

MEMORANDUM

To: CRA Board
From: Alexandra Levering and Matt Heller-Trulli
Date: January 18, 2023
Re: Forward Fund Feasibility Study Grants

OVERVIEW

The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority's (CRA) 2023 Forward Fund grant application will be released on January 20th at 5:00pm. Applications are open to Cambridge based non-profit organizations looking to conduct feasibility studies for capital improvement projects. The CRA will prioritize studies that are achievable, and those that will improve facility infrastructure to help an organization better conduct their programming initiatives. The goal of funding feasibility study grants is to create a pipeline of future Forward Fund capital investment projects.

The CRA Board approved \$100,000 for Forward Fund feasibility grants in the 2023 CRA Budget. Each grant applicant will be awarded a maximum of \$10,000. On January 20th at 5PM, the community will be able to download the Forward Fund application from the CRA's website. Grants will be awarded on a rolling basis until funds are allocated.

Hema Kailasam, Matt Heller-Trulli, and Alexandra Levering will consist of the CRA team providing staffing support for the grant program. This team will focus on conducting robust outreach, as described below, to inform Cambridge non-profits of the grant opportunity. This team will provide guidance to non-profits navigating the grant process, and selecting projects for funding based on the priorities of the Forward Fund program. This team will also be working on revisions to the capital infrastructure grant program, and will provide recommendations to the CRA Board when seeking additional Forward Fund appropriations later this year.

OUTREACH

The CRA will use multiple approaches to get the word out that grant funding is available through the Forward Fund. This will be accomplished through:

- Posting on the CRA website & CRA social media.

- Conducting direct outreach via constant contact to over 70 Cambridge non-profits who focus on providing social services locally,
- Informing the SAG committee and asking them to spread the word,
- Collaborating with the Cambridge Non-Profit Coalition, the Cambridge Community Foundation, and CDD's Economic Development Department,
- Posting in local publications, including the Cambridge Day, and the Patch,
- Placing information pamphlets within our buildings at 99 Bishop Allen, the Link and the Foundry,
- Investigating "information boards" where we can post about the Forward Fund.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment A – Notice of Funding Availability for Feasibility Study



Attachment A

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY FOR FEASIBILITY STUDY

THE FORWARD FUND FEASIBILITY STUDY PURPOSE AND GOALS

The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) Forward Fund is a grant program intended to make targeted investments throughout the City of Cambridge's non-profit community, to provide capacity and runway funds to plan and design capital improvement projects. The purpose is to provide financial assistance to capital projects that will improve or maintain the quality, efficiency, and accessibility of organizations that provide direct services for the benefit of all the City's residents, workers, or visitors.

The CRA anticipates offering awards to a diverse set of organizations whose proposals are both feasible and, once completed, foster innovative approaches to address how to create a more livable and equitable City.

The Forward Fund's goals are to:

- Advance the CRA's mission to implement creative initiatives that promote social equity and a balanced economic system.
- Support organizations whose mission and work consists of providing services, resources, and support to Cambridge residents while addressing the overarching needs detailed in the City's Reports: *Envision Cambridge* and the *Community Needs Assessment*.

AVAILABLE FUNDING

This year, the CRA will distribute up to **\$100,000** (\$10,000 max per grant) for feasibility studies related to capital infrastructure projects. The CRA reserves the right to allocate funding amounts depending on the quality of the proposals. Grants will be awarded throughout the year on a rolling basis.

FEASIBILITY STUDY GRANT

Awards will be offered to applicants seeking to conduct feasibility studies to gather preconstruction information or relevant data related to a capital improvement project. Feasibility studies are important for an organization to inform the staff resources and financial investments needed to successfully complete an extensive construction project.

WHO SHOULD APPLY

Eligibility is open to all Cambridge-based non-profit organizations that own and/or operate community facilities. The organization's mission should provide support, social services, and/or resources to those in Cambridge with the goal of closing the gaps reported in *Envision Cambridge* and the *Community Needs Assessment*. Applicants will be asked to provide a clear narrative on how their proposed project supports their organization's mission, and how their mission's goals are aligned with Cambridge's overarching needs.

Projects must meet all of the following criteria in order to be eligible:

1. The project is located in Cambridge.
2. The applicant is a Cambridge-based nonprofit organization.
3. The study facilitates a capital improvement that does not require any additional ongoing funding from the CRA or the City to operate or maintain.
4. If the study costs more than what is requested by the Forward Fund, the applicant can identify how the remaining cost of the project will be paid for.
5. The applicant can explain how the feasibility study will inform a decision to move ahead with a capital project.
6. The applicant can explain how the capital project to be studied via the Forward Fund grant will help to achieve the priorities identified in the City's *Envision Cambridge* and *Community Needs Assessment* reports.
7. The applicant has control over the proposed project site, or has a letter or support from the property owner detailing a long-term lease agreement.