



July 23, 2021

Alderman Michael Murphy
Chairman, Finance and Personnel Committee
Common Council, City of Milwaukee

Dear Committee Chairman Murphy,

I am writing this letter in support of Mayor's Stronger Summer Plan, part of the first allocation of American Rescue Plan funding. The Stronger Summer Plan provides over \$93 million in much needed funding for a range of critical programs as a first phase of investment, and these resources will help Milwaukee continue a strong recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a membership organization, the Urban Economic Development Association of Wisconsin (UEDA) works on a variety of issues related to community and economic development. Our key programs include *Bank On Greater Milwaukee* (focused on economic inclusion and access to financial services), *Take Root Milwaukee* (focused on sustainable homeownership), Capacity Building (organizational technical assistance, neighborhood data support, and eviction prevention), and membership services. In each of these areas UEDA works in collaboration with diverse, cross-sector coalitions.

The Mayor's Recovery & Resilience Plan centers racial equity and inclusion in each recommended investment, taking intentional first steps to address the unequal impact of COVID-19 on Milwaukee residents. It also provides significant resources to several key areas that directly relate to work underway at UEDA and within our membership network:

- **Affordable and sustainable housing development, operations, and support programs.** For example, our *Take Root Milwaukee* program works closely with the Department of City Development to connect people to services and resources that help them "Buy, Fix or Keep" their home. We fully support the allocation for HUD-approved homeownership counseling programs – these agencies are critical partners in our efforts to sustain and increase homeownership rates in the city. Both the Compliance Loan and Climate, Energy, & Equity Upgrade programs address the need for critical resources that help maintain and improve the city's older housing stock.
- **Milwaukee Rental Housing Resource Center**, a new collaborative initiative to serve as a virtual clearinghouse for tenants and landlords to connect with resources such as legal and mediation services and financial assistance. UEDA currently serves as the convener for the MKE RHRC, and this support will provide a strong foundation as the Center continues to respond to the economic impacts of COVID-19 on people's housing situation. We also support other initiatives that help prevent eviction and stabilize housing such as Milwaukee Right to Counsel.
- **Small business support including Business Restart 3.0 and the Ethnic & Diverse Business Coalition (EDBC)**, both of which will provide direct investment to programs that will help Milwaukee businesses sustain operations and access technical assistance resources. UEDA has worked with EDBC and its members for many years and they are a critical connector for underserved businesses.

- **Employment and job training programs** that will connect city residents in high poverty and/or groups that are experiencing higher rates of unemployment to paid training, apprenticeships, workforce transition, and certification opportunities.

We strongly support using ARPA funds for initiatives that increase housing stability, invest in neighborhoods, support our small business community, and enhance economic opportunity for Milwaukee residents – leading toward a more resilient and healthier city. Your support of the Stronger Summer plan will help Milwaukee emerge from this pandemic stronger and more equitable.

Sincerely,



Kristi Luzar
Executive Director
(414) 562-9904 | kristi@uedawi.org

cc: Members of the Finance and Personnel Committee, City of Milwaukee Common Council
Alderman Milele Coggs, District 6
Alderman Nik Kovac, District 3
Alderman Scott Spiker, District 13
Alderman JoCasta Zamarripa, District 8

Mayor Tom Barrett, City of Milwaukee
President Cavalier Johnson, City of Milwaukee Common Council

ABOUT UEDA

The Urban Economic Development Association of Wisconsin (UEDA) is a 501(c)(3) membership association dedicated to facilitating effective, cross-sector collaboration, meaningful connections, and strengthening individual and organizational capacity in Wisconsin's community and economic development sector. Our vision is that the members and communities we serve are inspired and thriving, with equitable access to investment and opportunity. Learn more at www.uedawi.org.