

City of Cincinnati



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Councilmember

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MOTION

WE MOVE that City Council allocate \$150,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act to the Bond Hill Community Council to fund a Community Organizer to facilitate a neighborhood outreach strategy and needs assessment. The objective is to build a more thriving and connected Bond Hill by rebuilding neighbor relationships and civic engagement in the Bond Hill community. The funds will cover personnel and programming needs.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney".

Councilmember Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney

STATEMENT

See attached proposal prepared by the Bond Hill Community Council.



Neighborhood-Based Community Organizer Budget Proposal for the COVID-19 Stimulus Fund

Since December 2020 the Bond Hill Community Council has been actively recruiting new leaders to rebuild its council structure. Today, our Executive Board and Committees are fully-chaired with intergenerational leadership that seeks to honor the legacy of our great neighborhood while helping to usher in a new era of health, wealth, and opportunity for Bond Hill residents.

As we reconvene we have learned a lot about our community’s strengths and weaknesses, as well as how they have been impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. We have a council structure that enables us to advocate for the critical resources our neighborhood needs, however we face several barriers to becoming a voice that truly represents our neighbors.

To this end, **we strongly propose that \$150k of the COVID-19 Relief Fund be allocated to the Bond Hill Community Council to obtain a community organizer** who will facilitate a neighborhood outreach strategy and needs assessment. Our objective is to build a more thriving and connected Bond Hill by rebuilding neighbor relationships and civic engagement in our community.

Background & Goal

Like many communities, Bond Hill’s social, economic, and physical assets were deeply fragmented by the 2009 Housing Crisis and 2020 Global Pandemic. We need an organizer who, with direction from the Bond Hill Community Council, will act with laser focus to reengage the broken pieces that make Bond Hill one.

With 7,174 residents, Bond Hill is rich with human resources that must be engaged in order for Bond Hill to thrive. The Bond Hill Council aspires to reach all of our neighbors to understand how their families have been impacted by the recent crises, to begin mending our broken fences, and to create a shared vision for the future.

Today the Community Council engages fewer than 1% of Bond Hill residents. As a volunteer-led board comprised of working professionals we have limited capacity to grow and sustain our membership. **To effectively function as the City-recognized resident planning, policy, and implementation organization of Bond Hill, it is imperative that the Community Council represent resident voices.** A community organizer will help us to achieve this goal.

Budget

The proposed budget provides for a competitive salary to attract a dynamic and highly-skilled community organizer. The urgency of the moment requires that we ensure the success of the organizer. We aim to provide an infrastructure of Council and resident support as well as the resources that will enable immediate impact.

Project and Materials would include costs related to outreach efforts such as charrettes, murals, meetings or events. Contractual Services would provide for technical assistance beyond the Council’s capacity.

I. Personnel Costs	\$ 78,000
A. Salaries	\$ 60,000
B. Fringe Benefits	\$ 18,000
II. Non-Personnel Costs	\$ 72,000
Projects & Materials	\$ 37,000
Contractual Services	\$ 30,000
Computer & Technology	\$ 5,000
Total	\$ 150,000

Council Structure & Objectives

The **Bond Hill Neighborhood Community Organizer** will assist the Community Council by bringing together community members, facilitating resident-led problem solving, and strengthening the Council’s systems and infrastructure to ensure long-term organizational health.

The organizer will ensure that the objectives of the Council are defined by resident voice and will support the Council Committees to execute objectives with resident buy-in and participation.

Beautification Committee. This year Bond Hill celebrates its 150th anniversary providing the Council an ideal moment to reengage with our neighbors. We are raising funds to support our anniversary celebration and jump start our beautification and community engagement campaigns.

- The community organizer will help us to facilitate resident participation in our broader efforts to celebrate and beautify Bond Hill.

Communications Committee. Senior residents represent nearly a third of the neighborhood. Digital access and skill gaps have disconnected us from our senior residents, often times leading to their worsening physical and mental health.

- The community organizer will help us to reach senior residents in a way that is safe and comfortable so that we may reconnect them to their neighbors, community resources and to the Community Council.

Youth Committee. Nearly a third of Bond Hill's children lived in poverty prior to the pandemic. The pandemic significantly reduced students' engagement in school and safety at home, accelerating the decline of youth development and educational attainment.

- The community organizer will help us to reach Bond Hill's youth with learning resources that address education gaps, as well as recreational resources to aid in their personal development.

Safety Committee. As the economy has declined, Bond Hill has seen an uptick in crime. Today our crime rate is 153% and 22% higher than the national and city-wide average, with the highest incidents reported as theft and burglary.

- The community organizer will facilitate an assessment of safety issues in Bond Hill and help to define safety strategies that include heavy engagement with the community.

Residential Revitalization Ad Hoc Committee (BHRRC). Bond Hill has enjoyed a high rates of home ownership despite systemic barriers to wealth creation in predominantly Black neighborhood. Bond Hill's legacy of Black homeownership is threatened as the racial wealth gap widens and the neighborhood becomes a target for development.

- The community organizer will help us to engage public and private sector partners to increase homeownership, protect residents from displacement, and support equitable development of the Bond Hill Business District.

Council Executive Committee

- **President – Jacque Edmerson.** Director of Clinical Services at Cincinnati Works with a background in community engagement, human services, and strategic program design and implementation.
- **Vice President – Marcia Boyd.** Senior Software Solutions Administrator at Cincinnati Children's Hospital with a background in information technology management and social media management.
- **Treasurer & BHRRC Co-Chair – Dorothy Brundidge.** VA Medical Center retiree with more than 40 years volunteering with local arts organizations from Music Hall, Playhouse in The Park, CVG, and the Aronoff.
- **Secretary – Celeste Wonson.** Retired public servant with a background in administrative services and real-estate.
- **Beautification Chair – Joyce Powdrill.** Versatile business executive bringing over 30 years of experience as an accomplished entrepreneur, business developer, and commercial banker.
- **Communications Chair – Tami Lunan.** Founder and Lead Organizer at Imprint Strategies LLC with nearly a decade of experience in movement building project management, public policy, and LGBT and racial justice.
- **Youth Chair – Kimberly Thomas.** 26-year resident of Bond Hill and life-long educator and advocate for children.
- **Safety Chair – Melisha Reese.** Veteran with more than six years' experience in the US Air Force.
- **Membership Chair – J. Sue Walker Isabel.** Lifetime Bond Hill resident who is dedicated to ensuring that the community council has a healthy and increasing membership.

We hope that the preceding illustrates the effect a community organizer would have in Bond Hill. We hope you will join us in this vision.