

DATE: 12/3/2021

FROM: Dr. Nakia Baylis

TO: City of Battle Creek

SUBJ: The Village Network – ARPA Funding

The Village Network – Battle Creek

The Village Network (TVN) represents an unprecedented partnership and collaboration between the communities of color in one city to advance all members of the community equitably. Founded as a program of the United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region (UWBCKR) through a Catalyzing Community Giving grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), the Village’s original mandate was to support communities of color in developing philanthropy as a tool for advancing their initiatives and becoming true agents of change. That mandate is still at the heart of our work, but as each member of The Village Network shared community stories and challenges, we understood the enormous possibilities built into our collaboration and the need for a clear, stable structure to support all efforts.

As noted, The Village Network currently operates as a collective with “backbone” support from UWBCKR. With support from UWBCKR and WKKF, The Village Network is beginning a strategic transition to an independent nonprofit organization that will support individual and collective projects across Battle Creek prioritizing racial equity, diversity, and inclusion. We are currently finalizing an arrangement with UWBCKR to act as our incubator for the next two years, ensuring a successful transition. UWBCKR has previously launched Kidnet as well as others, and we are confident that The Village Network will be the next success story.

The Village Network is organized around a number of structural goals that guide our work and our interactions with each other and with the larger community. Those goals include:

- Restore our communities of color in Battle Creek by driving significant investments into historically divested people, neighborhoods, and businesses. (1. Renovate existing structures/facilities to better provide current programs and services, 2. Acquire unused properties in divested neighborhoods to bring community partner programs services directly to residents of color via trusted and accessible places, and 3. Develop new infrastructures and microcosms that are uniquely designed to increase economic participation and build generational wealth within our communities of color.
- Build the capacity and technical maneuverability of a growing cohort of BIPOC leaders (both those that hold titles or organizational positions, and those that lead from their community relationships - neighborhoods, such as churches, community groups, neighborhood associations, parent associations, etc.)

- Advocate for community equity by supporting the transparent and equitable distribution of community resources.
- Serve as an equitable depository for advocating for, managing, and distributing resources to historically marginalized residents.
- Provide a source for real-time data for BIPOC community conditions and outcomes.
- Implement a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) prioritizing BIPOC community initiatives and outcomes.
- Provide systematic quality control, equity lens accountability, and support to local systems.
- Support culturally relevant and inclusive leadership development in the BIPOC community.
- Support a living *code of conduct* within and across our communities of color and in our relationships across systems.
- Support peer mediation and promote healthy working relationships to heal past trauma (e.g. the scarcity mindset that shows up in how BIPOC leaders compete with one another for the same resources).

The Village Network's ARPA Request

Funding from the American Rescue Plan Act represents an incredible opportunity for communities across the country, and it carries special importance and opportunity for The Village Network. Public funds are critical for supporting what is called “tip-out” for The Village Network organizations. This means they will be able to accept more private funding from foundations and individuals, comparable with larger, traditional organizations. The Village Network will be able to leverage ARPA funding for philanthropic matches to help maximize funding and ensure the implementation of the priority projects and programs. Leadership has worked to design signature projects and programs for sustainability by embedding revenue-generating mechanisms into those projects while also strengthening increasing the impact of existing community programs and services and maximizing investments outside of The Village Network partner organizations.

The Village Network is grounded in the principle of collective liberation. Accordingly, ARPA funds will be transparently and equitably distributed across the organizations. No single organization will receive the bulk of the resources. If awarded, the leaders will workshop with The Village Network's technical team to provide strategy support and ensure that the allocations are fully aligned with the collective goals, objectives, and established outcomes, as well as the ARPA funding guidelines. We are vetting expert legal and accounting council to ensure all proper protocols and attention is designated to the ongoing work of The Village Network and all but unequivocally guarantee a maximum return on every investment made into it.

It is important to us that we make the best use of this singular opportunity to support full network implementation. We also support the organizations within The Village Network that have

submitted individual ARPA requests for specific projects. We view those requests as both reasonable and valid given the traditional imbalance in funding provided to BIPOC communities and organizations. Equally important, well-funded individual projects will support our collective work, allowing us to maintain the momentum of the coordinated projects and signaling an equitable shift in our local partnership culture.

As the strategy lead of The Village Network, I'm committed to building and strengthening relationships across our community to support collaborative work and achieve our shared goals. I take the responsibility of using public taxpayer dollars very seriously, as does each member of The Village Network. We also understand the reporting requirements attached to federal and state resources. The proper experts will be engaged to ensure that our ARPA request, and any of the member requests, if granted, will truly catalyze community giving in time, talent, and resources to achieve the desired outcomes for our entire community.

Operating Framework

Network operations and strategy (N. Baylis)

- Strategic plan and phased implementation plan
- Governance, policies and procedures
- Partnership development and accountability tracking and management
- Onboarding new partners
- Advocacy for changing systems
- Funding strategies and opportunities, proposal writing

Capacity building and technical support (consultants)

- Coaching
- Shared services
 - Legal/ finance/accounting support
 - Back office/admin.
 - Health insurance
 - Fundraising
 - Data management and analysis
- Administrative support (UWBCKR)
 - (scheduling, document processing, meeting coordination)
- Revenue generation models and fundraising support

Communications and public relations (Van Dyke•Horn)

- Professional communications strategy and support
- Village directory, website, and branding
- Social media campaigns
- Village story capturing/sharing
- Media relations – interviews and op-eds
- Video development
- Communication capacity building/ support for individual Village organizations

Data collection and evaluation (UWBCKR)

- Research and evaluation
- Analytical software
 - Data management and analysis of Village data
 - Collective, real-time data sharing among organizations

The Village Network Pillars and Projects

Education

Early Childhood

- ELNC Expansion

K-12

- Investment in out-of-school education support (teachers, tutors, educational materials and software)
- Village Learning Center (intensive supplemental, holistic, culturally responsive, learning and social-emotional supports for students and their families)
 - Feasibility study (*Tim and Victoria Reese, Dr. Sheila Matthews*)
 - Implementation
 - Collaborate with BCPS
 - Coordinate services
 - Fit space in Washington School (if acquired)

Adult Education

- Remedial learning support for adults

Industry & Economic Development

Facilities and real estate development

- VOCES: new facility
- Urban League: renovation of existing facility
- Burma Center: capital campaign in progress; significant property renovations
- New Level Sports: renovations and mixed-use development
- RISE: Washington School (51% RISE, 49% The Village - Education and Wellness Center: education center, social, emotional and mental health supports, workforce development support/technology, satellite health clinic, mixed-income housing on property-10 acres, and 24-hour on-call BIPOC community concierge)
- The Village Network: Southwestern School (multicultural center: arts, community meeting space, health clinic, satellite legal clinic, business support and incubation space, creative space, transitional, affordable housing, urban garden, green space, community recycling and conservation, community kitchen space for family meal planning and prep, learning technology for after school and workforce development, and 24-hour on-call BIPOC community concierge)
- Post/Franklin: Truth in Action Ministries purchase currently leased property, rebuild facility, land development according community needs/desires, healthy food market
- 450 W. Michigan: supportive housing and employment training facility
- Facility upgrades/ support for new network partners (e.g., Kingdom Builders, Cool People)
- Facility for BIPOC youth
 - Community presence
 - Youth voice development
 - Youth movement-building
 - Youth-driven and benefiting programs and services

Workforce development

- Expand employment hub model (location TBD - 450 W. Michigan?)
- Maximize existing investments through partnerships with workforce development partners
- Advocacy for jobs for people of color
- Unique job and soft skill training
- Partnerships with institutions on public sector proposals
- Real-time data sharing to support sector decision-making
 - Identify service and trust gaps more readily
 - Reduce the number of BIPOC residents missing critical services/resources to remove barriers to sustainable employment
 - Increase the number of BIPOC residents entering and remaining in the local workforce

Entrepreneurship

- Incubation and pop-up space (in neighborhoods)
- Business plan development supports
- Culturally competent financial coaching
- Mentor and expert networking
- Exposing BIPOC youth and adults to new experiences and models for creating a successful, sustainable business
- Youth entrepreneurship
 - Youth newspaper publication
 - By and For youth in partnership with Issue Media Group

Sports, Arts & Culture

Sports

- Providing organized sports programs for youth to learn and grow.
 - Improve self-discipline
 - Increase emotional intelligence (EQ)
 - Collaboration
 - Commitment

Arts & Culture

- Exposing BIPOC youth and adults to new arts experiences
- Provide culturally relevant art opportunities
- Increase/improve community fellowship
- Increase visibility and occurrence/existence of culturally relevant art
- Share culture
- Incubate arts entrepreneurship

Health and Well-Being

Health

- Increase access to quality healthcare
- Identify and fill service and trust gaps
- Social-emotional and mental health supports
 - Entire Village network

Food systems

- Urban farms (2)
 - North (Washington)
 - South (Wilson)
- Culturally relevant fresh food markets within 20-minute walking distance
 - According to each established mini village geographic and service footprint

Community Engagement & Leadership Development

Community Connectedness and Transparency

- Community conversations (*UWBCKR*)
- Forums and other convenings
- Movement building support
 - Learning series for leaders on developing strategies for driving change derived from community input

Youth Voice

- Convening (regular) (*UWBCKR*)
- Community mentors
- Ecosystem planning, design, and implementation (shared visioning)
- Philanthropy and entrepreneurship
- *Youth Shopper*
 - *A new periodical newspaper publication that is produced by and for youth, highlighting youth priorities and opportunities.*
 - Issue Media Group/Second Vision partnership
- Increase community value and visibility of youth experiences, priorities, and outcomes through strategic communication and community engagement embedded in new and modified programs.
 - Programs, services, events that help youth see themselves as valued community members
- Privileged experiences
 - Co-creating (youth and partners) a new way of working with and for youth in our community

Organizational Structure

The Village Board

Chris McCoy - New Level Sports Ministries

Richard Bailey - Truth in Action Ministries

Jose Orozco - VOCES

Tha Par - Burma Center

Kyra Wallace – Southwestern Michigan Urban League

Damon Brown – R.I.S.E.

Deboraha Sallee - A. Phillip Randolph Institute

Dr. Elishae Johnson - Community Mental Health Professional

Dr. Nakia Baylis – Executive Director

United Way of Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region - Incubator

Definitions

Catalyzing Community Giving (CCG) - Original W. K. Kellogg Foundation grant to the United Way of Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region (UWBCKR) to support communities of color in activating philanthropy as a tool for becoming their own agents of change

The Village Network Battle Creek – A collaborative partnership engaging all leaders and residents of color in Battle Creek designed to develop and implement programs and initiatives to create and support

equity in education, housing, health care and economic opportunity. Initially the work is targeted to specific areas of Battle Creek, but it will be scaled to the entire city.

The Village Board - The original CCG participants and BIPOC leaders of The Village Initiative and The Village Reemergence Plan. As we move forward with plans to formally establish 501c3 nonprofit status, the original board will become trustees and a new Village Board will be seated. Original organizations include: New Level Sports Ministries, Southwestern Michigan Urban League, VOCES, Burma Center, Truth in Action Ministries, R.I.S.E., A. Phillip Randolph Institute and Dr. Elishae Johnson, a community mental health expert.

Mini-Village - Each leader/organization's individual village aligned with their geographic and service footprint.

The Youth Village/NLSM Youth Village – The mini-village developed and supported by New Level Sports Ministries, prioritizing and driving youth outcomes in NLSM's geographic and service footprint, as well as the youth across The Village. Other mini-villages may coin names in the future.

The Village Initiative - The implementation framework of The Village Reemergence Plan

The Village Reemergence Plan - The written document explaining the philosophy, strategy, planning and implementation of The Village Initiative.