

2020 POVERTY INITIATIVE GRANT PROPOSALS REPORT

Thanks to a unanimous vote* by Lynchburg City Council on Tuesday, January 28, 2020, all nine Bridges to Progress grant applications were approved! (*Vice Mayor Dolan, who is involved in the initiative, abstained from voting.)

We are very thankful to have a local governing body that understands the critical need for a collaborative effort to combat the complex nature of poverty and are supportive and encouraging about our plans! Now that we have received this awesome funding, this is where the rubber really meets the road.

Council's goal and our goal is to raise Lynchburg's median income and to reduce poverty. We need to be able to show real results to keep the momentum going. If you have been an interested observer or were once involved but felt things weren't happening fast enough, please consider joining a taskforce and pitching in. Every citizen deserves to have the resources available to envision and develop a positive future story. Each step forward we make in this effort builds a stronger, healthier, safer, and more prosperous Lynchburg. Everybody gains!

Here is an overview of the grants:

COMMUNITY TASKFORCE: \$20,785

The clients to be served are Getting Ahead participants. Services will be provided through Getting Ahead classes, training through Virginia Career Works, and ongoing social support through Community Connected's Open Table model. The funding will be used to support Getting Ahead classes (16 sessions, 3 hours each) which are for individuals who are seeking to become economically stable. Virginia Career Works is starting a new program, Career Essentials. Through in-class instruction and home-based application, the program aims to provide individuals with the skills necessary to obtain local employment. While the program is still in development, its goal is to provide guaranteed employment to all participants who complete the requirements. Getting Ahead graduates will be participants and Community Connected's Open Table will provide the very much needed ongoing support. The Open Table model of natural

support brings together community volunteers to serve an individual or family. Meeting once a week for a year, the volunteers and the individual build relationship as they offer their mental, emotional, and social capital to meet the individual's needs and achieve self-identified goals. Through the building of relationships and community contacts, the individual served establishes a professional—and personal—network of community members whose bonds and support last well beyond the end of the program. For more Getting Ahead class information, contact Lindsey Cawood at lindsey.cawood@vdh.virginia.gov. For more information about Career Essentials, contact Keith Cook at keith.cook@vcvwcentral.com. For more information about The Open Table, contact Neil Massey at nealmassey@theopentable.org.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION TASKFORCE: \$6,900.00
Smart Beginnings Central Virginia, a partner in the Early Childhood Care and Education Workgroup, will provide intensive classroom-based coaching at the White Rock Head Start Center. This will entail approximately 23 hours per month of on-site assistance to new teachers. White Rock Head Start has the capacity to house 160 students (three and four year old) within its eight classrooms. In addition, coaching will be conducted (3 hours per month) at Rivermont Early Learning Center and/or Rhema's Gentle Care, in partnership with Amazement Square (the Amazing Kids/Smart Beginnings collaborative, combining children's programming with reflective teacher coaching). The expectation is to see that the skills of new teachers improve dramatically, and that teacher-child interactions will improve across all CLASS domains including Classroom Management, Emotional Support, and the dimensions falling under Instructional Support (Concept Development, Quality of Feedback, Language Modeling). For more information about this program, contact: Karen Wesley at Karen.wesley@unitedwaycv.org. For meeting information on this taskforce, please contact Jane Gerdy at jane@eelc.info.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION TASKFORCE: \$5,000
Partnering with the City of Lynchburg's Parks & Recreation department, the Zumbini project is designed to engage low-to-moderate income families with early childhood education in an accessible setting – the City of Lynchburg's Neighborhood Centers. Zumbini is a whole-child music and movement education program, designed for children birth to four years old

with a caregiver. Through music and movement, Zumbini supports the critical development of social, emotional, cognitive, motor and language in young children. A Zumbini class is a celebration of the power of music to enhance our lives, stimulate learning, inspire dance and movement, and strengthen the bond between caregiver and child. For more information about this project, contact Jamey Love at jamey.love@lynchburgva.gov.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION TASKFORCE: \$1,500.00

This grant will fund the hosting of an event for Lynchburg business and corporate leaders and local government officials to present data that informs on the impact to them and the community as a whole when childcare is available to employees and to potential workforce contributors. Through a statistical report on the cost of missed work days, on the lack of availability of childcare in Lynchburg, on the benefits to local economies, and on an informed business community; a commitment to support a Lynchburg Childcare Alliance will be garnered. For more information about this event, contact: Karen Wesley at Karen.wesley@unitedwaycv.org. For meeting information on this taskforce, please contact Jane Gerdy at jane@eelc.info.

EDUCATION TASKFORCE: \$19,000

20 community and faith based organizations will participate in a training-the-trainer workshop hosted by the Center of Education and Leadership at the University of Lynchburg. Each organization will be allowed two facilitators for the training event. Once the training is completed, participating organizations will be able to facilitate family relationship building sessions (Keep Connected). Free online resources will then be made available to participating families. The training event will be conducted by Search Institute. Each participating organization will be required to outreach to at least 25 families in a year equating to 500 families trained in relationship building. For more information, contact: Dr. Owen Cardwell at revoccrj@verizon.net. **The Education Taskforce meets the third Tuesdays at Extra Staffing Solutions (645 Oakley Avenue) at 6 PM.**

FAITH TASKFORCE: \$7,700

Responding to a need expressed by the staff of the Fairview Community Center, the Faith Taskforce will partner with approximately 25 families of

the Fairview Community Center to offer three sessions of a four week program to enhance family money management skills as well as family soft skills necessary to secure and maintain gainful careers. Each weekly session will begin with a community meal for volunteers and participating families. Then adults and children will be separated for lessons and activities on money management and soft skills over the four classes. Funds will be used for class meals, class supplies, and family graduation incentives. Childcare will be provided for those children too young to participate in the classes. For more information contact Shawne Farmer at ioashawne@ntelos.net or Keith Anderson at hilifavrd@icloud.com. **The Faith taskforce meets the first Wednesday of every month at 2 PM in the Carriage House behind St Paul's Episcopal Church.**

FOOD TASKFORCE: \$7,000

The Food taskforce will purchase 100 transit folding shopping carts for citizens regularly utilizing food agencies that are challenged with transporting groceries via walking or public transportation. Weight capacity of cart is 120 lbs. to 200 lbs. depending on the cart selected. Recipients of the carts will be selected by the food agencies who are familiar with the population choosing those participants who would most benefit from using the cart and would be responsible with its care. Recipients will be asked to participate in a confidential survey study in exchange for the cart. Many citizens who utilize food agencies walk or take the bus to get to the food agency. However, due to the amount of food acquired, the citizen usually has to pay money for a cab or a ride to get their groceries home. The carts will allow citizens to walk their groceries home or to be able to ride the bus instead of paying for a cab. Disposable income used for transportation costs can be diverted to pay bills. Having a reliable way to carry groceries each week will facilitate regular use of the food agencies and allow citizens to bring home more groceries instead of what they can carry. This will result in reduced need to purchase more expensive and less nutritious food at the corner convenience store to fill in what they weren't able to carry home from the agency. For more information, contact Eileen Emerson at eemerson@brafb.org. **The next Food Taskforce meeting is Wednesday, February 12, 2020, at 10:00 AM at the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank at 501 12th Street.**

HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH TASKFORCE: \$15,000

Based on the findings of the 2018-2021 Community Health Needs Assessment, there is a clear lack of knowledge of the mental health resources available in our area, particularly in the 3 zip codes with the highest poverty rates. They will also consider targeting a specific age range in addition to the geographic target area. There is a considerable amount of fear/stigma within this demographic around seeking help for mental health issues. A multi-tiered, 3 month media campaign to address both of these issues, targeting the timeline surrounding Mental Health Awareness month which is May will be launched. There are also plans to explore creating a centralized resource for mental health assistance/referrals similar to the CHIA role in housing. For more information, contact Lisa Taylor at

lisa.taylor@communityaccessnetwork.org or Debra Jefferson at debra.jefferson@horizonbh.org. **The next Health/Mental Health Taskforce meeting is February 13, 2020 at 5:00 pm 2215 Langhorne rd. Lower level Conference room.**

HOUSING TASKFORCE: *This taskforce did not request a poverty initiative grant for this round.*

For meeting information, contact Denise Crews at dcrews@lyncaq.org.

LEGAL TASKFORCE: *This taskforce did not request a poverty initiative grant for this round.*

This taskforce meets the second Thursday of each month from 6:30-8:30 PM. Presently, they are meeting at the Salvation Army. For more information or if you would like to attend a meeting, please contact Josh Quintero at joshjq@gmail.com or Jane Henderson at henderson.sarahjane@gmail.com as they sometimes meet elsewhere.

TRANSPORTATION TASKFORCE: \$31,375

The project is to provide additional funding for the Ways to Work and the Lynchburg Area Center for Independent Living programs. Ways to Work works one on one with individuals to facilitate obtaining low interest vehicle loans and provide case management support for individuals to successfully budget and manages the financial burden of owning/operating a vehicle. Their target population is low to moderate income working families within

the Lynchburg area. Currently 64 % of their current case load are with clients who reside within the city of Lynchburg. The Lynchburg Area Center for Independent Living (LACIL) serves individuals with disabilities with the goal of assisting them to live independently within their homes and communities. Approximately one-third (165) of their consumers reside within the City of Lynchburg and of this number, almost two-thirds rely on public transportation or a combination of other means of transportation to live independently. The grant would assist clients with obtaining and receiving adequate/sustainable transportation during times of hardship from unforeseen circumstances. For more information on Ways to Work, contact Anna Jones at ajones@humankind.org. For more information on LACIL, contact Jennifer Martin at jmartin@lacil.org. For more information on public transportation, contact Brian Booth at bbooth@gltconline.com. **The next Transportation Taskforce meeting is Friday, February 21, 2020 at the GLTC Transfer Station at 2:00 PM.**

WORKFORCE TASKFORCE: *This taskforce did not request a poverty initiative grant for this round.*

Virginia Career Works is starting a new program, **Career Essentials**. Through in-class instruction and home-based application, the program aims to provide individuals with the skills necessary to obtain local employment. While the program is still in development, its goal is to provide guaranteed employment to all participants who complete the requirements. Keith Cook, the liaison and facilitator for this taskforce, is the Workforce Operator for Virginia Career Works. For more information, contact Keith at keith.cook@vcvwcentral.com. **The next event for this taskforce is a FREE Life Skills Institute Open House, February 11, from 10:30 AM until 12:30 PM, Lower Level Plaza, 2323 Memorial Avenue, Suite 26. For more information, call 434-845-8468 ext. 800 or email LSI@parkviewmission.org. Refreshments and childcare will be provided.**

THAT'S OVER \$112,000 LYNCHBURG CITY COUNCIL HAS APPROVED FOR OUR INITIATIVE! LET'S SHOW THEM THEIR SUPPORT IS JUSTIFIED BY MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE IN INCREASING LYNCHBURG'S MEDIAN INCOME AND REDUCING

**POVERTY IN OUR AREA. PLEASE COME JOIN US IN THIS
EXCITING ENDEAVOR!**

**The next Bridges to Progress 90 Day Community
Meeting is Thursday, April 23, 2020
from 9:00 AM until 11:00 AM at the Miller Center
Auditorium.**