

City of Aurora 2023 CDBG Applicant Summary

1. **Applicant:** Aurora Fire Station Preservation Corps.

Agency Background: Housed in Aurora’s old Central Fire Station, the Aurora Regional Fire Museum actively serves the Aurora community to teach and preserve the history of the Aurora Fire Department and our region as well as through fire safety programs. The Museum serves the community as a unique historical, educational, landmark and is a destination for local, regional, and international visitors. The Aurora Regional Fire Museum is open to the public Wednesday – Saturday from 10am-4pm and during the summer months, we are open on Tuesdays. We are actively involved in all events happening in Downtown Aurora and open our doors for First Fridays and other community events. We have two floors of exhibits, provide educational programming and outreach in the museum, virtually, and in the community. We are a stakeholder in Downtown Aurora, Aurora, and the Region. We are actively engaging in diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility work to ensure we are open and available to all Aurora residents.

2023 Project Proposal: *Week Long Summer Fire and Life Safety Camp: The Aurora Regional Fire Museum seeks to create 4 – one-week summer camps during June 2023 to educate about the firefighting profession, showing how to create a safer living environment and to create a hands-on learning experience.*

2. **Applicant:** APS Training Institute Inc

Agency Background: We concentrate on providing STEAM education for students K-12 through project-based learning. Our vision is to promote economic equality so our community will not simply survive, but thrive through the cultivation of a diverse STEAM-based workforce. Our mission is to empower vulnerable communities in the Aurora area by providing free and low-cost education and vocational opportunities in STEAM.

2023 Project Proposal: *Child and Youth STEAM Programs: APS Training Academy's Child and Youth STEAM Programs offer free, accessible technology and robotics training to the underserved community in Aurora.*

3. **Applicant:** CASA Kane County

Agency Background: The CASA movement began in the late 1970’s when Superior Court Judge David Soukup felt that children were not being adequately represented in court. CASA Kane County was established in 1988, when an associate of Judge Soukup, brought the idea to Kane County, Illinois. The overall goal of CASA Kane County is to ensure every child in our local Juvenile Court system has their best interests in the forefront to help ensure they achieve permanency in the quickest amount of time. We are a Guardian ad Litem, non-profit, 501c3 volunteer organization that serves the best interests of abused and neglected children from the age of birth through 21. For over three decades, CASA Kane County has recruited, trained and supervised community volunteers who serve as a child’s Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and Guardian ad Litem (GAL) for children in court due to abuse, neglect, or private guardianship. CASA/GAL volunteers become an officer of the court to be the Judges eyes and ears in making very difficult and life changing decisions about the determination of each child's placement, as well as services they need to help restore them to good physical and mental health.

2023 Project Proposal: *Child Advocacy for Abused & Neglected Children in Aurora: Funding for CASA will be in the supervision of children in the program from Aurora and to ensure the proper systems and people are in place to help the children in care heal and thrive.*

4. **Applicant:** City of Aurora Engineering Division

Agency Background: Maintains and rehabilitates local streets throughout the City of Aurora.

2023 Project Proposal: *Street Resurfacing Program: Removal and replacement of surface asphalt pavement, sidewalk, and curb/gutter on City streets in low/moderate income areas.*

5. **Applicant:** City of Aurora Innovation and Strategy Division

Agency Background: The City of Aurora provides several community and public services to its over 180,000 residents. These services include financial assistance, education, senior services, youth training leadership development, workforce development, snow removal, financial empowerment and safety, and more.

2023 Project Proposal: *Aurora Financial Empowerment Center: The Aurora Financial Empowerment Center provides families free financial counseling services to become more financially stable, access to public support programs, workforce development opportunities and child savings toward post-secondary education.*

6. **Applicant:** City of Aurora Senior Services and Disabilities Subdivision

Agency Background: Provide leadership to and build bridges with organizations/partners in the community that offer services and resources for seniors and individuals living with disabilities. Identify gaps in services and services that need to be scaled and partner to create or develop those resources. We currently offer snow removal and lawn mowing support for seniors and the disabled as well as assistance with smaller home repairs.

2023 Project Proposal: *COA Senior and Disability Services Transportation Program: To develop a pilot transportation program that is a solution and meets a great need in the community in partnership with AID, Aurora Township and Senior Services Association that they are not able to meet.*

7. **Applicant:** City of Aurora Youth Services Subdivision

Agency Background: The Youth Services Division of the City of Aurora works to foster educational, recreational, and developmental programs that offer positive and constructive activities, done in collaboration, which result in beneficial services being provided to youth in the community. Programs include summer camps, after-school programs, resource fairs, athletic events, back to school fairs, & other community events.

2023 Project Proposal: *Aurora Youth Street Soccer: Our program will consist of a state-of-the-art, enclosed soccer field that will encourage youth to free-play, be active, and create community-based soccer.*

8. **Applicant:** Fox Valley Park District

Agency Background: Fox Valley Park District provides a full range of recreation facilities, activities and special events as well as a vast public open space and regional trail system for the 233,000 residents it serves. Through its 10 indoor and outdoor facilities and 169 park sites, the District offers recreational and outreach opportunities such as sports, fine arts, outdoor education, fitness and wellness programs, summer camps, senior programs, and before/after school activities.

2023 Project Proposal: *Walters Park "Wellness Walk" Phase Two: The requested CDBG funding will be directed toward construction of a splash pad/spray ground and a "council ring" seating and gathering area used for VNA Health Care and FVPD staff led health and wellness programs.*

9. **Applicant:** Jennings Terrace

Agency Background: Jennings Terrace, a not-for-profit senior living facility, has a long history of service to the community. In response to a demonstrated community need, it opened its doors in 1943 with apartments for 64 senior residents and a waiting list of 30. Stepping up in response to another

community need in 1984, with a donation from the Kemmerer Family, a 60-bed annex was added to provide comprehensive nursing care. Today, Jennings Terrace operates a state-licensed facility, offering Skilled, Intermediate and Sheltered care services to senior citizens, with an expanded program of rehabilitation services, restorative exercise and social programs. The Mission of Jennings Terrace states that we recognize seniors' unique composition of body and soul and believe this concept embraces their physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs and a basic recognition of the dignity of each person. Jennings's Vision sees our organization as one of the leading providers of senior care in Aurora; recruiting and retaining compassionate, highly trained, motivated staff; providing affordable, high quality, safe services; and remaining responsive and flexible in meeting current and evolving senior needs, consistent with sound financial management.

2023 Project Proposal 1: Safety and Accessibility Improvement Capital Project: *In order to ensure resident safety and security, Jennings Terrace will replace three badly deteriorated exterior doors and replace non-ADA compliant sidewalk, ramp and parking lot, both in serious disrepair and a fall hazard to residents and their guests.*

2023 Project Proposal 2: Aging and Inefficient HVAC System Replacement – Phase I, Electrical Service Upgrade: *Upgrade electrical service to provide additional needed power for new HVAC at Jennings Terrace, which is Phase I of a project to replace an aging, failing and extremely energy inefficient boiler heat and window air conditioner HVAC system.*

10. **Applicant:** Lewis Simmons Foundation

Agency Background: Established in 2018, Lewis Simmons Foundation (LSF) is a 501c3 corporation that champions business growth, job readiness, and professional development. LSF's mission is to help close the health and wealth gap for those in underserved communities, particularly communities of color, women, and other groups faced with labor market barriers such as incarceration. The organization's vision is to "champion change for those whose voices are stifled and so often go unheard." This vision is the vehicle that drives the foundation's efforts to serve as an intermediary that organizes and works with employers, training participants, employees, government agencies, and other organizations to solve workforce development problems within Illinois and help grow Illinois by developing trust and a base of knowledge about its organizations and businesses, as well as available public and private resources. Our second chance program with Kane County Sheriff's Office creates opportunities for those currently or previously incarcerated to carve a path to a bright and healthy future. Through this initiative, we partnered with numerous organizations to develop virtual workforce development training programs, with wraparound services for 12 months, for adults, youths, and low to moderate-income individuals. This grant will provide funding to support the expansion of our program for two years throughout the Fox Valley area serving all of Aurora counties, Kane, Kendall, Will, and Dupage.

2023 Project Proposal: Building Strong Blocks Workforce Momentum Project (BSBWMP): *We will continue our work with the Fox Valley Area to create opportunities for the currently or previously incarcerated to carve a path to a bright and healthy future by implementing virtual workforce development training programs.*

11. **Applicant:** Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry

Agency Background: Each year, Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry (MWFP) serves the nutritional needs for families and individuals and that number continues to grow each week. Many of our pantry clients are children, the elderly, low income residents and the disabled. Clients also include the "working poor", those individuals who are employed but do not earn enough to make ends meet. Marie Wilkinson founded the Aurora, IL Food Pantry in the 1950's after a near-death experience that caused her to make a personal commitment to helping the less fortunate. Driven by a new life purpose, Wilkinson began

giving out bags of food to those in need from her bungalow on View Street. She recruited friends and neighbors to help, and soon she had started a soup kitchen and food pantry. The Food Pantry serves the communities of Aurora IL, Kane County and the surrounding areas. Mission: To continue the legacy of Marie Wilkinson, the Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry is dedicated to meeting the hunger needs of individuals and families in Aurora and surrounding communities by educating, empowering and enlightening people to be self-sustainable through collaborations and partnerships. Vision: Engage our community as a leader in the ongoing fight against hunger

2023 Project Proposal: *Program Expansion of Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry: CDBG funds will be used for renovations to the existing food pantry so the MWFP can expand program offerings.*

12. **Applicant:** Mutual Ground, Inc.

Agency Background: Mutual Ground, Inc. (MGI) is a not-for-profit social service organization, established in 1975, that operates one of the oldest and largest domestic and sexual violence programs in Illinois. Services are provided across these three programs (Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence and Substance Use) and six departments within those programs (Hotline, Shelter, Counseling, Legal Advocacy, Family Services, and Prevention). MGI provides services at its main office in Aurora and five satellite offices throughout the service area, which includes Southern Kane and all of Kendall Counties. MGI also provide services directly at local schools, hospitals and law enforcement offices. In April 2020, MGI developed the infrastructure to support telehealth services for victims who are unable to access services in-person. The mission of Mutual Ground is to empower individuals, families, and communities to eliminate domestic and sexual violence and the harms of substance use through education, awareness, and life-changing services. MGI is the only provider of comprehensive domestic and sexual violence resources in its service area. Our 24-hour shelter services are located in the central portion of our service district.

2023 Project Proposal: *Domestic Violence Emergency Shelter: MGI's 24-hour Emergency Domestic Violence shelter program exists to be a beacon of hope for those seeking a path away from violence, and continually works to meet the needs of adults and children at risk.*

13. **Applicant:** NAMI KDK (National Alliance on Mental Illness for Kane-South, DeKalb, and Kendall Counties)

Agency Background: NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. In 1979 NAMI began by a small group of families struggling with mental health conditions and has grown into the largest grassroots mental health organization. Our Affiliate NAMI KDK office is in Aurora, IL. NAMI KDK works in our community to raise awareness and provide support, education, and training that was not previously available to those in need. We offer the following services to community members in Aurora: NAMI Connection & Recovery: a peer-led support group for individuals living with mental health conditions.

2023 Project Proposal: *Remove Barriers and Meet the Service Gap of Mental Health Services: NAMI KDK will be mindful of the key barriers to mental health support and create programs designed remove the following barriers; Insufficient insurance coverage, Healthcare staffing shortages, Stigma and bias surrounding mental illness, Transportation, work-related, language and cultural barriers.*

14. **Applicant:** Prairie State Legal Services

Agency Background: Prairie State Legal Services is a civil legal aid organization serving 36 counties in northern and central Illinois outside of Cook County. All legal services are provided without charge to eligible persons. We provide services from 11 offices located in Bloomington, Galesburg, Joliet, Kankakee, Ottawa, Peoria, Rockford, Rock Island, Waukegan, West Chicago and Woodstock. We offer other services including criminal records relief, a low income tax clinic, and legal advice by telephone.

2023 Project Proposal: *2023 Housing Advocacy Legal Services Project: This program provides legal services at no charge for eligible residents with rental housing issues that can lead to homelessness if not addressed.*

15. **Applicant:** Public Action to Deliver Shelter, Inc.

Agency Background: Hesed House began in the early 1980s when the Aurora Clergy Association noticed that people were beginning to knock on their church doors asking for food and clothing. It was decided that it was vital that the churches band together to help solve the problem. On February 23, 1983, Hesed House was opened. In addition to providing food and shelter as unconditionally as possible, volunteers and staff strive to affirm the dignity of each client, thus enabling her or him to regain self-respect and a sense of personal worth. Hesed House serves the very poorest residents of the Aurora and surrounding areas. Clients must be homeless and include the unemployed, mentally ill, physically disabled, victims of domestic violence, the chronically homeless, veterans, displaced families, senior citizens, alcohol and substance abusers and those experiencing homelessness due to severe economic duress. In addition, in 2010, we opened the Hesed Comprehensive Resource Center (CRC) directly across the street from our shelter programs. Besides our own case managers, there are several local service agencies - with specialized knowledge of the homeless population - that have offices at the CRC. This includes a legal clinic, a medical clinic, a mental health counselor, an addictions counselor and a children's counselor, in addition to others.

2023 Project Proposal: *SEEDS Case Management: SEEDS case managers work with homeless clients of Hesed House, addressing the issues that made them homeless in order to return them to independent living.*

16. **Applicant:** Quad County Urban League, Inc.

Agency Background: Quad County Urban League provides services to individuals who are members of the targeted populations in this application. Our organization works with all populations who live in low-income communities. We understand the needs of the community from young adult ex-offenders and at-risk youth to single mothers trying to make ends meet on a low-wage job, to seniors who are struggling on fixed incomes. Our programs consistently reach and help residents that other programs cannot or do not - those with multiple barriers to employment and financial stability. QCUL addresses needs of young people who are in poverty, exposed to crime (including gun violence), and are un/underemployed through its various programs including: (1) The Excel Academy (EA2) and (2) Strengthen Communities - Ready to Work Program. QCUL also operates an Emergency Assistance and Relief center, connecting older youth, adults, and families to Stimulus, Families First, CARES, and other government and private sector resources and supportive services, training, and re-employment. We are an Economic First Responder and Economic Relief Community Navigator for the Aurora community, which needs our help now more than ever to address financial, basic needs, health, and emotional hardships, during this COVID-19 emergency.

2023 Project Proposal: *Community Empowerment Program - Adults*

The Community Empowerment Program will accomplish workforce development outcomes by providing occupational/job and customized training that increases access to skilled workers to meet the workforce needs of local businesses who are industry partners.

17. **Applicant:** Rebuilding Together Aurora

Agency Background: Rebuilding Together Aurora (RTA) provides critical home repair and accessibility modification services to low-income, owner occupied, homes in Aurora and the surrounding areas.

2023 Project Proposal: *Safe at Home: To provide ADA compliant accessibility modifications to qualified low-income, owner-occupied, households in which at least one person has an independently verified disability that can be aided through home modification.*

18. **Applicant:** Senior Services Associates, Inc.

Agency Background: Senior Services Associates, Inc. is a non-profit agency dedicated to sustaining and improving the quality of life for individuals age 60 and older, the disabled age 18 to 59 and their caregivers, by providing access to the social services they need. We are dedicated to preserving their independence, promoting mental and physical well being, and protecting their rights and dignity. Preserving independence since 1973. Our focus is on the frail, vulnerable elderly and their caregivers including grandparents raising grandchildren. No one is denied services because of their ability to pay. In pursuit of our mission we provide case management, assessing seniors needs and linking them with in home services; also information and assistance, accessing the benefits they qualify for, assisting with the application and follow up to determine proper services are in place and remain relevant. We provide the following services to promote health and wellness and prevent social isolation; evidence based wellness programs, educational and recreation programs, Friendly Visiting, Transportation and volunteer opportunities. Additional services include Adult Protective Services, abuse investigation; nursing home Ombudsman, Volunteer Transportation and Outreach to the homebound. Senior Services primary objective is to provide the support that will allow our clients to live safely with improved health and dignity in their homes and community as long as possible.

2023 Project Proposal: *Community Connection Center: Provide services for seniors, veterans of all ages and persons with disabilities that will allow them to live safely with improved, maintained health, security and dignity in their homes and communities as long as possible.*

19. **Applicant:** The Neighbor Project

Agency Background: The Neighbor Project (TNP) is a nonprofit, HUD-Approved Housing Counseling Agency dedicated to helping low to moderate income families reduce debt, build credit, save and ultimately buy their first homes. TNP not only provides financial and homebuyer education, but post-purchase counseling, foreclosure prevention and emergency home-repairs. Moreover, TNP strives to harness existing resources in the community through a unique savings model that can involve directing rent dollars already being spent by lower-income families back into their hands, eliminating one of the largest barriers to financial growth and stability - savings. TNP Programs help position working families to be the primary drivers of neighborhood revitalization by educating and preparing families to reduce their debt and begin building wealth. At The Neighbor Project, clients always do the work to change their own financial situation. But that work is leveraged, powerfully, through innovative savings programs that help clients reach their goals more quickly and effectively than they ever would alone. Volunteers, churches and donors multiply their neighbors' efforts - opening the path to true financial freedom.

2023 Project Proposal 1: *Matched Savings - Individual Development Accounts: TNP will expand its pilot program through the "Use of (CDBG) to Assist Individual Development Accounts [IDAs]" per HUD Notice CPD-17-07 to help Aurora residents accelerate savings for homeownership, education or small business start-up.*

2023 Project Proposal 2: *Safety-First Program: Fund urgent or safety-related repairs in the homes of income-eligible homeowners including: HVAC/mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems; roof repairs/replacements; porch repairs; mold/radon mitigation; and more.*