



Recover Forward is designed to help Bloomington recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic downturn. Rather than restoring a pre-pandemic normal, Recover Forward seeks to lean into a future consistent with our values, toward a Bloomington more thoroughly embodying our community’s goals for racial equity, a sustainable and inclusive economy, and climate action.

Important funding mechanisms are needed over the next 4 months to provide Bloomington the tools to recover quickly, and develop programming and infrastructure supporting racial, climate and economic justice in the next decade and beyond. Recover Forward’s initial phase entails passing the 2020 \$2M special appropriation request from 2019 reversion funds, followed by the 2021 budget that will include a reallocation of funds among City departments and access to \$4M of our reserves to protect basic services and accelerate equity projects. These appropriations will position Bloomington to make the infrastructure, equipment and programming upgrades needed to meet the very real challenges before us, and continue to provide basic City services.

SUSTAINABLE QUALITY OF LIFE: \$1.3 MILLION

Lower Energy Use/Cost Burden for Built Environment

Energy Efficiency—Commercial & Residential Improvements: \$250K

Through energy-efficiency loans and grants, this program will reduce energy burden and operational costs for eligible homeowners, renters and small businesses, primarily targeting income-restricted homes or small businesses as well as multi-family units managed by property management companies with greater than five units. The program will focus on those at or below 100% area median income (AMI) as calculated by HUD (\$51,700), and applicants must complete home or business energy assessments through an approved contractor list and apply for an income-qualified grant or loan. Some financed improvements may include aerators, LED bulbs, smart thermostats, EnergyStar certified appliances, and weatherization improvements, as well as others identified by the energy assessment. The program will improve economic equity,

as well as climate response, given the major impact our buildings have on our carbon footprint. Success will be measured by the number of units served, with a focus on serving those who have limited access to financing and have the highest cost burdens from the rising cost of energy. The program will be administered by ESD, HAND, and the Controller's Office.

Improve Mobility Options

Sidewalk and Path Enhancements: \$400K

This program addresses ADA curb ramp improvements, pavement improvements to bike lanes and bike paths, and sidewalk damage caused by street trees, with investments focused in lower- and moderate-income areas. The Department of Public Works will use overall condition index data from its asset management system to identify specific locations for investment. The department also intends to break up the work into several smaller contracts in order to attract local small businesses to the projects, including a focused effort in promoting the work to minority and women-owned business enterprises.

Sidewalk/Path Improvements for BT Stops: \$250K

Based on Bloomington Transit's (BT) 2019 accessibility inventory, a comprehensive bus stop assessment and inventory that evaluated and rated each bus stop according to ADA and accessibility guidelines, City staff are working with a local engineering firm on preliminary designs to make accessibility improvements to BT bus stops. These improvement projects include creating paved landing zones, installing benches, and adding crosswalks and other pedestrian infrastructure where needed to make bus stops more easily accessible. To generate the greatest impact, the bus stops prioritized for improvement will include those rated lowest in accessibility that also serve large numbers of riders. Improvements to bus stop infrastructure will make public transit more accessible and convenient for the entire Bloomington community.

Improve Local Food

Farm Stop: \$75K (initial investment)

The community's existing local food system is fragile and lacks basic infrastructure. As a result, food farms that exist in our region have few options for selling the vegetables, fruit, meat and dairy they produce, at a fair price. Bloomington residents rely instead on food imported from faraway places, through an industrial food complex that exploits people, animals, and natural resources in exchange for a cheap price. Simultaneously, local growers from Monroe and surrounding counties find themselves caught in a unique moment of dual crises with uncertainty in the traditional local fresh food marketplace and struggling with limited customer access because of COVID-19.

This project addresses these issues by creating a consignment-based, local-only grocery store, following the successful model developed by the Argus Farm Stop in Ann Arbor, Michigan. This Farm Stop will establish an independent organization and basic physical infrastructure that will

empower growers to collaborate and expand their businesses while also increasing food security in our community. The project will focus significant efforts on diversity and inclusion among both growers and buyers.

Other

Jack Hopkins: \$200K

Social service providers and other nonprofits have been devastated by the health pandemic with accompanying rising social needs and a collapsing economy. For decades, the Council's Jack Hopkins program has effectively granted resources to local nonprofits. Providing an additional \$200,000 for immediate awards in 2020 can help our community recover more humanely and more quickly. The council infrastructure exists, nonprofits know how to access the funding, and there is already a dependable process in place to assign funds to the greatest needs.

Arts Community: \$100K

Our arts community—so central to Bloomington's well-being and prosperity -- has been radically challenged by COVID-19 and the near shut down of traditional arts events and activities. City government has accelerated support for the arts since the spring, but real risks continue to threaten the existence of major arts institutions and programs. Allocating an additional \$100,000 for awards in 2020 can help avoid some of the worst threats and damage. The BUEA has identified funds to use, and a dependable process is already in place to award funds to protect this essential sector of Bloomington.

Digital Equity: \$35K

Digital equity refers to the fairness of the distribution of benefits of the internet and modern technology throughout society. Digital equity disparities often track other societal equity gaps like income, race, age, gender, and geographic location, among others. Digital equity gaps are now more salient than ever as the past several months of the COVID-19 pandemic have clarified how critical digital access is, and how damaging inequities can be.

To address the challenges of the digital divide identified by ITS' recent digital equity survey, the department proposes to establish a digital equity grants fund to support local nonprofits in their efforts to bridge the digital divide. Potential partners include Area 10, TechHeroes, BEDC, Community Foundation and other organizations. ITS anticipates inventive proposals that build capacity in the community to address digital equity challenges, including supporting navigators and trainers to address skills gaps, providing assistance for eligible residents in securing subsidized broadband service, and more.

GOOD JOBS, NET NEW: \$525,000

Net New Job Incentives (to Small Businesses and Organizations): \$375K

These programs will support underserved and underemployed Bloomington residents in acquiring jobs and skills that will make them 1) eligible for higher wage skilled labor jobs in the building trades and other similar professions; 2) eligible for governmental and other regulated private sector contracts; and 3) eligible for reentry into the job market after challenging life circumstances.

Building Trades: \$100K

The building trades sector is one of few sectors that has continued hiring locally during the pandemic, with good paying jobs. The Bureau of Labor Statistics cites the annual mean wage of construction workers in Indiana as \$37,810–\$43,550. But the number of highly skilled building tradespeople, especially among minority populations, has diminished over recent decades.

This program will support residents in becoming eligible for skilled jobs in building trades by funding wages for the first 4 weeks of employment as apprentices learn actively on the job. In addition, the program will offer several days of training on employment soft skills and basic best practices. While this program will not be comprehensive enough to certify a participant as an electrician, for example, it will support future employees who presently lack the financial flexibility either to take time away from earning income to take classes or to self-finance an educational program.

Implementing parties will include local general contractors, the City of Bloomington, the state's Department of Workforce Development and Ivy Tech. The target demographic will include unemployed residents, people earning below 100% AMI, people recently released from prison or with criminal convictions, workers from collapsed sectors, and any other individuals who may be experiencing financial distress and are seeking advancement.

Re-Entry Support: \$150K

This program focuses on jobs for members of the population who are reentering the workforce after sometimes prolonged absences, with a particular emphasis on people released from prison with criminal convictions, individuals in recovery programs, and individuals having experienced extended unemployment.

The program will fund new, temporary job opportunities via the City and partner workplaces to provide reentry skills and income for individuals, and help them achieve permanent job opportunities. Leveraging local partnerships, the program will expand upon the successful City/Centerstone partnership and collaborate with other, similar existing community programs focused on reentry into the workforce. These funds can bolster the Brighten B-Town program to triple the number of participating employees, from 5 to 15.

Parks & Recreation and Centerstone Partnership: \$50K

This partnership began in 2017 and is renewed annually by the Board of Park Commissioners. Currently 11 Centerstone crew members work seasonally alongside Parks Operations staff providing landscaping and park maintenance services. The Recover Forward funding would

employ an additional 9 Laborers (\$13.21/hr) and 2 supervisors (\$15/hr) for 24/hours a week, September through November. Employees will be assigned to city landscaping crews working at Switchyard Park, sports facilities, playgrounds and landscaped areas throughout the city, with duties including weeding, invasive plant removal, and basic park and facility maintenance.

Direct New Jobs Support: \$75K

This program will provide additional support to employers hiring individuals into new positions in their organizations that emerge from programs outlined above. Employees hired from these skill-building programs will be significantly more employable than prior to their re-entry training, but may require additional, post-hire support to be successful long-term. The program would incentivize hiring and would help employers offset incremental costs. Additionally, the program will support very small businesses to gain the structural support they may need to compete for more substantial contracts, including government contracts, and be positioned to hire additional employees.

Coding School: \$100K

With new tech companies growing at The Mill, it has become evident that local tech talent is critical to sustain these companies in Bloomington. To help address this local need, The Mill will provide a low-cost code school focusing on people who are un/underemployed, underrepresented, and interested in training for a tech career. The program will cost \$200 per participant, and laptops will be provided to those in need. The curriculum consists of two 12-week online courses through Team Treehouse. Students will interact weekly with local tech professionals to help them build a network of coders and meaningful relationships with local employers. This program is derived from Code Louisville, which has placed over 450 graduates in tech jobs over the past 5 years.

The Mill Code School will use a cohort model with 3 groups of 40 students starting annually. The program will require 2 paid computer science instructors, 5 volunteer professional mentors who are currently employed as developers/coders, and 1 part-time staff member at The Mill. Students will graduate from the program after completing 2 courses, and will have the opportunity to take additional courses. Participants also will receive career readiness training to ensure they have the needed soft skills to complement their new technical skill set.

Life Sciences Support: \$50K

Hoosier Hills Career Center, in partnership with Ivy Tech, WorkOne and local manufacturers, developed the Biomanufacturing Technician Apprenticeship Program, a 110-hour, 3-week course that teaches necessary skills to gain employment in our region's life sciences manufacturing sector. This course features 2 weeks of biomanufacturing-specific content and 1 week of soft skills content and includes an interview process with local manufacturers. Each of this summer's 14 participants received multiple job offers, as well as the ability to become a

certified Biomanufacturing Technician after completing 1,800 total hours of on- and off-the-job training.

The Life Sciences Support program will support un/underemployed residents in gaining necessary skills to acquire jobs in this growing sector. This program will be marketed to unemployed residents, people earning below 100% AMI, former service industry workers, and other residents who may be experiencing financial distress and are seeking advancement. The program can accommodate between 25 and 50 participants in the remainder of 2020; additional sessions of the program can take place in the spring and summer of 2021.

AFFORDABLE HOME OWNERSHIP: \$450,000

These programs will help home buyers who have difficulty accessing the Bloomington home ownership market, including those traditionally left behind by financial systems, lack of household wealth, or other inequities. Recover Forward intends to assure that more such households gain the fundamental value of home ownership.

The goal of the programs will be to assist buyers acquiring a local home, while at the same time establishing long-term affordability of some homes through shared equity to maintain affordability for subsequent buyers. Research that guided the programs included types of home equity products in the market, current interest rates, and average sale prices, as well as input from mortgage lenders. According to the Board of Realtors, the median list price for a home in Monroe County has increased 38% since 2012. As of April 2020, the median price of a home was \$224,300. Homes in that price range stay on the market an average of 60 days or less.

Downpayment Assistance: \$100K

This program builds directly on an existing federally funded HAND program that has helped a small number of homeowners realize their dream. More nontraditional first-time home buyers will be able to access the Bloomington market by expanding the qualifying income limit beyond federal restrictions. At a maximum cost of \$10,000 per household, this program can help families who are ready for homeownership but lack the sufficient down payment needed to purchase a home.

Shared Appreciation Home Ownership, 2nd Mortgage Assistance: \$350K

This program will provide down payment and closing cost assistance for homebuyers who could afford a mortgage payment with financial assistance to lower the monthly mortgage costs. With assistance of at least 20% of the purchase price, up to a maximum of \$50,000, first-time home buyers can avoid the significant cost of Private Mortgage Insurance and achieve home ownership. Long-term affordability of the home is achieved through affordable pricing and resale

formulas, much as a land trust operates, so whenever the first new home buyer decides to sell, subsequent buyers of the home will be offered a similar affordable purchase opportunity. This program ensures that the significant public investment in affordable homeownership can serve multiple generations of homebuyers in the same way that investments in long-term affordable rental housing does.