

Guiding Principles for Distribution of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fiscal Recovery Funds in Cambridge



The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocates \$350 billion nationwide in aid for state, local governments to use in providing “assistance to households, small businesses, and nonprofits, or to aid impacted industries” responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. **As the City of Cambridge plans the allocation of its \$65 million share of the fiscal recovery funds, Cambridge nonprofits urge city officials to focus on equity and aid to disproportionately impacted populations and communities, and include nonprofit partners for substantive roles in strategy development, gathering community input, as well as the decision making process for how funds are deployed.**

The process by which funds are distributed significantly impacts the ability to effectively address community needs. CNC has reviewed ARPA funding guiding principles from several nonprofit associations in other states including West Virginia’s Nonprofit Association, New York State’s Coalition to Advance Nonprofits, and Washington Nonprofits. We have incorporated their ideas into guiding principles for Cambridge and we urge you to consider these items as you determine where and how to distribute ARPA Fiscal Recovery Fund dollars for our community and to prioritize those most negatively impacted by the pandemic.

- 1. Leverage nonprofit leaders as knowledgeable partners, and include them in strategy development in addition to engaging them for service delivery. Allocate funding in partnership with the nonprofit sector, including through special task forces and advisory committees, as urged in the Treasury Department’s Interim Final Rule.**
- 2. Center racial equity from the outset to end the disparities in access to and delivery of services exposed by the pandemic nationally and in Cambridge. Invest in robust community outreach and technical assistance in service of achieving equitable distribution of funding, while moving with a level of urgency that matches the scale of community need.**
- 3. Provide premium pay for essential workers at Cambridge nonprofits, offering additional support to those who have borne and will bear the greatest health risks because of their service, and a strategy for nonprofits to help recruit and retain employees.** According to a [recent survey by the National Council of Nonprofits](#), 26% of organizations responded that they had job openings for 20% to 29% of their positions. Eight out of 10 nonprofits identified salary competition as a factor preventing them from filling openings.
- 4. Streamline, simplify and standardize grant processes to the extent possible. For example, reassessing grant timelines, selection criteria and reporting requirements. Work with local philanthropic partners such as community foundations to distribute funds. Allow funding of fiscally sponsored projects.**
- 5. Exempt projects and programs supported through ARPA funds from restrictions imposed by the Anti-Aid Amendment, allowing much greater flexibility for supporting community organizations and residents in need.** The Anti-Aid Amendment of the Massachusetts Constitution controls only public funds raised by Massachusetts state and local taxes and should not be applied to dollars raised from the federal government. See [Commonwealth v. School Committee of Springfield](#), 382 Mass. 665, 680 n.16 (1981); see also *Opinion of the Justices*, 368 Mass. 880, 885 (1975) (“public purpose” limitation of Massachusetts Constitution applies only to public funds raised by Massachusetts taxation).

The American Rescue Plan Act provides a unique opportunity for the City of Cambridge to more fully put its values as a caring community into action. Many in our community need help, and nonprofit organizations have been the bedrock of connecting with and uplifting residents during this time of crisis. We now stand ready to partner with City leadership to deploy these resources equitably and with the greatest impact possible.

This position is supported by the following Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition (CNC) members:

Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC) – Duane de Four
Brattle Film Foundation – Ivy Moylan
Breakthrough Greater Boston – Elissa Spelman
Brookline/Cambridge Community Center for the Arts, Inc. (BCCA/CCCA) – Dan Yonah Marshall
Cambridge Camping – Sharon Zimmerman
Cambridge Carnival International, Inc. – Nicola Williams
Cambridge Center for Adult Education – Mary-Catherine Deibel
Cambridge Community Center – Darrin Korte
Cambridge Community Television – Maritza Grooms
Cambridge Family & Children’s Service – Robert Gittens
Cambridge Local First – Theodora Skeadas
Cambridge School Volunteers – Meg Ramsdell
Cambridge Volunteer Clearinghouse – Laurie Rothstein
Cambridge Women’s Center – Michelle Long
Central Square Theater – Catherine Carr Kelly
Charles River Conservancy – Laura Jasinski
Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc. – David Gibbs
Community Art Center – Erin Muirhead McCarty
Community Dispute Settlement Center, Inc. – Gail Packer
Dante Alighieri Society – Salvatore Bramante
East End House – Michael Delia
Enroot – Rose Francois
Farrington Memorial dba Farrington Nature Linc – Wendy Matusovich
FKA Agassiz Baldwin Community – Maria LaPage
Food For Free – Sasha Purpura
Green Cambridge – Steven Nutter
Hands with Ethiopia – Ashebir Gezmu

Innovators for Purpose – Michael K. Dawson
Just A Start – Carl Nagy-Koechlin
Life Science Cares – Sarah MacDonald
Many Helping Hands 365 – Lori Lander
Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House – Kimberly Massenburg
Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS) – Paulo Pinto
Material Aid and Advocacy Program – Cassie Hurd
Multicultural Arts Center – Adria Katz
New England Bangladeshi American Foundation Inc. (NEBAF) – Fehmida Malik
Paine Senior Services – Elizabeth Aguilo
Parents Forum – Eve Sullivan
Per Scholas Greater Boston – Robin Nadeau
Science Club for Girls – Bonnie Bertolaet
Second Chances, Inc. – Andrea Shapiro
South Asian Workers Center – Boston – Jyoti Sinha
Sustainable Business Network of MA – Laury Hammel
The Dance Complex – Peter DiMuro
The Loop Lab – Christopher Hope
The Rian Immigrant Center – Ronnie Millar
The Union Partnership for A Whole Community – Joan Squeri
TiE Boston – Rowena Kay Mascarenhas
Transition House – Sarah Gyorog
Violeta Montessori School, Inc – Mardie Hinkley
Young People’s Project (YPP) – Maisha Moses
YWCA Cambridge – Tania Del Rio

List as of December 1, 2021

MISSION STATEMENT

The Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition advances equity and justice in the community by strengthening the Cambridge nonprofit sector, building collective voice, and promoting collaboration.*

** We define equity as recognizing that as a result of root causes that are historical, environmental, systemic, cultural, and political, everyone does not start at the same place – so some people will need different resources or supports to achieve the same outcome. We have a collective responsibility to work to eliminate disparities and create greater racial and economic equality.*

VISION STATEMENT

The Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition envisions a city where all community members have equitable access to opportunities and resources, and where the nonprofit sector is a valued partner in leading social change that addresses historical injustice, levels the playing field, and improves our community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

COLLABORATION

We advance inter- and intra- sector partnerships that benefit the community.

INCLUSION

We value residents’ perspectives and elicit and elevate resident voice in all of our efforts.**

TRANSPARENCY

We are open and honest, and we seek similar accountability from our partners.

STRATEGY

We strive to be efficient and effective, and base our work on in-depth research.

LEADERSHIP

We strengthen the sector with knowledge sharing, network building and innovation.

*** We define resident as a person living in Cambridge, regardless of any legal status, with a particular focus on residents that are part of underrepresented groups.*