

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
CDBG SPECIAL COMMITTEE PY50  
PUBLIC HEARING  
MARCH 21, 2024**

**ATTENDANCE:**

**City Council Members:** Mary McBride-Lee, Co-chair; Jazmarie Melendez, Co-chair;  
Richard Ortiz, Aikeem Boyd

**Citizen Union:** Kathleen Ortiz, Orlanda Strong, Keith Cryan, Carmen Hernandez,  
Jessica Ortiz, Kelly Nims, Vaughn Sims, Denise West, Kelly  
McGee

**HCD Staff:** Anjerice Miller, HCD Senior Manager; Milta Feliciano, ESG  
HOPWA Program, Mgr; Melissa Oliveira, CDBG Program Mgr;  
Ava Showah, Admin./IDIS Finance Coordinator; Obiara Nkwo,  
HOME Program Mgr.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-chair Melendez called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. and outlined the rules of the public hearing as follows:

- Presenters will be given a two-minute limit to present the application.
- When the signal sounds to end the presentation, questions from the Council members and Citizen Union will be addressed.
- Presenters are requested to answer the questions without long testimonials and refrain from lengthy comments.
- Any Council members in the audience that have a conflict of interest with an application must leave the chamber during the presentation.

Attached is the list of CDBG public service applications with the PY 50 amounts requested, continued from the public hearing of Wednesday, March 20, 2024.

<b>Application Number</b>	<b>Agency Name</b>	<b>PY 50 Request</b>
	<b>CDBG- Public Service</b>	
<b>30144-30</b>	Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders - Building Today's Youth... Tomorrow's Leaders	<b>\$69,000.00</b>
<b>30145-31</b>	Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders - Caribe Connections Parent Workshops	<b>\$30,000.00</b>
<b>30134-32</b>	McGivney Community Center - Facility Upgrade	<b>\$225,500.00</b>

<b>30042-33</b>	Applied Behavioral Health Institute, Inc. - Training for Success Vocational and Educational Program	<b>\$25,000.00</b>
<b>30120-34</b>	Central Connecticut Coast YMCA/Bridgeport YMCA - BPT Y-Ralphola Taylor Community Center	<b>\$250,000.00</b>
<b>30182-35</b>	COB Health and Social Services - Utility Shut-off Protection Program	<b>\$50,000.00</b>
<b>30066-36</b>	Children's Center for the Art - The Body Heals	<b>\$35,000.00</b>
<b>30105-37</b>	COB Dept. of Public Facilities - Maintaining the Park City's Urban Canopy	<b>\$270,000.00</b>
<b>30131-38</b>	Greater Bridgeport Symphony Society, Inc. - Music Mentorship Program	<b>\$25,000.00</b>
<b>30162-39</b>	Hall Neighborhood House, Inc. - HNH Senior Podiatry, Vision, and Hearing Education Program	<b>\$25,000.00</b>
<b>30106-40</b>	Hall Neighborhood House, Inc. - Science Educators for the Alan Wallack STEM Learning Center	<b>\$50,000.00</b>
<b>30141-41</b>	Hall Neighborhood House, Inc. - Hall Early Learning Center Computer Literacy Program	<b>\$16,860.00</b>
<b>30090-42</b>	CT HopeHouse Inc. - Youth Global Citizen Program	<b>\$98,000.00</b>
<b>30125-43</b>	The Color a Positive Thought - Social Emotional & Mental Health Project	<b>\$50,000.00</b>
<b>30086-44</b>	The Village Initiative Project, Inc. - V.I.P. College Tours	<b>\$100,000.00</b>
<b>30097-45</b>	The House of Darla - The Art of Heart: Empowering Youth from Foundation to Future	<b>\$40,000.00</b>
<b>30138-46</b>	The United Mentoring Academy, Inc. - The Light Program	<b>\$585,000.00</b>
<b>30111-47</b>	Hall Neighborhood House, Inc. - HNH Health Clinic COVID-19,RSV,Flu, Strep Throat, Screening Machine	<b>\$45,000.00</b>

The following applicants came forward--not in order of the application number, but in the order as called by Co-Chair Melendez.

Note: Applicant names were not provided on a sign-up sheet, and are referred to as representatives of the application.

1. 30182-35 COB Health and Services- Representatives of the applicant outlined the rationale for the request to support for the utility shut-off protection program to provide residents relief for utility bills to help prevent shut offs.

Replies to questions and comments from the Council and Citizens Union members:

Referrals through social services '211' energy assistance programs and Alliance for Community Empowerment.

2. 30105-37 COB Dept. of Public Facilities: Representatives of the applicant outlined the rationale for the request to maintain the parks in the City's Urban Canopy.
3. 30064-25 Bridgeport Downtown Services: Representatives of the applicant outlined the rationale for the request to support Bridgeport Colorful Crew Beautiful expansion programs to host events that preserve sidewalks and plantings along the city.

Replies to questions and comments from the Council and Citizens Union members:

They use volunteers as ambassadors for the environmental protection of the grounds and work with Parks & Recreation to beautify the city grounds.

4. 30120-34 Central CT Coast – YMCA/Bridgeport YMCA: Representatives of the applicant outlined the rationale for the request to support Ralphola Taylor Comm Center for the East End Community to provide 8 week sessions of after school programs.
5. 30144-30 - Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders: Representatives of the applicant outlined the rationale for the request to support after school program for students for the program Building Today's Youth to Tomorrow's Leaders, providing free fitness and exercise sessions.
6. 30144-31 – Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders: Caribe Connections Parent Workshops to families with children with special needs

Replies to questions and comments from the Council and Citizens Union members:

Are services available for those on the autism spectrum? Yes, they are working with behavior specialists for help with those with learning disorders to help them develop skills to integrate them into sports.

7. 30066-36 Childrens Center for Art – Representatives of the applicant outlined the rationale for the request to support art programs. Established in 1995, the center is operated by retired Bridgeport teacher to address high school special education students to nurture education for the arts.
8. 30162-39 Hall Neighborhood House- Representatives of the applicant outlined the rationale for the request to support the HNH Senior Podiatry, Vision and Hearing Education Program. Funding will be used to address portion of salary increases for the services provided to help the seniors address health issues that impact care of their feet, eyes and ears.
9. 30162-40 Hall Neighborhood House - Representatives of the applicant outlined the rationale for the request to support Science Educators for the Alan Wallack STEM Learning Center. Funding is used for salaries, equipment and supplies such as drones and computer supports for teaching staff needs for set up and hands on.

Replies to questions and comments from the Council and Citizens Union members:

How many schools are involved? Currently equipped for set up 12 public schools and the goal is 20 so additional support accomplishes goal by June 2025 along with funding from M&T Bank.

10. 30141-41 Hall Neighborhood House: Early Learning Center Computer Literacy Program

Replies to questions and comments from the Council and Citizens Union members:

How many schools are involved? Ten Bridgeport elementary schools for robotics – curriculum for teachers for the goal of 36 total. The prototype is set up in schools and funds will be use to replace equipment as needed, after set up staff will be available for assistance for training in computer literacy. Desktops for 10 early learning to set up 25 classrooms to increase technology in classroom. Program centers benefit teachers and parents with I-pads and smart boards for filling the gap in technology education in the public schools.

11. 30111-47 – Hall Neighborhood House Health Clinic to provide rapid testing at Comm Health Centers for COVID-19, RSV, Flu, Strep Throat to provide screening machines at rapid test centers. They collaborate with the University of Bridgeport & Sacred Heart University nursing programs.

12. 30125-43 – The Color Positive Thought: Representatives of the applicant outlined the rationale for the request to support for the Social Emotional & Mental Health Project. Address learning in after school programs for students affected from home violence thru fitness therapy and meditation yoga run by Tonisha King, Yoga Therapist. This provides solutions to school suspensions – planting seeds for youth counselors.

13. 30086-44 Village Initiative Project: VIP College Tours

Co-Chair Melendez read an email notice that the representative was unable to attend due to attending a conference, she apologized and will answer any questions by email that the Committee has for them.

14. 30097-45 House of Darla – April Jackson, representative of the applicant outlined the rationale for the request to support for the After Schools Life school’s arts entrepreneurship to address high school special ed program job readiness, They work to build and develop a student run store ‘Art of the Heart’.

Replies to questions and comments from the Council and Citizens Union members:

How many schools are involved? It is proven to be empowered youth at risk and work as career advocates for high school youth to be exposed to higher education. This is hands on engagement impact youth- conflict resolution, they provide services for them to go from crises to jubilations.

15. 30138-46 United Mentoring Academy The Light Program – Representatives of the applicant outlined the rationale for the request to support for the financial literacy and healing financial through a healing journal.

Replies to questions and comments from the Council and Citizens Union members:

Location? They are at the new street sign for a halfway house & drop-in center.

Grant funds used to plant seeds – generational to help children of fathers that return now for help as fathers, he tries to reach everyone and is something he just ‘I gotta do’. Fathers whose lives were reset now help in schools with conflict resolution – suspensions from fighting, addressing prevention of bullying and social emotional education to help them to not give up on schools, important to start as early as in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

16. 30138-46 United Mentoring Academy - Representatives of the applicant outlined the rationale for the request to support for students by providing mentors from elementary through high school. They meet with students at the schools once a week to assist with homework, or just to spend time talking about what is going on in the classrooms.

17. CT HopeHouse – Youth Global Citizen Program – No representative in attendance.

18. 30105-38 Greater Bridgeport Symphony – Representatives of the applicant outlined the rationale for the request to support for students music education. They have served Bridgeport community since 1946 with free music mentorship education. Recently thru AARPA they were able to provide outreach but these funds are now depleted and no longer available. They have professional musicians work with students as mentors to low- income students where in public schools only basic ed only 1 semester is provided, they bridge gap from public education.

Evidence shows 25% more likely to graduate high school, improves quality of life, improved focus and increase in self esteem

Replies to questions and comments from the Council and Citizens Union members:

How to acquire beginner program for instruments? –Keys Empowered for Youth Support KEYS addresses social-emotional behavior issues, all different ages & learning styles.

Co-Chair McBride Lee asked the assembly if there was anyone who wished to make public comments, and repeated the question three times, and hearing none, she announced the public hearing was now closed and would be continued tomorrow.

Co-Chair McBride Lee thanked those for attending and presenting their applications.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Public Hearing was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services