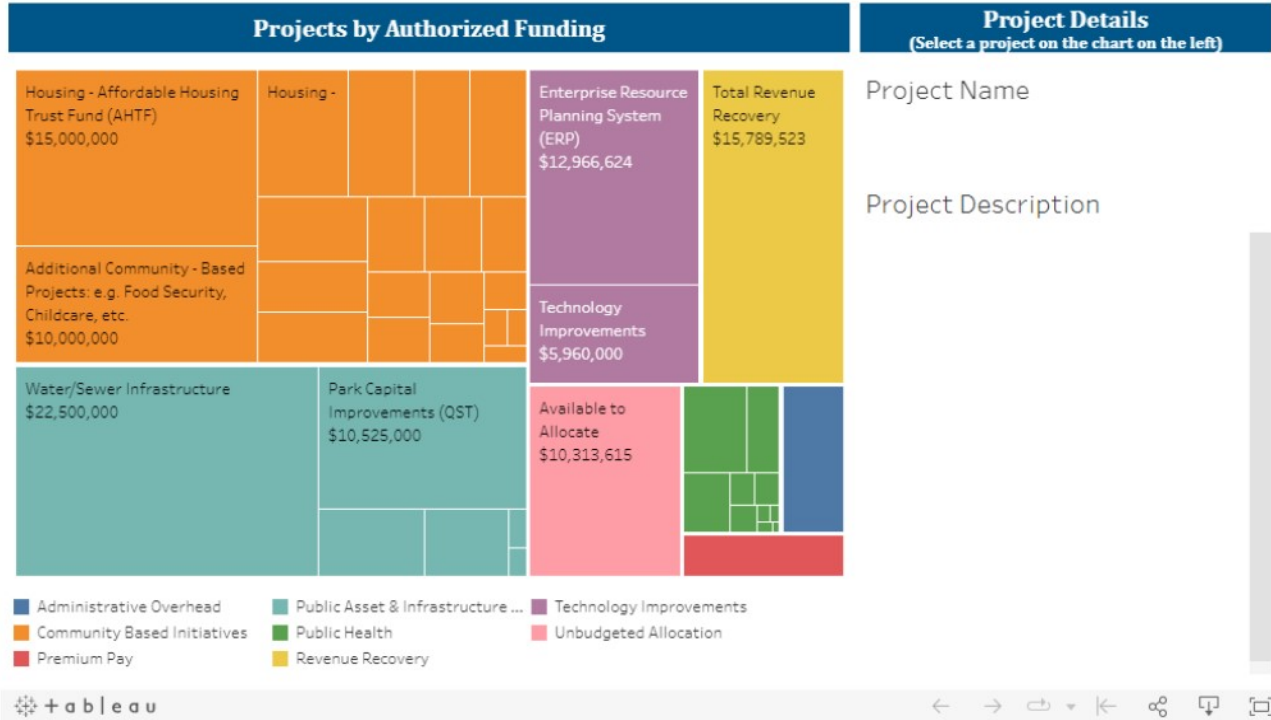
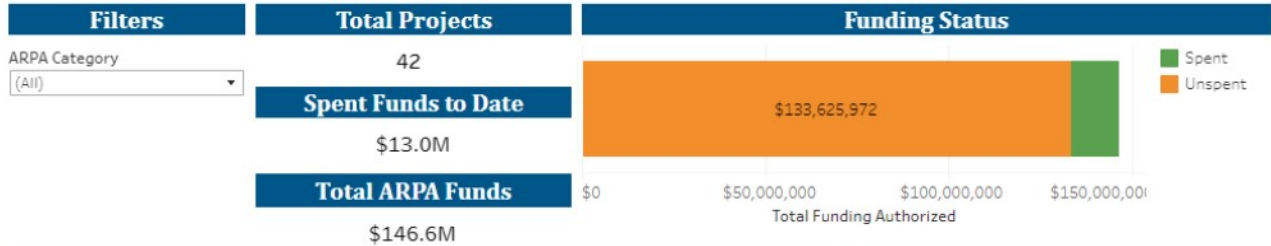
LINK TO DASHBOARD:

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/cityofworcesterma.innovationoffice/viz/ARPAProjects/Dashboard1#1>

VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF DASHBOARD:



American Rescue Plan Act Projects



Respectfully submitted,

Edward M. Augustus, Jr.
City Manager