

City of Augusta, Maine
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

AUGUSTA STATE AIRPORT
CODE ENFORCEMENT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



ENGINEERING
FACILITIES & SYSTEMS
PLANNING

MEMO

To: Bill Bridgeo, City Manager
From: Keith P. Luke, Deputy Director of Development Services
CC: Matt Nazar
Date: 6/4/2018
Re: Kennebec Valley YMCA CDBG Application

Two weeks ago the city received notification from DECD that our Letter of Intent has qualified to move forward in the application process for a Public Services Grant on behalf of the Kennebec Valley YMCA.

Unlike other aspects of the CDBG program, this request requires no matching funds from the city. The city is responsible for the proper administration of the program and given some risk in that regard requires that non-profit sub-recipients sign a memorandum of understanding clearly defining the responsibilities and limitations on use of CDBG program funds.

I have attached the program narrative, budget and timeline that will be included in the application. I have also attached a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding the city has used in the past to clearly establish the responsibilities of the KVYMCA as the program sub-grantee.

The final application requires authorization from city council. The application due date is June 22, 2018.

Tom Warren, Executive Director of the Kennebec Valley YMCA will again be available at the business meeting on Thursday, June 7th to discuss the application and how it will benefit the YMCA.

I. Impact

In the past five years, Augusta has emerged as an appealing destination for many “secondary” immigrants, newcomers who leave their initial relocation city in search of opportunities elsewhere. Augusta's immigrant population has swelled exponentially. More than 50 families from Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan now live in the capital area; in 2013, there were almost none. These New Mainers arrive in a place where many residents and local officials are unaccustomed to immigrants, particularly those from Muslim countries. The vast majority of the new arrivals are low-income and have many needs, including language, housing, transportation, and employment.

Among the top priorities for newly arrived immigrant families are recreation programs and child care for their children. Many immigrant families in Augusta are quite large, with between four and eight children, and they often live in cramped apartments without space for recreation. For immigrants, recreation and child care programs are essential to full immersion and integration into the larger community, giving children opportunities to learn English, make American friends, and share their culture while providing adults with the time to pursue stable employment. These programs help immigrant families overcome the isolation of language and cultural differences, and they provide critical opportunities for exercise, social interaction, and language development. Summer programs are particularly important because they help prevent summer learning loss, which hits immigrant children harder than native English speakers because newly acquired language skills can deteriorate rapidly without continued exposure.

Yet many immigrant parents lack the awareness, language skills, and income to enroll their children in recreation or child care programs. Prior to 2017, few immigrant families were members of the Kennebec Valley YMCA (KV YMCA) and few immigrant children participated in its summer programs or year-round activities. As a result, immigrant families often remain isolated from the larger community.

In summer 2017, KV YMCA joined with the Capital Area New Mainers Project (CANMP) to reach out to the growing immigrant community. KV YMCA and CANMP collaborated to provide scholarships for 14 immigrant children to enjoy Camp KV, as well as scholarships for three families (with a total of 17 children) to get family memberships at the Y. These scholarships were paid for through the KV YMCA's limited existing scholarship funds combined with a CANMP online fundraising campaign.

Our successful partnership has laid the foundation for a larger outreach effort to meet the immigrant community's increasing need for recreation and child care. Yet we face two significant barriers to a large-scale outreach effort: staffing and finances. CANMP is a volunteer-driven non-profit with one part-time staff member. It lacks the personnel and

resources to support an outreach program on the scale needed by the growing immigrant community. The KV YMCA does not have any Arabic- speaking staff members who can translate documents, serve as interpreters, or act as liaisons with the immigrant community. It has limited scholarship funds, and any money directed toward immigrant families comes from the larger pool of scholarship money.

Given the immigrant community's size and continued growth, the KV YMCA-CANMP partnership has the potential to grow significantly in the years to come. The success of this partnership depends on adequate funding for scholarships and targeted support for immigrant participants in recreation and child care programs. In the absence of new funds to support this outreach, any targeted effort to increase access for the immigrant population could deplete existing funds, potentially generating resentment from current members and undermining our effort to build a thriving, integrated community.

II. Development Strategy

The purpose of the KV YMCA-CANMP partnership is to provide recreation and child care opportunities to help integrate current and prospective immigrant families into the Augusta community. A two-year, \$50,000 Public Service Grant will significantly expand this partnership, enabling us to provide targeted outreach, staff support, and financial assistance to increase the participation of immigrants in recreation and child care programs by 800%. With PSG funding, we will:

- Develop a coordinated outreach program to ensure that all immigrant families in the Augusta area know about the range of services offered by the KV YMCA
- Translate KV YMCA applications and informational documents into Arabic and offer interpreters at organizational events
- Provide 25 individual and family scholarships to low-income immigrant families, and 102 placements in summer camp, day camp, swim lessons, and similar programs

This expanded partnership will directly address the identified needs of the immigrant community by raising awareness of the Y's recreational and child care programs, offering targeted services, and making the programs financially accessible. It will achieve three primary goals shared by the KV YMCA and CANMP:

1) Cultivate personal relationships between immigrants and the local community. The Y offers a wide a range of programming and evidence-based initiatives for everyone from babies to senior citizens. By participating in these social and recreational activities, New Mainers will have the opportunity to meet, share experiences, and build lasting relationships with members of the local community.

2) Meet immigrant needs and develop skills. The Y offers a range of opportunities for fitness, sports, and recreation, as well as programs fostering literacy, home economics skills, music education, aquatic safety, and outdoor skills. The Y also offers a licensed child-care program, after-school programs, and summer enrichment opportunities at Camp KV. These programs will help New Mainers develop language skills, learn about American culture, and prevent summer learning loss.

3) Educate the broader community. The increased visibility of New Mainers at the Y, along with targeted programming, will help CANMP and the Y educate the broader community about diverse cultures and promote the Y's mission that *everyone* "has the opportunity to reach their full potential with dignity."

The direct beneficiaries of the PSG-funded partnership will be low- and moderate-income immigrant families. These families will benefit from increased access to a variety of recreation and child care programs that not only will meet their need for exercise and social interaction but also will help them develop language skills and integrate into the larger community. In the long term, this holistic and integrative approach will help immigrants obtain employment, thereby decreasing their need for public assistance.

The project will last 24 months, beginning January 1, 2019. The KV YMCA and CANMP have already established a partnership and completed three critical tasks:

- 1) Created a referral process between our two organizations and a financial aid application identifying qualified individuals
- 2) Collaborated to provide scholarships to more than a dozen immigrant families
- 3) Established a schedule of regular meetings with organizational leaders

To track our success, we will use both quantitative and qualitative measures:

1) Quantitative measures: We will track referred memberships, facility usage, and program participation by immigrants. We expect to see an increase of 800% in all areas.

2) Qualitative measures: In addition to quarterly meetings with organizational leaders, we will hold open meetings twice a year to solicit feedback from members of the immigrant community. We also will conduct annual interviews with selected immigrant members to get an in-depth understanding of their experience at the Y. This feedback will inform our decision-making and help ensure quality in all our services.

For more than 100 years, the KV YMCA has been Augusta's community hub, offering an inspirational environment for the enrichment of all people, through social, recreational, and learning activities. The Y serves more than 10,000 people annually and boasts a trained staff that provides licensed programs such as a Learning Center, nationally certified swim lesson programs, and certified fitness instructors, health

coaches, and sporting coaches. Its Board of Directors includes key community leaders representing critical areas of local industry.

CANMP is a cross-cultural organization founded in January 2017 to welcome immigrants and create a thriving, integrated, multicultural community in central Maine. As the only local organization that works directly on immigrant issues, CANMP offers a variety of programs, including: Family Mentor Teams, Better Housing Program, holiday celebrations, community dinners, and educational programs. CANMP earned the 2017 Micah Award from the Kennebec Valley Organization and the 2018 Gerda Haas Award for Human Rights Leadership from the Holocaust & Human Rights Center.

III. Citizen Participation

This partnership actively involves the beneficiaries of the program: the immigrants themselves. CANMP is an immigrant-led organization. Of the nine members of its Board of Directors, seven are first-generation immigrants. CANMP's Board meets monthly to discuss CANMP's programs, plan long-term strategies, and make necessary decisions. Board members have strongly supported this partnership since its inception, and they have helped recruit new families to participate in KV YMCA's programs.

To raise awareness of this partnership within the immigrant community, KV YMCA and CANMP will use traditional media, social media, and texting. We have cultivated strong relationships with the local newspaper (*Kennebec Journal*) and received favorable front-page coverage of our partnership in July 2017. We will continue use these relationships to promote, advertise, and share the impact of our work with the broader community. However, most of our outreach efforts to immigrants themselves will focus on social media and texting because those are the primary ways that immigrants communicate. CANMP has a strong social media presence, with an active Facebook page and an online mailing list of more than 600 supporters. We will build a texting database and regularly text all information (in English and Arabic) and updates to immigrant families.

The KV YMCA and CAMNP will hold quarterly meetings over the duration of this project to track and measure the progress of all New Mainers participating in the Y's programs. We also will solicit direct participant feedback by conducting twice-annual community meetings and annual interviews with select participants. In addition, the Y will invite selected immigrant beneficiaries to serve on the Y's established program, membership, and marketing committees to give extended representation.

Kennebec Valley YMCA

CDGB Public Service Grant Program

Projected Project Timeline

The timeline for this project is 24 months in length effective January 1, 2019. A CDBG award of \$50,000 would be expensed over this timeframe with the direct purpose of providing scholarships and financial access for New Mainers to utilize any and all KV YMCA programs and services. The KV YMCA and CAMNP have a series of established tasks completed which has laid the foundation for our current and future work together. As part of the New Mainers we served in 2017, our established efforts have comprised frequent collaborations and scheduled meetings, an established referral process between our two organizations, and a financial aid application identifying qualified individuals. With this strong foundation, a CDGB award will allow our organizations to maintain services to our current New Mainers while connecting and aiding the projected growth of new immigrants coming to settle in Augusta through 2020.

Kennebec Valley YMCA
CDBG Public Service Grant
Program Cost Estimates

Direct Financial Scholarship Support Cost (2 years)

Family Memberships	25 memberships x \$780 = \$19,500
General Programs	50 programs x \$50 = \$2,500
Summer Day Camp Program	48 camp sessions x \$160 = \$7,680
Child Care Program	4 children x \$7,200 = \$28,800

TOTAL \$58,480

Administrative and Facility Cost (2 years)

Direct Staff and Administrative support	\$7,400
Facility Overhead	\$5,000
Support Services/Supplies	\$6,000

TOTAL \$18,400

TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COST \$76,880