



**Date:** December 18, 2023

**To:** Wanda S. Page, City Manager  
**Through:** Bertha T. Winbush, Deputy City Manager  
**From:** Victoria W. Samayoa, ARPA Grants Manager  
**Subject:** American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Project – Be Connected Durham: Fayetteville Street Corridor Equitable Engagement Series

### **Executive Summary**

On November 3, 2021, Be Connected Durham & Beyond, submitted proposal “Be Connected Durham: Fayetteville Street Corridor Equitable Engagement Series” requesting \$500,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to address the impact of COVID with a creative engagement model to further community trust for ongoing feedback to establish a strong network for collective systems, processes, and policies that majorly impact quality of life. On May 18, 2022, City Council approved \$350,000 funding for this entity. Staff has reviewed the revised proposal and recommends funding.

### **Motion**

To authorize the City Manager to execute an ARPA subrecipient grant agreement with Be Connected Durham & Beyond in an amount not to exceed \$350,000.

### **Background**

The original proposal from Be Connected Durham & Beyond requested \$500,000 from the ARPA funds under the core category of Community Resiliency. The organization seeks to lead resident engagement initiatives and build community resilience in a multi-layered ecosystem model. Everybody Eats program and events in the historic Hayti District seeks to engage residents equitably while sharing resources with approximately 2,000 marginalized Durham residents. 74% of these residents live in low-income housing or zero-car households. Be Connected utilizes local vendors and small businesses to increase mobility for minority businesses, creative and social entrepreneurs, and leverage existing community resources.

### **Issues and Analysis**

For this program, over the course of 1 year, Everybody Eats will produce:

- **Food Access with Civic Engagement:** Be Connected has worked with various Hayti community-based restaurants and Perkins Orchard to provide groceries and meals to families experiencing hardships through the Everybody Eats program. The increased cost for many essential goods while support for lost wages has gone away now that COVID-19 is no longer considered a state of emergency continues to create difficulties Durham families. Once a month, Be Connected will provide meals for 120 community members. This will continue to support food distribution with a dignified approach that sees those served as whole people who may need more than just food. Everybody Eats provides food security alongside opportunities for underrepresented residents to share with the

City their experiences and concerns for transportation, the Comprehensive Plan, 2020 Census, and other civic needs around studies and design efforts. This ensures that marginalized residents are represented in the data informing Durham's investments. Be Connected Durham offers program participants the opportunity to connect and participate in surveys, studies, and discussions that impact the community and resident quality of life. Be Connected will engage 75-100 community members per month as a part of the food access program.

- **Business Expo for Individual Artists to Enhance Entrepreneurship Skills:** The pandemic intensified the struggle of many artists' ability to network and grow their businesses. Be Connected Durham will host opportunities on the Fayetteville Street Corridor (film screenings, exhibits, and storytelling types of events through its marketing of Third Fridays for the Everybody Eats program) to allow participating artists (minimum of three artist) to connect with one another, learn about resources to grow, and sustain their businesses. Each artist will be required to provide a narrative of economic impact to their business due to the pandemic, documentation of their practice and work, and documentation on how event participation assisted in building their business capacity and expanding their career.
- **Health and Wellness Resources:** By hosting events at existing, known community sites, Be Connected Durham will continue to connect residents to healthcare, education, vaccines, testing, and other health resources throughout the community to further promote use of existing resources meant for their benefit. Be Connected Durham partners with local health organizations to continue to connect residents with information, personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies, and services. Be Connected Durham will supply 100 community members per month with PPE supplies and information.

### **Alternatives**

The City Council can choose not to accept the staff recommendation.

### **Financial Impact**

\$350,000 is available for this purpose from the funding source of the ARPA federal funds. The City of Durham received \$51,881,733 in two distributions; the first distribution was received on June 1, 2021, in the amount of \$25,940,866.50; the remaining amount was received May 2022. The City will have until December 2024 to obligate the funds. Recipients have until December 2026 to spend the funds.

### **Equal Business Opportunity Summary**

Due to the nature of this agenda item, a review by the Finance Department was not required.

### **Contractor Workforce Diversity & Hiring Practices**

Due to the nature of this agenda item, obtaining Contractor Workforce Diversity & Hiring Practices information would not be applicable.

### **Attachments**

Be Connected Durham & Beyond Subrecipient Grant Agreement