

MEMORANDUM

To: CRA Board

From: Carlos Peralta

Date: December 18, 2019

Re: December Forward Fund Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) working with a Selection Committee consisting of City of Cambridge (the “City”) staff from various departments, conducted the final review and selection of proposed project for the 2019 Forward Fund (the “Fund”). The review was intended to provide the Selection Committee the opportunity to evaluate the proposals that had been submitted to the CRA by a diverse set of local nonprofit organizations. Throughout this year, nonprofits were asked to propose projects whose goals and objectives are aligned with the action plans detailed in the City’s [Envision Cambridge](#) and the [Community Needs Assessment](#) reports.



Cambridge Community Needs Framework (image from Cambridge Needs Assessment Report)

AWARD TYPES

Organizations were able to submit proposals for one of two available grant types:

- ***Community Infrastructure Capital Grants:*** Awards of up to \$100,000 were offered to applicants seeking assistance for construction, repair, renovation, and/or other capital improvements, such as open space and landscape improvements associated with a civic mission that touches a significant portion of the public population.
- ***Technical Assistance Grants:*** Awards of up to \$10,000 were offered to applicants seeking funding for a feasibility analysis, architectural design, or engineering study to gather preconstruction information and relevant data related to a facility improvement project.

The CRA budget authorized the distribution of up to \$300,000 for 2019. As in previous years, the CRA has reserved the right to allocate funding flexibly depending on the quality of applications received, and to request project modifications or other conditions before disbursement of funds.

EVALUATION PROCESS

CRA staff and the Selection Committee evaluated proposals and made project funding recommendations during the December 13th review. The 2019 committee consists of the following members:

- Pardis Saffari, Economic Development (Community Development Department)
- Gary Chan, Community Planning (Community Development Department)
- John Nardone, Department of Public Works
- Lillian Hsu, Cambridge Arts Council
- Asuquo Ituen, Inspectional Services Department
- John Ziniewicz, Cambridge Housing Authority
- Nancy Tauber, Kids Council (Human Services Department)
- Carlos Peralta, Cambridge Redevelopment Authority

Project proposals were evaluated and scored based on the following criteria:

Project Related Scoring Criteria:

1. Alignment with the purpose and goals of the Fund and the CRA mission and operating principles
2. Demonstrate a tangible public benefit in an under-resourced area of Cambridge designated by the City of Cambridge [Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas](#)
3. Exhibits a clear narrative of how the project aligns with the action plan of [Envision Cambridge](#) and the [Community Needs Assessment](#)
4. Level of public access and visibility of the project
5. Ability to inspire or inform other community investments

Applicant Related Scoring Criteria:

1. Demonstrated capacity of applicant to successfully implement the project
2. Realistic financial feasibility of the project
3. Financial need of applicant

GRANT RECOMMENDATION

The Selection Committee evaluated three proposals that were submitted to the CRA before the submission deadline. Based on the quality of their proposals, the Selection Committee recommends all three organizations receive grants. The selected organizations are local, and own and/or operate facilities that provide support, social services, or resources to the community with the goal of closing the gaps reported in [Envision Cambridge](#) and the [Community Needs Assessment](#). These applicants provided a clear narrative on how their proposed project and organization's mission are aligned with improving the overarching needs stated in the reports.

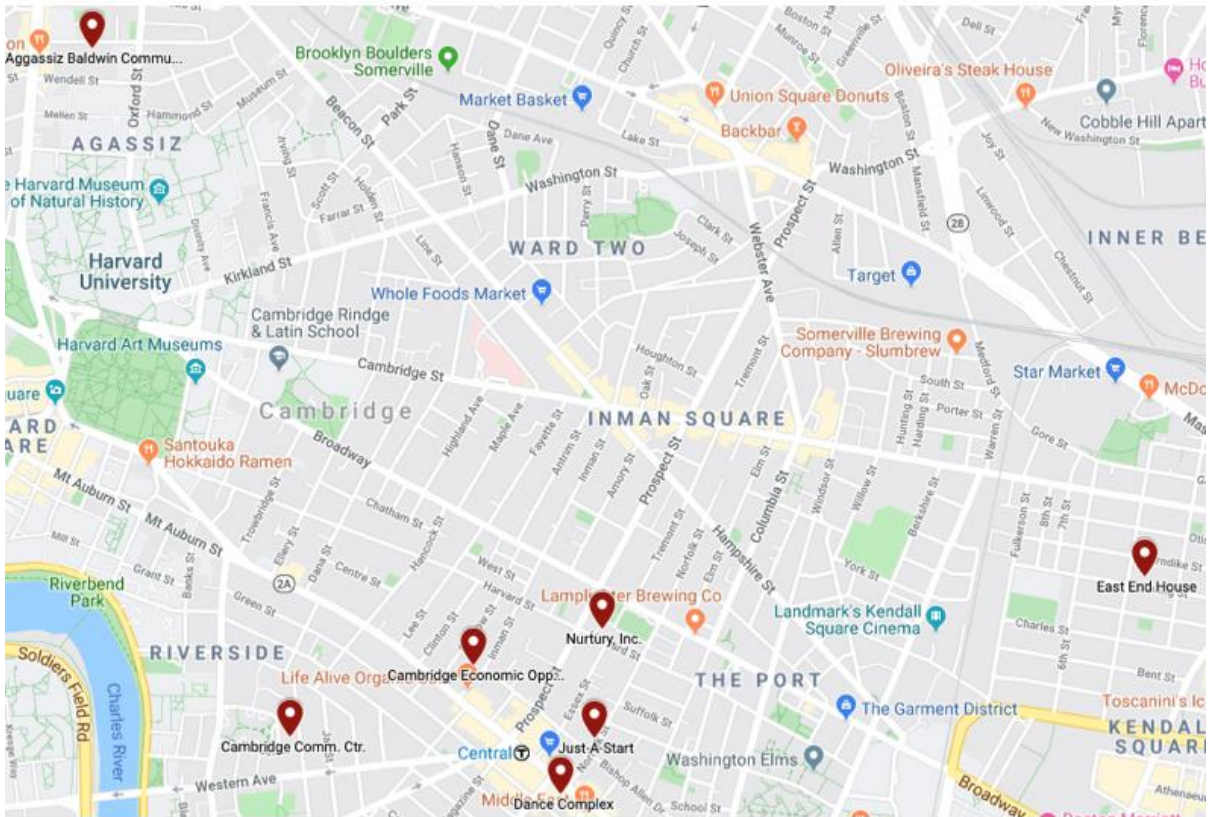
CRA staff with the assistance of the 2019 Forward Fund Selection Committee recommends the following organizations for a Forward Fund grant in the following categories.

Community Infrastructure Capital Grant

- East End House (EEH) - (\$9,132)
 - *EEH Replacement & Upgrade to Fire Alarm System*

Technical Assistance Grants

- Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee (CEOC) - (\$10,000)
 - *Planning & Feasibility for Food Pantry Renovation*
- The Dance Complex - (\$10,000)
 - *Planning & Feasibility for ADA Improvements*



NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to work with the awarded organizations to finalize all grant agreements and to schedule project follow-ups. The follow-ups will serve as routine project updates to gather information on the planning and feasibility studies and any related construction.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL GRANTS

EEH REPLACEMENT & UPGRADE TO FIRE ALARM SYSTEM

EAST END HOUSE

\$9,132

Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)
Michael Delia; Executive Director

Project Location: 105 Spring Street, Cambridge, MA 02141

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“East End House community center uses a holistic approach to promote the well-being, academic achievement, and successful transition to adulthood of children and youth from under-resourced families in Cambridge and surrounding communities. As part of the approach, East End House provides support services to a diverse population, from infants to seniors, to strengthen family and community. Originally established in 1875 to serve under-resourced families, East End House is one of Greater Boston’s earliest social service centers. East End House is the center of community life, welcoming, linking, and collaborating with individuals of all ages, their families, businesses, and community institutions to create innovative programs in pursuit of excellence on a sound fiscal basis. East End House offers a wide variety of programs and services that support families and individuals of every age and ability, improve self-sufficiency, and provide emergency aid.”

This project will upgrade the fire alarm panel and system in the building at 105 Spring Street in Cambridge. The scope of work includes:

- *Replacement and upgrade of existing fire alarm system with new Fire Life control panel*
- *Replacement of all existing devices*
 - *Batteries*
 - *Annunciators,*
 - *Outside beacon*
 - *Smoke detectors*
 - *Horn strobes, and pull stations*
- *Remount and support gymnasium smoke detectors*
- *Fully test and inspect newly installed devices to ensure proper operation within the Fire Protection System*



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS

PLANNING & FEASIBILITY FOR FOOD PANTRY RENOVATION

CAMBRIDGE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY COMMITTEE

\$10,000

Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)
Tina Alu; Executive Director

Project Location: 11 Inman Street, Cambridge, MA 02139

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“CEOC addresses the top-tier needs identified in Envision Cambridge and the City’s Needs Assessment: Affordable Housing and Housing Stabilization; income inequality; hunger; and mental and behavioral health. CEOC’s programs include: food pantry; individual tenant advocacy for housing stabilization and homelessness prevention to keep people in their homes; financial education and coaching to build economic stability; FAFSA advocacy and education on understanding financial aid and avoiding excessive college debt; free tax preparation; comprehensive public benefits outreach, enrollment, advocacy, and follow up to ensure that all individuals and families are receiving all the cash supports for which they are eligible and to maintain these critical benefits, especially SNAP, TAFDC, SSI, and SSDI; and assistance with health insurance application advocacy, outreach, enrollment and plan selection to have access to appropriate health care for their family.

CEOC also strives to empower low-income and working poor community members to advocate for initiatives that establish public policies at the local, state and federal level, that offer real economic supports for low-income individuals and families, without creating economic cliffs that eliminate needed benefits because of increased wages. These initiatives leave individuals and families worse off economically, by having to choose increased wages or lost benefits, with no hope of increasing economic stability and thus never escaping poverty. CEOC finds that in today’s political and economic climate, it is working harder to provide services to an ever-increasing number of participants with an ever-increasing intensity of needs.”



PLANNING & FEASIBILITY FOR ADA IMPROVEMENTS

THE DANCE COMPLEX

\$10,000

Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)
Peter DiMuro; Executive Artistic Director

Project Location: 536 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“Our existing decommissioned chair lift, which had provided access to our 2nd floor, addresses the needs at each level of the three identified in the Community Needs Assessment. Our own mission is to sustain the creation, study and performance of dance for all- with a core value of bringing the "other" in to the organization, with a stated value of "all in movement". We intentionally engage those who have physical or societal barriers to dance: those who might not think of movement as a ready option. This has in the past included immigrant families, LGBTA+, elders, those with mobility issues as well as the disabled.

All citizens should have a right to and should have agency of participation in healthful practice of movement, and to experience dance as audience - even those with disabilities. Replacing an existing chair lift with a newer and safer model will allow access for the disabled to our 2nd floor theatre and studios to experience dance as both an active participant as well as a audience. This touches on the individual's and a society's collective mind for healthy perspective, and reduction in bias against those with disabilities. This furthers education, civic engagement and social capital, and builds dynamic practice in health sustenance through the multiple genres from around the globe represented in our building.

Having an active working chairlift allows us to build real connections to more of our historic building to more of our community; and it signals the wider community that those with disabilities are vital as individuals and as an entity.”

| **THE** DanceComplex |