

MEMORANDUM

To: CRA Board

From: Joshua Croom
and Alexandra Levering

Date: November 15, 2023

Re: Forward Fund Capital Grant Awardees

OVERVIEW

The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) released the 2023 Forward Fund Capital Grant application on June 21, 2023. Applications are open to Cambridge-based nonprofit organizations looking to conduct capital improvement projects. The CRA Board allocated \$400,000 for Forward Fund capital grants in the 2023 budget, with each grant applicant being eligible for an award of up to \$100,000.

As with previous years, the 2023 Forward Fund Capital Grant program funds projects that advance the CRA's mission to promote social and economic equity and support organizations which provide services that address City needs identified in Envision Cambridge.

The Forward Fund recently concluded its first round of capital grants. All applications, in the first round were submitted by September 30, 2023. On October 19, 2023, the Forward Fund Selection Committee, made up of representatives from CRA staff and city departments and commissions, conducted a first round of application review for the Capital Grant proposals received. Based on the quality of their proposals, and organizational alignment with City goals, the Selection Committee awarded \$208,150 to three proposals which are detailed below.

The CRA Board allocated \$100,000 for Forward Fund feasibility grants in the 2023 budget, with each application being eligible for an award of up to \$10,000. Grants are being accepted on a rolling basis, and to date, the CRA has received applications for feasibility studies from three organizations, The Multicultural Arts Center, the YWCA Cambridge, and Central Square which has not been awarded yet. Upon review, CRA staff recommend awarding funds to both organizations.

The second application deadline for the Forward Fund is November 30, 2023, after which the Selection Committee will reconvene to assess additional program applications and commit additional funding as applicable.

CAPITAL GRANT EVALUATION DETAILS

The Forward Fund focuses on awarding Capital Grants to mission aligned non-profit organizations to improve the quality, efficiency, and accessibility of organization facilities that provide services that benefit Cambridge residents, workers, or visitors.

A Selection Committee, made up of staff from the CRA, as well as from City Departments and Commissions including: CDD Community Planning, Department of Human Services, and the Commission of Persons with Disabilities evaluated and scored each proposal based on the following criteria:

1. The application included a clear narrative on how the project aligns with the action plans of the Envision Cambridge citywide plan.
2. The applicant demonstrated staff capacity for the organization to successfully implement the project.
3. The project is feasible and can be implemented within a one/two-year timeframe. Additionally, if the project/study costs more than what was requested from the Forward Fund, the applicant had a plan to identify how the remaining cost of the project/study will be paid for.
4. The project had a high level of public accessibility or visibility.
5. The project had an ability to inspire or facilitate other community investments.

Community Art Center, Inc.

Bathroom Renovation/ Podcast Studio

Awarded \$100,000



Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)

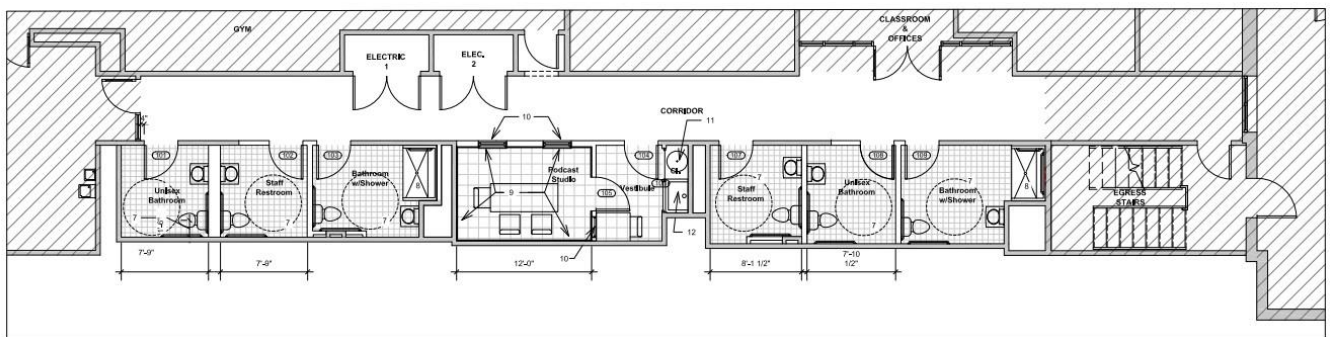
Erin Muirhead McCarthy; Executive Director

Project Location: 119 Windsor Street, Cambridge, MA 02139

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

Community Art Center intends to renovate 4, double-stall bathrooms in substandard condition; the bathrooms are in an extreme state of disrepair due to years of deferred maintenance, heavy use, and aging. The Art Center plans to reconstruct the bathrooms bringing them all up to code. Ultimately, there will be 6, single-unit, gender-neutral bathrooms; 2 of the bathrooms will include shower stalls for any unhoused Art Center students or families to utilize. Along the same wall as the bathrooms, an unused catch-all storage space will be reconfigured as a podcast studio, to support Art Center programs and build upon its existing storytelling capabilities and Media Program.

Community Art Center has been granted a project manager to assist in the coordination and completion of this project. Gabrielle Geller has made a career of managing community and economic development projects, and was assigned to work with the Art Center by the seed funder, Children's Investment Fund (administered by Community Economic Development Assistance Corp.). Working with a West Work architectural firm, Gabrielle Geller Consulting, and Vantage Builders, the project is determined to take no more than 42 days to complete. Hazmat testing, value engineering, and detailed schematic have been completed. There were unexpected delays between the proposal submission with original estimates, and EEOST award processing and notification; in that time, construction costs have risen considerably.



Cambridge Community Center

Gymnasium Roof and Insulation

Awarded \$96,120*



Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)

Darrin Korte; Executive Director

Project Location: 5 Callender Street, Cambridge, MA 02139

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

Our gymnasium roof and insulation project is the first step that we need to complete to move forward on our larger Resilience Hub project. The overall project will include a solar panel array and HVAC units, which will be placed on top of the gymnasium roof. These steps cannot be completed until the roof is fortified to safely support this additional weight. We will also be insulating our gymnasium roof and walls to improve energy efficiency in the long term. Final plans for this project have been completed and we are shovel-ready to move forward once we raise the funds needed to complete the project.

Our Resilience Hub project includes installing a clean and resilient energy system, which will include a solar panel array, battery energy storage, and a biofuel generator. This system has been designed to operate independently from the regional electric grid during and after disruption events, particularly if there is a power outage. During disruptions, this system would provide CCC with the capacity to operate all its equipment including lighting, computers, space conditioning, and kitchen equipment for five (5) to twelve (12) days. If no cooking is conducted, the system's endurance would be extended to at least nine (9) days with a potential maximum of more than fourteen (14) days.

The system would also strive to enable residents to charge mobile devices to facilitate communications. During normal times, the system would reduce operating costs for CCC, as well as its environmental impact, enhancing the resilience of the organization. During periods of disruption, a clean, resilient energy system would enable CCC to respond to community needs with food services, communications, safe shelter, and space for other response actions. Since CCC already has an established, trusted relationship with community members, it is a natural fit for the role of a Resilience Hub and will benefit greatly by having a clean, reliable energy system in place.

* The Cambridge Community Center has received support from the CRA Forward Fund in the past. In 2018 and 2019 the Cambridge Community Center received awards for their Commercial Kitchen and Building Modernization Projects, respectively. To date, \$12,500 of the Commercial Kitchen project has been paid out of a total \$25,000 award, while the Building Modernization

Project has been paid \$37,500 of its \$75,000 award. These projects have not been completed, but are planned to be completed once the building is certified as Resilience Hub. CRA staff determined that the \$50,000 already dispersed to the Center was released for reallocation for COVID-19 relief, as several other Forward Fund grants have been in recent years. The remaining previously allocated but unused funds, \$50,000, will be reallocated to fund the Center's 2023 Capital Infrastructure Roofing Project. Thus, of the \$96,120 in funding awarded to the Cambridge Community Center, only \$46,120 of this amount comes from the Forward Fund's 2023 budget.

Just-A-Start

Linwood Court Bike Shed Beautification Project

Awarded \$12,000



Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)

Carmen Chan; Director of Philanthropy

Project Location: 1035 Cambridge Street, Cambridge,
MA 02141

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

Just A Start has partnered with the Community Art Center (CAC) to beautify the exterior of eight outdoor bicycle sheds at Linwood Court, a Just A Start-owned affordable housing property. The project will benefit and engage a community of nearly 150 residents, passersby, local teen artists, and 2 community-based nonprofits through collaboration and public art.



Linwood Court is home to 68 low-income and workforce households and nearly 150 residents in 8 buildings. Between the Linwood Court buildings, there is a semi-open courtyard area with pedestrian walkways from the street and residences. The open courtyard contains a series of gray fiberglass bike sheds that are visible from the surrounding homes and street goes on Broadway. These bike sheds are located in an area of respite, play, as well as practical and daily use to many.

Just A Start has received a proposal from CAC to manage the mural design and installation process with their teen public art program. CAC's artist and program manager, with collaborating teens, will facilitate an engagement process with Linwood Court residents to produce a mural design with imagery, colors, and concepts that provide enhancement to the community and a sense of belonging to the residents. The final product will be a durable, digitally printed adhesive vinyl that covers the faces of the bike sheds.

Just A Start's Real Estate Project Manager, Madeline Lee, will manage the project while CAC's artist and program manager, along with local youth in the program, will carry out the design and production of the mural. In coordination, Just A Start's Resident Services staff will support CAC with community outreach to residents.

Forward Fund Capital Grant CRA Board Review

November 15, 2023

Forward Fund

The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority's Forward Fund (the Fund) is a grant program created in 2015 to invest development funds generated in the Kendall Square Urban Redevelopment Area into projects led by non-profit organizations and community groups in Cambridge.

The Fund provides financial assistance for capital infrastructure projects that will improve or maintain the quality, efficiency, and accessibility of organizations that provide services for the benefit of the City's residents, workers, and visitors. It provides grants for Capital Infrastructure projects and initial Feasibility Studies.



Central Square BID Murals - 2018 Forward Fund Awardee

Capital Infrastructure Grant Details

- Grant Cap: \$100,000
- Matching Fund Requirement: 1:1 match required for projects requesting \$50,000 or more
- Project Completion Requirement: Two years upon execution of a grant agreement
- Application Deadlines: 9/30/2023, 11/30/2023

Total 2023 CRA Budget = \$400,000

Capital Infrastructure Grant Evaluation Criteria

1. The application includes a clear narrative on how the project aligns with the action plans of the Envision Cambridge citywide plan.
2. The applicant demonstrates staff capacity for the organization to successfully implement the project.
3. The project is feasible and can be implemented within a one/two-year time frame. Additionally, if the project/study costs more than what is requested from the Forward Fund, the applicant has a plan to identify how the remaining cost of the project/study will be paid for.
4. The project has a high level of public accessibility or visibility.
5. The project has an ability to inspire or facilitate other community investments.

1st Round - 2023 Forward Fund Capital Infrastructure Applicant Awardees

- Community Art Center (CAC)
- Just-A-Start (JAS)
- Cambridge Community Center (CCC)

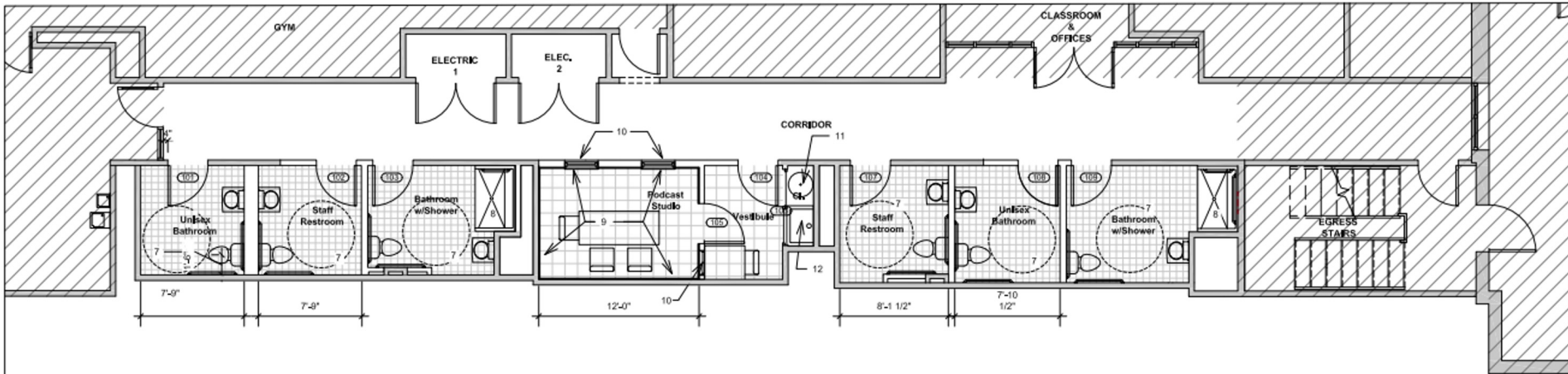
Community Art Center (CAC)

Bathroom Renovation / Podcast
Studio



Community Art Center (CAC)

- Project Details
 - Renovate 4 double stall bathrooms into 6 single unit gender neutral bathrooms
 - 2 of the bathroom stalls will include showers
 - Convert a catch-all storage space into a podcast production studio
- Forward Fund Grant Award - \$100,000



Cambridge Community Center

Gymnasium Roof Upgrades and Insulation



Cambridge Community Center (CCC)

- Project Details
 - The Cambridge Community Center plans to create the first resilience hub in the Northeast, equipping it to provide shelter and electricity in an emergency.
 - Prior to resiliency hub solar panel installation, CCC must re-fortify and better insulate the gymnasium roof.
- Forward Fund Grant Award - \$96,120, including reallocation of \$50,000 in previously awarded funds



Just A Start (JAS)

Linwood Court Bike Shed
Beautification Project



Just-A-Start

- Project Details
 - Beautify 8 outdoor, fiberglass bicycle sheds at Linwood Court
 - JAS received a proposal from CAC to manage the design and installation of a vinyl art design through their teen public art program
 - Will include a robust community engagement process
- Forward Fund Grant Award - \$12,000



Bike Sheds at Linwood Court

Feasibility Study 2023 Budget Overview

Organization Awardees	Type of Grant	Amount
Central Square Theater	Feasibility Study	\$10,000
YMCA	Feasibility Study	\$10,000
Multicultural Arts Center	Feasibility Study	\$10,000
CRA Board 2023 Forward Fund Feasibility Study Allocation		\$100,000
Total Allocated for Feasibility Studies To Date		\$30,000
Remaining Budget for 2023		\$70,000

Capital Grant 2023 Budget Overview

Organization Awardees	Type of Grant	Amount
Community Arts Center	Capital Grant	\$100,000
Cambridge Community Center	Capital Grant	\$46,120
Just-A-Start	Capital Grant	\$12,000
CRA Board 2023 Forward Fund Capital Grant Allocation		\$500,000
Total Allocated for Capital Grants To Date		\$158,120
Remaining Budget for 2023		\$341,880

Forward Fund Capital Grant CRA Board Review

November 15, 2023