



## **AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE**

Prepared by the Department of Administration

April 11, 2022

### **PURPOSE/FOCUS**

As part of the City's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) efforts on racial equity and inclusion, the City of Milwaukee Department of Administration (DOA) engaged a firm, Prism Technical Management and Marketing, Inc., to assist with the City's efforts to educate historically marginalized residents about the ARPA and seek their input on City programs and priority areas they would like to see funded. Special focus was given to Black, bilingual and bicultural residents (Latino and Hmong residents included), low-income residents, senior citizens, people with disabilities, LGBTQ and people who live in neighborhoods hardest hit by COVID-19.

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH SESSIONS/FOCUS GROUPS**

To date, two community update sessions have been held in addition to six focus groups. Based on in-person, virtual and live video reach, an estimated 500 residents have been reached through these efforts.

In addition to the firm (Prism) hosting ARPA community update and feedback sessions, the firm leveraged the City's survey and gave residents the opportunity to respond to it (via tablets) at other scheduled events hosted by organizations that serve the targeted population. Examples include:

- Provided information at Tenant Resource Fair hosted by Alderwoman Milele Coggs – 10/2/21
- Provided information to attendees at 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Fatherhood Summit hosted by Fatherhood Initiative - 10/8/21
- Provided information at SDC's Summit on Poverty – 10/19-21/21
- Provided information at Journey House Halloween Event – 10/29
- Presented information at Equal Rights Commission Meeting – 11/17/21

Community sessions hosted by the firm include:

- Hosted Virtual Engagement Update Meeting via Zoom and Facebook Live 11/30/21
  - 38 participants joined via Zoom
  - Live Video Reach: 85
- Hosted Virtual Engagement Information Meeting via Zoom and Facebook Live 9/23/21
  - 53 participants joined via Zoom
  - Live Video Reach: 286

- Engagement Posts
  - Overall Reach: 4,233

Focus groups hosted by the firm include:

- Journey House
- Fatherhood Initiative Listening Session
- Sherman Park BUILD Association
- Milwaukee Public Library Teen Council
- Independence First
- FORGE

## **MAJOR TAKEAWAYS**

Major takeaways and lessons learned from our outreach include:

- A total of 6,609 submissions were received with 82% being residents from Wisconsin. While the survey produced significant input on the City's ARPA priorities, it only accounted for 28% of underrepresented zip code submissions. In both instances, the top two priorities were Public Safety and Economic & Workforce Development. However, the third priority differed. All survey submissions show that Infrastructure & Transportation is the third largest priority, However data taken from underrepresented zips show Housing Access as the third largest priority.
- The city's marginalized populations expressed the highest needs are affordable/accessible housing, childcare funding, mental health issues vs. public safety and infrastructure. This is not to say they are not important, but more so that some of these issues will improve if other issues are focused on first.
- There is a huge concern around accountability and how the dollars allocated will be monitored and disbursed to the public. An overall ask for a running report of how the money is spent, jobs acquired, etc.
- A few ideas around transportation outside of bus lines include: Uber/Lyft vouchers for workers and funding for a Forgivable Revolving Car Loan Program and Drivers Education Program
- Mental health accessibility and education is a key to helping families thrive
- More investment in workforce development will decrease crime
- More investment in driver education will decrease reckless driving
- Increase number of community centers and city-wide Wi-Fi
- Accessible housing/transportation for disabled

## **KEY NEXT STEPS**

The scope of services has been largely fulfilled. An official report on these efforts will be produced and shared with the Mayor and Common Council in the near future.

Work remaining includes at least one more ARPA community update, up to two more focus group meetings, a final report and presentation on Prism's findings and conclusions reached. It is our intent to continue to educate the public on ARPA until the funding for ARPA expires. Residents expressed the strong desire to continue to be educated on the status of projects and programs that have been funded with ARPA dollars.