

# City Of Torrington

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
(860) 496-5920



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Torrington, CT 06790-5245

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## MEMORANDUM

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TO: City Council CC:

FROM: ARPA Committee file

DATE: FEBRUARY 17, 2022

RE: ARPA Funding: Strategic Plan

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URGENT     FOR REVIEW     PLEASE COMMENT     FOR YOUR USE     PLEASE RECYCLE

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Dear Council Members,

Since February/March of 2020 many City Officials have been fully immersed in responding to both the public health emergency as well as helping the community address the economic hardships caused by COVID-19 as this pandemic unveiled before us.

Unlike a natural disaster, say a hurricane, where you immediately respond to the threat, then focus on recovery when the threat is over, this pandemic has stretched local resources. City Officials and community partners, were, and still are, simultaneously responding to the health threat and addressing the economic hardships caused by the health threat.

To ensure the needs of the community are met, cross-sector communication was, and remains, critical. Over the past 2+ years, the City has taken an active role in coordinating proper communication, ensuring limited resources were distributed to residents & businesses in need, and maintaining all day to day municipal operations.

Noteworthy initiatives are as follows:

**Situational Awareness meetings:** Since March 10, 2020 there have been 28 Situational awareness meetings. Attendees at Situational awareness meetings include representation from the following:

- Emergency Management Director
- Region 5 Emergency Management Director
- Torrington Area Health District
- Fire Department / CERT Volunteers
- Police Department
- Mayor's Office
- Public Works
- Trinity Ambulance
- Community Health and Wellness
- Senior Center
- Economic Development
- Region 5 Recovery Committee
- IT
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Housing Authority

These meetings include updates and roundtable discussion on challenges each organization or department is facing and identifies community needs that each organization or department is addressing or has become aware of.

These meetings are instrumental in:

- Creating collaborations across a variety of organizations,
- Ensuring limited services or resources are being distributed fairly and
- Identifying any gaps in services or resources; then further identifying how that need could be addressed.

### **State-wide Emergency Management Director and CEO calls with Governor & Region 5**

Communication with State and Regional Officials was also critically important to ensure we were responding to, and complying with, the most up to date information. This communication also ensured that State and Regional Officials were made aware of local needs so they could respond accordingly.

Weekly conversations with the Governor's Office were held to discuss executive orders and public health guidelines, including updates on positivity, hospitalization and death rates.

John Field, DEMHS Region 5 Coordinator, also held weekly meetings to discuss logistics of PPE delivery, regional resources and community need.

## **Long Term Recovery Committee**

In July of 2020, the City of Torrington's Long Term Recovery Committee was created. The purpose of this committee was to have representation from various community organizations to help identify unmet needs within the Community. The full committee met 16 times, plus 8 additional meetings to discuss food insecurity, housing insecurity, downtown business roundtable discussion and impacts to restaurant, tourism & hospitality industry.

Long Term Recovery Committee members are:

- Elinor Carbone
- Rista Malanca (Co-Chair)
- Martin Connor (now Jeremy Leifert)
- Pete Towey (now David Tripp)
- Cathy Coyle (Brooker Memorial)
- Nancy Cannavo (Gathering Place)
- Catharina Ohm (Youth Service Bureau)
- Gina Burrows (Community Health & Wellness)
- Kevin Johnson (Reverend AME Zion Church)
- Donna Labbe (Torrington Schools)
- Michael Menard (Larc/ Co-Chair)
- Michelle Anderson (Ed Advance)
- Owen Quinn (United Way)
- Rufus de Rham (Warner Theatre)

This Committee worked together to solve problems utilizing local resources, when possible. When local resources were not available, the committee advanced the unmet needs to the regional recovery committee to access regional resources. The top "unmet needs" within the community were centered around child care providers, food insecurity & housing insecurity. These needs are still prevalent in the community today, with the addition of a scarce workforce that is having a significant impact on employers operating to capacity.

A few key deliverables from the Long Term Recovery Committee include:

- Created safe operating and opening procedures for child care centers (thanks to Brooker Memorial) and distributed them widely
- Identified locations businesses could purchase signs, partitions and PPE they needed to re-open and
- Provided important links to resources for a variety of organizations, that allowed them to re-open or continue to operate

## **Tele-Town Hall Meetings**

In the early stages of this pandemic, guidance was changing rapidly and raised much confusion. In order to provide both reliable resources and clarification to specific industry sectors guidance, the City held 10 Tele-Town Hall meetings. Tele-Town Halls were held for the following sectors: Restaurants, Offices, Houses of Worship, Hair & Nail Salons, Real Estate Agents, Manufacturing, Child Care Centers and Sports and Fitness Facilities.

Tom Stansfield from Torrington Area Health District, Mayor Carbone, Rista Malanca and Peter Towey, along with various other local officials that were pertinent to the discussion, attended these meetings. Real-time attendance was between 15-30 people. Those participants had the opportunity to ask specific questions of local officials. Tele-Town Halls were recorded and then put on the City website, which had significant views.

### **COOP Committee**

Municipalities perform a variety of duties that are critical to public health and safety. A plan to ensure the Continuum of operations Plan (COOP) across departments was developed. Different COOP's were necessary for the Police Department, Fire Department, Public Works, Senior Center and City Hall.

Each COOP identified the critical functions that each department performed, who the primary person was that performed that tasks and others that have the knowledge/ability to perform that task. It was further detailed, what additional resources, such as remote access, would be required to ensure that task are able to be carried out in the event staff contracted COVID or Municipal Buildings were closed.

Part of the COOP also included operational changes, to protect the City's workforce. This included measures to ensure social distancing, barriers to separate staff from public, distribution of proper PPE and creation of policies that comply with EFMLA and CDC guidelines for exposure.

### **Food & PPE Distributions / CERT Volunteer training and capacity building**

To address the increased demand on resources, such as PPE, and services, such as a Food Pantry, community-wide distribution of food, masks, thermometers and most recently test kits were held. These distributions are staff intensive to organize and run effectively and efficiently. To meet the staffing demand, the City relied on CERT Volunteers.

The City ramped up recruitment and training of CERT Volunteers to address this need. There were weekly food distributions through the Farm to Families program that were held at the Torrington Middle School and Riverview Parking Lot. There were 8 masks and thermometer distributions to businesses and multiple mask distributions to the general public. Most recently, there were 3 test kit distributions at 5-Points Center for the Arts, Riverview Parking Lot and the Torrington Middle School.

CERT volunteers also assist TAHD with their vaccination clinics.

### **Up to date Webpage, Pandemic Related Newsletter & Torrington Thrives email**

The City coordinated with Torrington Area Health District, Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, Torrington Public Schools, Trinity Ambulance and Community Health and Wellness to provide up to date guidance and resources to residents, non-profit organizations and businesses.

On March 23, 2020 a letter to every business in Torrington was mailed, through the US Postal Service to give ensure businesses had proper contact information and access to important resources.

The City maintain a webpage, on the City's home page, that offered a "one-stop" approach to important links and information related to COVID-19. This included information on CDC guidelines, Governor Lamont Executive Orders, Re-Opening protocols and guidelines, resources to purchase PPE, resources to purchase necessary signage and cleaning products, testing locations, vaccination locations and details on food distributions to name a few.

In addition, an emergency newsletter was issued several times a month that contained up to date information that mirrored the City's webpage. This newsletter was distributed on all social media pages and email blasts of community partners.

We also wanted to be sure we heard from residents and businesses who had specific questions or hardships. [Torringtonthrives@torringtonct.org](mailto:Torringtonthrives@torringtonct.org) was established for all residents, non-profits and businesses to send questions or inquires related to COVID. This email was monitored daily and inquiries were passed on to the proper agency or department.

### **Overflow Facilities**

As hospitals throughout the State became overwhelmed with COVID-19 positive patients, we prepared to standup an overflow facility at East School. Fortunately, CHH was able to keep up with demand in-house and overflow hospital facility was not needed; however, significant planning and coordination between the City, CHH and National Guard had taken place to prepare for this situation.

### **Testing & Vaccination Clinics @ the Armory & Coe Park**

In order to provide community access to both COVID-19 testing and vaccination, including boosters, the City worked closely with CHH to provide locations for clinics.

Over the past 2+ years, both the Armory and Coe Park Civic Center have been used for regional testing and vaccination clinics.

## **Marketing Efforts – It’s Happening Here**

As restrictions were lifted, and businesses began re-opening, their needs continued to change. One major need from local businesses, across multiple business sectors, was the need for marketing help. Businesses were struggling to pay rent and open their doors, so funds for marketing was not available to many. In addition, workforce was, and remains, limited; therefore, staffing to promote business was also limited.

The City re-established the “It’s Happening Here” campaign, by making improvements to the [itshappeninghere.com](http://itshappeninghere.com) website, drawing traffic to that website through postcards, radio ads and posters. In addition, the City created 2 commercials and is in the process of creating additional promotional material.

A Communications Intern was hired, to ramp up social media presence that promotes local businesses, develop a “It’s Happening Here” monthly newsletter and formalize the City’s branding related to It’s Happening Here.

## **ARPA Funding**

Despite the significant effort that has been exerted to respond directly to the health emergency and to the hardships created by the pandemic, there are still unmet needs within the community. The City is receiving \$10, 074,000 of Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to help meet the needs of the community and create resiliency and sustainability that will provide the ability to efficiently respond to future needs of the community, as the impacts of this pandemic are expected to be long lasting and continually changing.

The approach to the City’s Survive and Thrive Recovery Plan has been to “grease the wheel, not reinvent the wheel” whenever possible.

To create a strategic plan for the spending of the City’s ARPA funds, Mayor Carbone established an ARPA committee, comprised of City Staff that has been deeply involved with responding to the community’s needs with a hands on approach.

Members of the City’s ARPA committee are as follows:

- Mayor: Elinor Carbone
- Police Chief: William Baldwin
- Fire Chief: David Tripp (Formerly Pete Towey)
- Director of Public Works: Ray Drew
- Facilities Manager: Jamie Sykora
- Director of Economic Development: Rista Malanca
- Director of Elderly Services: Joel Sekorski
- City Planner: Jeremy Leifert (Formerly Martin Connor)

On May 10, 2021, the US Treasury released the 151-page interim final rule that provided guidance on how the ARPA funds were to be used. The interim rule was complex and gave little guidance on how the funds could be spent. Attendance at state-wide conferences and discussions with other municipalities, helped provide some clarity, but across the board there were still many unanswered questions.

Realizing there was immediate need in the Community, the ARPA committee met in 2021 on 7/9, 7/22 & 8/25 to discuss the American Rescue Plan Act funding and identify ways this funding can better help the City of Torrington respond to the public health emergency (COVID-19) and address negative impacts, caused or exacerbated by COVID-19, within the community.

Due to the uncertainty of the Interim Rule, the Committee took a conservative approach to how these funds could be spent. After a draft spending plan was prepared significant community outreach was done to ensure all of the needs of the community had been addressed, to the fullest extent possible.

Members of the Committee met with the following organizations to discuss:

- City of Torrington's Long Term Recovery Committee
- Hartford Health Care
- Torrington Area Health District
- NW CT Chamber of Commerce
- Torrington Development Corporation
- NW Community Foundation
- Fit Together
- Rotary
- Friendly Hands
- New Opportunities

On September 20, 2021 a public presentation was given at a City Council meeting, and public input was encouraged at the meeting as well as to submit input to the Mayor's office after the meeting. This plan has been on our website

On January 6, 2022 the US Treasury released the 437-page Final Rule which provided further clarification on how the funds are allowed to be spent.

<https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-Final-Rule-Overview.pdf>

The final rule requires that the recipient (City of Torrington) and all sub-recipients follow federal award terms and conditions, including the Uniform Guidance at 2 C.F.R subsection 200.331-200.333. <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200>; therefore, approval of this spending plan does not waive any formal procurement process required for the proposed services.

### **Next Steps**

After review of the final rule and careful consideration of community input, the City's ARPA committee has developed a draft strategic plan, which includes an estimated budget and summary of each initiative proposed to be funded.

This proposal will be submitted to City Council for review on February 22, 2022. Simultaneously, this proposal will be posted on the City's website and public input through a google survey [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1GL0thdYadJRF9L5-MuGxTh3ZkUIGJ0zKctlDsuAW\\_E/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1GL0thdYadJRF9L5-MuGxTh3ZkUIGJ0zKctlDsuAW_E/edit?usp=sharing)

All input and modification will be shared with City Council on March 7, 2022. At which time, we encourage City Council to votes on this strategic plan, so that we can move forward with implementation.

**\*\*Bold items are non-negotiable**

**\*\* Items in red have been previous obligated**

	Funding Priorities	Proposed Funding
<b>Administration costs</b>		
<b>City Grant admin / legal advice specific to ARPA (80hrs/qtr. @\$100/hr.)</b>	<b>\$64,000.00</b>	<b>\$64,000.00</b>
<b>NW Community Foundation for administration of Grants (est. 2% of funds)</b>	<b>\$60,000.00</b>	<b>\$45,000.00</b>
<b>Board of Education</b>		
<b>BOE: English as a 2nd language teachers, paras &amp; tutors to address English learning students. Social workers at THS &amp; TMS to address re-engagement and emotional support</b>	<b>\$569,281.00</b>	<b>\$569,281.00</b>
<b>Building Improvements</b>		
<b>Access Control (All Buildings)</b>		
Fire Headquarters	\$30,000.00	\$-
North End Station	\$6,000.00	\$-
Police	\$95,000.00	\$95,000.00
Armory	\$6,000.00	\$-
Senior Center	\$6,000.00	\$-
Public Works	\$40,000.00	\$-
Animal Control	\$24,000.00	\$-
Coe Park civic Center	\$6,000.00	\$-
Teen Center	\$12,000.00	\$-
<b>Total Access Control</b>		
<b>Animal Control Facility</b>	<b>\$1,000,000.00</b>	<b>\$1,000,000.00</b>

<b>Improvements to Armory</b>		
Ceiling insulation	\$80,000.00	\$-
Upgrade LED Lighting	\$55,000.00	\$40,000.00
Side entrance ADA ramp	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
New HVAC system	\$850,000.00	\$-
electrical upgrades	\$25,000.00	\$-
emergency generator	\$100,000.00	\$-
<b>Total Armory Improvements</b>		
<b>Improvements to City Hall</b>		
Technology Improvements to Council Chambers (City Hall) to improve community outreach and meeting participations	\$55,000.00	\$55,000.00
<b>Improvements to Fire Department (headquarters)</b>		
Elevator	\$100,000.00	\$-
Lighting	\$57,000.00	\$57,000.00
VFD on motor	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
BMS (Building Maintenance System)	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00
<b>Total FD Improvements</b>		
<b>Improvements to Police Department</b>		
HVAC	\$88,000.00	\$88,000.00
Lighting	\$81,000.00	\$81,000.00
Security fencing	\$50,000.00	\$-
<b>Total PD Improvements</b>		
<b>Security Cameras</b>		
North End Station	\$35,000.00	\$-
Armory	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
Public Works	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00
321 Oak Ave - park	\$8,000.00	\$-
Animal control	\$45,000.00	\$-
Coe Park civic Center	\$85,000.00	\$-

Teen Center	\$25,000.00	\$-
Traffic Garage	\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00
Franklin Plaza	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00
Total Security Cameras		
<b>Improvements to Senior Center</b>		
BMS @ Senior Center	\$68,000.00	\$68,000.00

<b>Community Grants</b>		
Community Impact: Mini-Grants	\$500,000.00	\$500,000.00
Community Impact: Partnership Grants	\$1,550,000.00	\$1,250,000.00
<b>Façade Grant: already allocated</b>	<b>\$286,937.00</b>	<b>\$286,937.00</b>
Lead abatement program (TAHD)	\$300,000.00	\$200,000.00
Resource Navigator	\$150,000.00	\$-
Small Business & Non-Profit Direct Assistance Grant	\$500,000.00	\$500,000.00
Workforce Navigator	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00

<b>Health Care: Community Support</b>		
Social Care Provider: Data Collection & Strategic Plan	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
Social Care Provider: Implementation of Study	\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00
<b>Stand up Medical Clinic to CHH</b>	<b>\$36,000.00</b>	<b>\$36,000.00</b>

<b>Infrastructure Improvements (other than municipal buildings)</b>		
100 Franklin Street - brownfield remediation	\$125,000.00	\$226,500.00
Communications Radios	\$3,000,000.00	\$3,000,000.00
Feasibility Study for Public Safety complex	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
Police: CAD & RMS System	\$300,000.00	\$-

Winsted Rd: Pedestrian tunnel - sewer improvements Winsted Rd	\$1,000,000.00	\$750,000.00
Total Above	\$12,193,218.00	\$9,631,718.00
Total ARPA funding to City	\$10,074,000.00	\$10,074,000.00
Difference between actual funding & Proposed funding	\$(2,119,218.00)	\$442,282.00
Contingency		4.39%

## **Funds Previously Committed**

**Board of Education:** English as a 2<sup>nd</sup> language, teachers, paras & tutors to address English learning students. Social worker at THS & TMS to address re-engagement and emotional support

**Budget \$569,281**

**Façade Grant:** Funded an additional 17 applications for the City's Façade and Building Improvement Grant Program

**Budget: \$286,937**

**Temporary Medical Clinic:** CHH stood up a temporary medical clinic at Coe Park Civic Center, to increase access to medical care, testing and vaccination in downtown Torrington. Funds were provided to Coe Memorial Trust to cover expenses associated with opening the Civic Center for this medical clinic.

**Budget: \$36,000**

**Animal Control Facility:** Funds have been allocated to close the funding gap and proceed with the construction of the Animal Control Facility.

**Budget: \$1,000,000**

**Total funds previously allocated: \$1,892,218**

## **Northwest Community Foundation Sub-grant administration**

The City does not have in-house capacity to administer a robust grant program, that complies with the federal reporting guidelines; however, we recognize a grant program to infuse these funds into the community is essential.

In order to most effectively administer these sub-grant awards, it is recommended that Northwest Community Foundation be retained to handle the administration of these grant programs.

The City will enter into an MOU with the Foundation to clearly identify the roles of both the City and the Foundation. These funds would be set up as a donor advised fund.

As a donor advised fund, the City to establish a committee that will be responsible to review the applications and ultimately determine which applications to fund.

Possible committee would consist of:

- Mayor
- City Council Member (R)
- City Council Member (D)
- Board of Public Safety Member
- Board of Finance Member
- Economic Development Commission Member
- Representative from CHH

## Municipal Building Improvement summary

In order to effectively respond to the public health crisis, improvements to municipal buildings that provide better access and sustainability are necessary. In addition, inefficiencies in ventilation, throughout municipal buildings, was also brought to light, especially in facilities such as the Senior Center, which supports a more vulnerable population.

In order to provide community access to both COVID-19 testing and vaccination, including boosters, the City worked closely with CHH to provide locations for clinics, such as the Armory and Coe Park Civic Center.

Upgrades proposed below would improve community response to future pandemic needs, improve safety for residents and employees, increase buildings efficacies and lower annual operational expenses.

<b>Senior Center</b>			<b>Security Cameras</b>	
BMS	\$ 68,000.00		North End Station	\$ 35,000.00
			Armory	\$ 25,000.00
<b>Improvements to Armory</b>			Public Works	\$ 45,000.00
Ceiling insulation	\$ 80,000.00		321 Oak Ave - park	\$ 8,000.00
Upgrade LED	\$ 55,000.00		Animal control	\$ 45,000.00
Side entrance ADA ramp	\$ 15,000.00		Coe Park civic Center	\$ 85,000.00
New HVAC system*	\$ 850,000.00		Teen Center	\$ 25,000.00
electrical upgrades	\$ 25,000.00		Traffic Garage	\$ 35,000.00
emergency	\$ 100,000.00		Franklin Plaza	\$ 45,000.00
<b>Improvements to Police Department</b>			<b>Access Control</b>	
HVAC	\$ 88,000.00		Fire Headquarters	\$ 30,000.00
Lighting	\$ 81,000.00		North End Station	\$ 6,000.00
			Police	\$ 95,000.00
<b>Improvements to Fire Department (HDQTRS)</b>			Armory	\$ 6,000.00
Lighting	\$ 57,000.00		Senior Center	\$ 6,000.00
VFD on motor	\$ 5,000.00		Public Works	\$ 40,000.00
Maintenance System)	\$ 100,000.00		Animal Control	\$ 24,000.00
			Coe Park civic Center	\$ 6,000.00
			Teen Center	\$ 12,000.00

# Technology Improvements Council Chambers

## **Background**

As the public health emergency ramped up, restrictions on gatherings was one of the first mandates put in place by both the CDC and Governor Lamont.

Complying with these requirements meant that City Boards and Commissions could not hold public meetings the traditional way. At first all public meetings were held via ZOOM; however, as the regulations began to loosen up a bit, Boards and Commissions were allowed to meet in person, but occupancy in the Council Chambers was still limited. To allow any member of the public that was interested to be present and participate in all public meetings, Board and Commission meetings were held as a Hybrid meeting. Although occupancy requirements have been lifted, the pandemic continues to be present and have occasional spikes in positivity rates. Many people, for a variety of reasons, are still reluctant to attend gatherings with large number of people, especially people they do not know.

For this reason, and because we have seen an increase in the number residents attending and participating in local board meetings, the City plans to continue to hold hybrid Board and Commission meetings. The existing technology in Council Chambers was not designed to effectively host virtual or hybrid meetings. While we have been able to install temporary technology to get us by, there is often concerns with audio and visual components expressed by the virtual attendees.

## **Summary**

The proposed improvements would provide a user-friendly system that reduces the chance for operator error and provides higher quality audio and visual components for both the virtual and in-person user.

## Community Impact Grants

This program was established to provide local organizations financial assistance to:

1. Provide new services and programs to individuals, households or “impacted industries” that have had a negative economic impact caused or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Increase capacity of existing services and programs to meet increased demand of individuals, households or “impacted industries” that have had a negative economic impact caused or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This program is funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

The recipient of this grant will NOT be the direct beneficiary of these funds, but rather a sub recipient of these funds designated to provide services or programs that respond to the public health and negative impacts of the pandemic on individuals, households and impacted industries.

ARPA funding is designed to address the public health impacts and negative economic impacts caused or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This program is intended to focus on both public health and economic recovery in 5 distinct categories:

- Behavioral Health Care
- Aid to an impacted industry
- Assistance to impacted households
  - Build a stronger community through investments in housing and neighborhoods,
- Prevent or respond to violence
- Assistance to unemployed & underemployed

Through outreach efforts and the Long Term Recovery Committee, the City has specifically identified the following unmet needs within the community and will prioritize the following categories:

<u>Community / Mental Health</u>	<u>Small Businesses / Economic Growth</u>
Food Insecurity	Small Business Support to aid in business growth and sustainability
Housing Insecurity	Building capacity for day care
Mental Health (All ages): including Suicide prevention, Stress reduction & Drug/Alcohol abuse	Workforce Development / Job Training
Reengagement of teens back into society to address social emotional issues & pediatric Obesity.	Assistance to hospitality and Tourism: Community events, marketing
Increased Violence: including Domestic Violence	

Each category above has specific guidelines and criteria that are further defined in this document. When submitting an application please indicate which category you believe your proposal falls under. Some proposals may address multiple categories, indicate which portions of the proposal meet specific categories. For example: if you are creating a park for youth programs, the construction of the park

may be building a stronger community thorough investment in a neighborhood, while the programing may fall into the behavioral health care category.

**Eligible recipients:**

A portion of these grants will be designated for **mini-awards** to small businesses and non-profit organizations that provide a service or program that addresses on of the eligible uses. An application will be created, that any eligible organization can apply. Applications will be reviewed based on information submitted with the grant **These grant awards will be up to \$10,000**

The majority of these funds will be **partnership grants** that have a proven track record of providing quality services and programs that meet the needs of the community and the objectives of this funding. The first step in a partnership grant will be meeting with Mayor Carbone and members of the ARPA Committee, as determined appropriate, to discuss the proposal and community need that will be addressed. The application process will include a formal presentation, and discussion, with the review committee. **These grant awards will be based upon the overall community impact and number of residents or business the program will benefit. Partners must demonstrate the ability to comply with all federal reporting guidelines. No limit on award; however, anticipated awards will be between \$20,000-\$150,000. Awards will be dependent on impact to community and resources matched.**

## **Small Business and Non-Profit Direct Assistance program**

This assistance program was established to provide one-time assistance to Torrington's small businesses and non-profits who have been impacted by the COVID pandemic. This program is funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

The recipient of this grant, will be the direct beneficiary of the funds. This assistance will help adopt safe operating procedures, weather periods of closure or mitigate financial hardship resulting from COVID-19 health emergency.

Applicants must identify an economic harm caused by or exacerbated by the pandemic. Per the US Treasury guidelines, if a recipient is located within a Qualified Census Tract, it is presumed the business or non-profit is disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

All other applicants must provide information illustrating a negative economic impact. Small businesses or non-profits will be considered to have a negative economic impact if they can demonstrate impacts such as loss revenue or increased costs, faced challenges covering payroll, mortgage or rent or other operating expenses as a result of the public health emergency and measures taken to contain the spread of the virus.

### **Eligible Applicants**

- All applicants must be located in Torrington CT
- Small businesses with fewer than 500 employees
- Self Employed & microbusiness
- New small business startups (must demonstrate faced greater difficulty accessing credit that prior to the pandemic or faced increased costs to starting the business due to the pandemic or had lost expected startup capital due to the pandemic)
- Non-profit Organizations

### **Eligible Uses**

- Mitigate financial hardship such as declines in revenues or impacts of periods of closure. Examples: supporting payroll and benefit costs, costs to retain employees, mortgage, rent, utilities costs or other operational costs
- Implementation of COVID-19 prevention or mitigation tactics. Examples: Installation or improvements of ventilation systems, purchase of PPE, physical improvements to implement, including developing outdoor spaces, enhanced cleaning efforts & barriers or partition
- Technical assistance, counseling or other services to assist with business planning needs
- Providing job training for individuals for unemployed individuals
- Rehabilitation of commercial properties, storefront improvements and façade improvements
- Technical assistance for business incubators
- Startup or expansion costs for disproportionately impacted small businesses.

**Grant Award up to \$10,000**

# Lead Abatement Grant Program

## Summary

According to Center for Disease Control and Prevention, during the COVID-19 pandemic, “social distancing measures in response to the pandemic may have also exacerbated pre-existing public health challenges. For example, children living in homes with lead paint, spending substantially more time at home raises the risk of developing elevated blood lead levels, while screening for elevated blood lead levels declined during the pandemic. The combination of these underlying social and health vulnerabilities have contributed to more severe public health outcomes of the pandemic within these communities, resulting in exacerbation of pre-existing disparities in health outcomes”

The majority of the City’s housing stock pre-dates 1978, which is when the U.S. banned the manufacture of lead-based house paint; for this reason, any home built prior to 1978 needs to be checked for lead.

It is anticipated this program would mirror the TAHD’s LAMP Program and follow State and Local Health District regulations. More info to be found here: <https://www.tahtd.org/childhood-lead-poisoning-prevention-program.html>

# Workforce Navigator

## Background

There are currently over 1500 quality jobs available in NW CT; however, our unemployment rate in December 2021 remains at 5%. In comparison, unemployment rates for NW CT is 4%, State of CT is at 4.4% and US is 3.7%.

If you go on indeed, within 5-miles of Torrington 1,040 jobs come up, within 15-miles that number jumps to 4,386 jobs.

Through community outreach and conversations with local manufacturing companies (the industry with the largest number of available jobs) there are a few obstacles, both employers and employees are facing:

- Employers are having a difficult time reaching prospective employees, due to the saturated market. Traditional recruitment methods, such as indeed, are saturated with jobs and quickly become overwhelming for job seekers, discouraging them from applying to jobs.
- Job seekers face barriers such as, limited access to technology or language barriers
- Job seekers face barriers to “wrap-around” services, such as public transportation, day care or access to training programs.

## Summary

A Workforce Navigator, will provide assistance to job seeker by connecting them to available jobs that meet their specific skill set. Specific duties of the Workforce Navigator will be:

- Work closely with Torrington employers, to compile a list of available jobs and the skill set that is necessary to perform that job. The primary focus will be on filling jobs within the manufacturing and child-care industries, which both have significant need. However, jobs will not be limited to those industries. The Workforce Navigator will have the flexibility to work with other employers who have job opportunities within the city.
- Work closely with Child Care providers to identify availability of child-care providers
- Gain a full understanding of the services NW Transit offer, to educate job seekers on how to access this service. If service gaps prevent employment, that information will be relayed to NW Transit.
- Meet with NCCC & NW CT Workforce Investment Board, to get a complete understanding of training opportunities that existing within the region.
- Meet with Torrington residents, who are actively looking for jobs, to connect them to jobs that meet their skill set.
- Provide assistance to remove technical and language barriers for job seekers
- Provide connections to wrap around services, such as child-care, transportation or training

The Workforce Navigator, will hold regular office hours (at their organization, or at City Hall TBD), but will also engage residents by having set hours within the community, such as meeting halls in residential developments & condos (Woodland Hills, Georgetown Gardens, Warrenton Mills ....) and in local organizations (Friendly Hands, New Opportunities, YMCA ...) to ensure access to job seekers that may have limited access due to the very barriers that are preventing them from applying for jobs, i.e. child care & transportation.

The City of Torrington will issue an RFQ/RFP to solicit an organization, or individual, to fill this position. The organization, or person, hired to fill this role, will be a consultant for the City of Torrington. This position will not be considered a City of Torrington employee.

This position will be a temporary position, that is intended to directly respond to the economic hardships caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The pandemic caused many people to lose their jobs, reduced child-care capacity, and created

need for additional employment within certain industries to meet demand and/or comply with Federal and State guidelines.

The time frame of this position, along with the number of hours worked each week, will be dependent on proposals that are received.

The city will assist the Workforce Navigator in dispersing information about this position and how to access this service. The city will use their Social Media networks, Press Release & website to help promote this service. The Workforce Navigator will also be responsible to help disseminate this information to the community.

# **Social Care Providers Study**

## **Data Collection & Strategic Plan**

### **Background**

In so many ways, Torrington's social care providers were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Impacts range from financial uncertainty to the organization itself, finding socially distant ways to assist vulnerable populations, to ramping up services to meet new and increased demand within the community.

Many of these organization are competing for the same federal, state, local and fundraising dollars, to service the same individuals or households. Many agencies had similar challenges when it came to the sustainability of their own organizations.

Additionally, many families and individuals were seeking services, but didn't know where to turn for help. A significant amount of time and energy was spent going to each agency seeking assistance. This is an inefficient and often times impossible way of seeking help which resulted in some families, or individuals, getting duplicate services, or even worse, some not getting the services at all.

While the pandemic was mostly disruptive to the way social care providers have traditionally operated, it did strengthen partnerships between some agencies and initiate conversations about the sustainability of our social care provider network.

Throughout this pandemic, two things became abundantly clear:

1. Torrington's Social Care organizations provide critical services to support this community in their time of need, in particularly the vulnerable populations that are most effected by the pandemic or other crisis situations.
2. It is necessary to improve sustainability and financial security of Torrington's Social Care Provider Network so that they can continue to carry out their important work.

### **Summary**

The City of Torrington will issue an RFQ/RFP to hire a consultant that will analyze Torrington's network of social care providers and provide technical assistance to organizations in order to help improve financial security, become more sustainable and identify if services provided (community wide) meet community needs, or if additional services are needed.

This study would encompass all social service needs of the community, including:

- Food insecurity
- Housing insecurity (including utility assistance)
- Homelessness
- Drug & Alcohol Abuse/Addiction
- Domestic violence
- Mental Health
- Youth & Family services
- Elderly services

At a minimum, this study would collect the following data:

- Develop detailed asset mapping of services
- Identifying gaps and/or overlap of services
- Determine which organizations, if any, could potentially benefits from cross collaborations or co-location.

- Identify, if any, geographical areas and/or populations (demographics) have no or limited access to services.

Once this data is collected, the study will help create a strategic plan to address the findings. This study would continue to break down silos and begin working as a network of providers that serves the community, reduce competition for funding (where possible), increases the community's capacity of services and strengthens individual organizations.

Final costs will be determined through the RFQ/RFP process. The City has earmarked \$50,000 to perform the study and \$200,000 to assist with the implementation of the strategic plan developed as part of this study.

## 100 Franklin Street Remediation

The City of Torrington is the responsible party for brownfield remediation at 100 Franklin Street. Over the past 2 years, the City has successfully removed the contaminated soil detailed in the Remedial Action Plan (RAP) prepared by GZA. This RAP used the approved site plan for mixed use development to determine proper remediation methods and incorporated improvements that are/will be done by Pennrose as part of the cap/remediation where possible.

Beyond the work already performed by the City and Pennrose's proposed work, the City will have additional costs associated with the remediation of this site. These costs include:

Top soil to be provide adequate coverage in landscaped areas	\$50,000
Ground Water Monitoring, ELUR, VRP report	\$ 176,500

## Communication Radios

### Background

City's Communication radios are becoming antiquated and in need of update. Some radios and towers are becoming in a state of disrepair and costing taxpayer dollars for limited replacement and repair. Police, Fire and Public Works use radios to effectively communicate on a daily basis but more importantly during times of natural disasters.

### Summary

Investigation into joining the State's Communication system is being investigated to determine if improvements to existing system or move to State system is beneficial.

Meeting with Vendor and State to determine feasibility is scheduled for March 7, 2022

# **Public Safety Complex Feasibility Study**

## **Background**

The Police and Fire Departments have outgrown their existing buildings. Due to the age of the buildings, improvements that are for regular maintenance is costly and may not be feasible to meet their increased needs of the departments. Facility Condition Assessments are currently underway to determine the existing condition of the facilities as well as the capital infrastructure needs of the facilities. By bringing both the Police and Fire Departments and possible ambulance service together in one centralized complex, will help eliminate duplicate costs, provide a more cohesive line of communication and provide a more streamlined service to the community.

## **Summary**

This feasibility study would be the first step in the process of developing Torrington's Public Safety Complex.

This Study would:

1. Identify the departments and/or organizations that would be housed in the Complex
2. Identify the needs of each department and/or organization within the Complex
3. Determine the space required to meet the needs of each department and/or organization
4. Identify potential locations, within the city, that would be suitable for a Public Safety Complex

## **Pedestrian Tunnel (Winsted Rd)**

### **In conjunction with force main sewer line replacement**

#### **Background**

In 2019 the City conducted a routing study to determine the best route for the extension of the Sue Grossman Greenway. The 5-mile extension of the Greenway will connect Downtown Torrington to Downtown Winsted, with a contiguous, multi-use trail.

Along Winsted Road the Greenway is currently on the East side of the road. Due to topography, wetlands, and available ROW, the Greenway must cross to the west side of the road. A few alternatives were looked at, but the most preferable and safest would be a tunnel under Winsted Road near the “sink hole bridge” area. Two force main sewer lines installed in the late 70’s run under Winsted Road in this area. These lines are fed from the Harris Drive Pump station which is the largest pump station and serves all of northeastern Torrington. This sewer line needs to be replaced, which will require either open cut or directional drilling under Winsted Road. At the time of this replacement, it could be feasible to construct a pedestrian tunnel instead of putting it back to existing conditions. A tunnel would also give WPCA better access in the event this sewer line requires any future maintenance or repairs.

#### **Summary**

The City is currently in the process of design for the sewer repair, including the feasibility and cost of a pedestrian tunnel vs. replacing to existing conditions. Preliminary cost estimate for the tunnel have been submitted.