

City of Cincinnati



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Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney
Councilmember

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MOTION

WE MOVE for City Council to allocate \$154,055 from the American Rescue Plan Act to Keep Cincinnati Beautiful's Environmental Services Program with the goal of more effectively deterring and preventing illegal dumping, which will better the health and safety of our communities.

Councilmember Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney

STATEMENT

Keep Cincinnati Beautiful (KCB) is a longtime partner of the City of Cincinnati, working to address the litter and blight that can plague our neighborhoods. KCB collaborates with the City's Department of Public Services (DPS) to remediate tire and illegal dumping, an issue that disproportionately impacts lower-income neighborhoods even though the majority of dumpers are not City of Cincinnati residents, according to data from DPS. Illegal dumping is not only financially costly to address, but it also is a health hazard to residents. Dumping sites are composed of materials that can lead to or worsen airborne illnesses and respiratory conditions.

KCB's Environmental Services Program Manager, whose salary is funded by the City of Cincinnati, identifies dumping hot spots as well as monitors and installs cameras at these sites. As a result of monitoring sites, KCB annually, on average, turns over evidence to authorities for approximately 100 cases of illegal dumping, which equates to a maximum of \$2.5 million of potential revenue for the City.

To expand the reach of the Environmental Services Program, KCB needs to increase the number of cameras they install and monitor, upgrade their technological infrastructure, add an additional vehicle, and hire a second full-time employee. With these enhancements, KCB can more effectively deter and combat tire and illegal dumping in our communities.

PROPOSAL

**FROM: KEEP CINCINNATI BEAUTIFUL, INC.
JEFF HARRIS, BOARD CHAIR
JONATHAN ADEE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**TO: CINCINNATI CITY COUNCIL, BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE
DAVID MANN, CHAIR
CINCINNATI CITY COUNCIL, NEIGHBORHOODS COMMITTEE
JAN-MICHELE LEMON-KEARNEY, CHAIR**

DATE: 20 APRIL 2021

RE: STIMULUS FUNDING, ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PROGRAM

Keep Cincinnati Beautiful is a leveraged partner of the City of Cincinnati. Established in 1978 as Clean Cincinnati, KCB is a private 501(c)3 organization headquartered in the Department of Public Services Administration building. KCB works closely with DPS on such issues as litter and blight, developing public green spaces throughout Cincinnati's 52 neighborhoods, and addressing more institutional elements of litter to include tire dumping and illegal dumping. The Department of Public Services Neighborhood Operations Division responds to approximately 20 illegal dump sites per month. They have indicated that the direct and indirect costs of remediating a dump site are \$10,000 per site per month. This equates to a \$2,400,000 expense for the City of Cincinnati. Hamilton County, through its Recycling and Solid Waste District, established an Environmental Crimes Unit, with a deputy working in conjunction with KCB across the County, including within the City. Additionally, KCB continues to work with the Neighborhood Liaison Unit (NLU) to provide evidence of environmental criminal activity.

The Department of Public Services, in conjunction with Mayor Cranley's ObLITTERate Task Force, worked with Cincinnati City Council and the City Administration to make the public aware of this issue and steps that can be taken to address it. DPS data shows that illegal dumping is disproportionately located in lower-income neighborhoods serving families and communities of color. In addition to the economic costs associated with illegal dumping, data from the Office of Performance Data and Analytics shows that

environmental crimes and violent crimes are clustered together. Furthermore, illegal dumping is largely composed of materials that are incubators of airborne illness and exacerbators of respiratory conditions. Discarded tires, which are a large component of illegal dump sites, are havens for mosquitoes and are demonstrated to be positively correlated with childhood disease.

Issues of illegal dumping are known to the Community Councils of the City of Cincinnati. KCB has been contacted by numerous Community Councils and neighborhood advocacy groups, and works with them to identify dumping hot spots and communicate surveillance opportunities. The City of Cincinnati provides salary funding to a full-time Environmental Services Program Manager. Alistair Probst, in this capacity, identifies locations most likely to be hot spots for illegal dumping, and installs, monitors, and services trail cameras to provide evidence of illegal dumping that is then turned over to law enforcement for investigation, arrest, and prosecution. On average, Alistair provides video surveillance evidence to law enforcement of close to 100 illegal dumping criminals a year. It should be pointed out that the vast majority of these dumpers are not City of Cincinnati residents. Many of the dumpers discard the contents of rental units upon eviction to conserve costs. Others are sub-contractors who discard construction materials illegally as it costs roughly \$350 per construction job to dispose of materials properly. Once again, they are attempting to conserve costs. There are also common characteristics to a typical dump site. Typically they are along longer, narrower streets in low-income neighborhoods with minimal occupied housing. These characteristics make it difficult to detect with any legal degree of certainty criminal activity since cameras are only able to show a limited scope.

According to existing Cincinnati City Ordinance, illegal dumping is punishable by up to \$25,000 per occurrence. DPS erected signs with KCB's assistance to inform the public and potential criminals of the consequences of illegal dumping. KCB currently installs, services, monitors, and provides evidence of up to 30+ separate sites throughout the City of Cincinnati. As mentioned, KCB turns over actionable evidence for around 100 cases within an average year. At a maximum fine of \$25,000 per occurrence, this

equates to potential restitution revenue of \$2.5 million annually, essentially covering the costs of illegal dumping which are currently borne by City taxpayers.

Since DPS continues to remediate ten dump sites per month, it is clear that the response to illegal dumping has been insufficient to date. KCB's Environmental Services Program Manager is also tasked with operating the City's Greenspace Program. He is able to devote no more than 20 hours per week to camera service, installation, monitoring, and work with law enforcement. KCB currently operates 25 of these cameras. Each camera costs \$600-\$700 per unit. The cards and batteries in each unit need to be changed out frequently, as they are motion sensor based, and animal and other non-criminal activity triggers the camera. Cameras also exist throughout the City, and KCB has only one vehicle capable of transporting a ladder. That vehicle must be allocated among all of KCB's programming, including Environmental Education, Great American Cleanup, and the Future Blooms Program.

Keep Cincinnati Beautiful has as part of its Board approved strategic plan program growth in Environmental Services. What must be done to effectively deter illegal dumping within the City? A multi-prong strategy is necessary.

1. KCB needs additional investment to provide for a second person in the Environmental Services Program. This individual would be allocated full-time to installing cameras, servicing cameras, accumulating evidence, and assisting law enforcement in bringing these individuals and companies to justice.
2. KCB needs to develop a relationship with University of Cincinnati's Criminal Justice Program to provide a steady allocation of co-op students to assist in these activities as a real-world experience in reducing crime within the City. Keep Cincinnati Beautiful has reached out to UC for this co-op program, but we are limited in that currently we are able to offer only unpaid internship opportunities.
3. KCB needs to install, service, and monitor more cameras. Dump sites tend to relocate periodically to stay one step of detection. Some of the cameras are readily visible in order to act as a crime prevention measure. Others are hidden to aid in the

detection of criminal activity. Currently KCB has an inventory of 25 cameras. With sufficient eyes on the cameras and a sufficient pipeline to law enforcement, and, ultimately, the judicial system, the City would be best served by a total of 70 cameras placed strategically throughout the City with the input of neighborhood advocacy groups and OPDA.

4. KCB needs the technological infrastructure to conduct surveillance and provide video evidence for law enforcement. A technology upgrade would allow KCB to adequately utilize additional cameras.

5. KCB needs to be able to respond to camera installation and service needs. Our existing fleet of vehicles consists of one truck that is utilized across all KCB programs and one van more than twenty years old which is utilized exclusively by our Future Blooms Program. An additional vehicle with ladder transport capability will enable us to be responsive to constituent needs.

6. Although KCB provides adequate support to practically eliminate the direct economic costs of illegal dumping to the City, very little restitution comes back to the Department of Public Services. There have not been any instances where persons convicted of illegal dumping have had to pay anywhere near the \$25,000 maximum allowed. Typically offenders are ordered court costs, community service, and perhaps are ordered to clean up the sites. We need access to judges administering these sentences to provide adequate education not only on the costs of illegal dumping but also the consequences to health and safety.

It is clear from the voices of community councils and neighborhood advocacy groups that illegal dumping is on the minds of Cincinnatians. It is clear from the neighborhoods most affected that illegal dumping is a form of environmental injustice. An investment in KCB's Environmental Services Program is just the kind of investment contemplated by this form of funding to provide a great return on investment of taxpayer funds and a commitment to the health and safety of all Cincinnatians.

Keep Cincinnati Beautiful
Environmental Services Program Budget Table

Camera Equipment	Grant Dollars
25 Surveillance Camera (1x purchase)	\$11,500
25 Camera Security Enclosure (1x purchase)	\$1,250
25 Cable Lock (1x purchase)	\$750
25 Padlock (1x purchase)	\$500
50 Memory Cards (1x purchase)	\$750
25 Rechargeable Batteries/Charger (1x purchase)	\$2,500
1 Ladder (1x purchase)	\$300
<i>Annual Equipment Maintenance/Replacement</i>	\$600
Total:	\$18,150
Vehicle	
Vehicle (1x purchase)	\$45,000
Bed Liner (1x purchase)	\$600
Safety Lights (1x purchase)	\$1,800
Vehicle Wrap (1x purchase)	\$2,500
<i>Annual Maintenance</i>	\$1,000
Total:	\$50,900
Personnel	
<i>Employee (40 hrs. per week)</i>	\$50,000
<i>Intern (3 semesters)</i>	\$7,000
<i>Annual Administration</i>	\$8,550
Total:	\$65,550
Technology	
Computer (1x purchase)	\$2,500
Monitors (1x purchase)	\$600
SD Reader (1x purchase)	\$60
<i>Annual Microsoft Office/Adobe</i>	\$75
<i>Annual Cell Phone Stipend</i>	\$420
Total:	\$3,655
Marketing	
<i>Annual KCB Outerwear</i>	\$300
Vehicle Wrap (1x purchase)	\$2,500
<i>Annual Brochure</i>	\$500
<i>Annual DPS Truck Campaign</i>	\$5,000
<i>Annual Design Services</i>	\$2,500
Total:	\$10,800
Event Resources	
<i>Annual Event Services (dumpster blitz etc.)</i>	\$5,000
Total:	\$5,000

Totals:

\$154,055