

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE: December 22, 2025

TO: Supervisor Marcelia Nicholson, Chair, County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Celia Benton, Economic Development Director, Department of Administrative Services

SUBJECT: From the Economic Development Director, Department of Administrative Services requesting authorization to support Metcalfe Park Community Bridges (MPCB) in their application for, acceptance, and implementation of a Community Development Investment Grant in a maximum amount of \$250,000 from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to assist in their 2600 N 38th Street Liberation Hub development.

POLICY

Milwaukee County Board review and approval is required for the submission of grant funding applications, pursuant to MCGO 56.06.

BACKGROUND

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation ("WEDC") is the State of Wisconsin's lead economic development agency focused on sustainable business growth and job creation. The economic development resources WEDC provides to local governments and private parties include the Community Development Investment Grant ("CDIG") Program. This program is meant to assist "urban, small city and rural community (re)development efforts by providing financial incentives for shovel-ready projects with emphasis on, but not limited to, downtown community-driven efforts" by providing grants to developers with the support of local municipalities for use on specific projects which "demonstrate significant, measurable benefits in job opportunities, property values and/or leveraged investment by local and private partners."

DAS-Economic Development is seeking authorization to assist Metcalfe Park Community Bridges (MPCB) organization to apply for a CDIG in an amount up to \$250,000 to assist in the development of their new Liberation Hub office and community resources space at 2600 N 38th Street, Milwaukee (the "Project"). The Project involves two phases: first, the extensive renovation and adaptive reuse of the current unused 2.5 story brick building into a fully activated resource center for the organization and the community; and second, the building and expansion into a new addition to the existing building, to expand capacity and establish the site as a long-term community development campus. Phase 1, the adaptive reuse, will include addressing immediate community needs by incorporating community meeting and organizing space, administrative for MPCB and potential partner offices, a community bookstore and café, soup kitchen and food distribution center, and community laundry facilities, with the addition of ADA-accessible infrastructure to ensure accessibility to the community. Besides serving community needs, this phase will benefit the neighborhood by activating a currently underutilized building, increasing foot traffic and neighborhood safety, and some early-stage job creation. Phase 2 will bring additional benefits to the

neighborhood, including a flexible space multi-use building addition able to host mental health services, youth programming, small business development, and workforce training programming, as well as a rooftop seating area with trellis, central courtyard, and additional parking and security enhancements. This phase will provide the ability for MPCB to significantly expand their programming capacity, serve the community across age groups, and increase their organizational sustainability and neighborhood identity and cohesion.

This new MPCB office space and community hub will allow MPCB to continue their work to create economic development and wealth building in the community, enhance their neighborhood's public health and safety, provide civic infrastructure and local leadership, and provide community stability in an area heavily affected by historic redlining and community displacement issues.

Anticipated start date of Phase 1 is to get all funding sources in place by mid-2026, with construction to start soon after and be completed around the end of 2026; Phase 2 is anticipated to be planned/financed in conjunction with Phase 1, with expectations of financing in place by late 2026 or early 2027 and renovations starting soon after Phase 1 completion, and construction taking place 2027-2028.

The CDI grant requires a project to commit to a 75% match. Match funds would not come from the County, but from public and private funding committed to the project. No funds for this project will come directly from the County. WEDC requires a resolution from a local municipality in support for their CDI projects.

If awarded, Metcalfe Park Community Bridges will contract directly with WEDC for responsibilities related to the grant, including submission of any invoices, performance reports, and requests for payment, as well as access to project records. Milwaukee County would have no further ongoing responsibilities or be subject to any terms of a grant agreement between the two parties.

The CDIG programs has previously been utilized by Milwaukee County to support the Sherman Phoenix, Welford Sanders Historic Lofts, Community Within the Corridor, State Street Redevelopment Project, and most recently the Monterrey Market New Location Project in the beginning of 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

The Director of the Department of Administrative Services - Economic Development recommends authorization to support Metcalfe Park Community Bridges as they apply for, accept, and implement a Community Development Investment Grant in a maximum amount of \$250,000 from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to assist in the development of their 2600 N 38th Street Liberation Hub development.

FISCAL NOTE

Acceptance of the grant will have a net zero impact on the division's budget. Milwaukee County's role in the process will be that of a government authorization for the application. Any staff time to provide support for the Project will be absorbed in the division's existing budget.

Prepared by: Heather Reindl, Contracts Manager

Submitted by:

Celia Benton

Celia Benton

Economic Development Director, Department of Administrative Services

Attachment: Resolution
 Fiscal Note
 Project Overview
 Project Grant Application

cc: David Crowley, County Executive
 Liz Sumner, Comptroller
 Economic and Community Development Committee Members
 Finance Committee members
 MaryJo Meyers, Chief of Staff, Office of the County Executive
 Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services
 Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board of Supervisors
 Clarence Kinnard, Committee Coordinator
 Allyson Smith, Committee Coordinator
 Ken Smith, County Board Research Analyst