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City of Newark 2021 Recovery Plan

Executive Summary

During the plight of the COVID 19 public health emergency, the City of Newark has demonstrated our capability and ability to service the entire city through a strategic public health preparedness and communicable disease prevention approach. Below are key elements of our approach:

- The City will address homelessness, affordable housing and economic and food insecurity
- The City intends to get monies into the hands of affected residents and offer loans to small businesses that suffered during the pandemic
- Coordinate with local public health agencies, local OEMS, municipal, county, and state health departments, federally qualified health centers, and elected officials
- Disseminate information to the public about COVID-19, including but not limited to personal hygiene, safety, the importance of mask wearing and social distancing, testing locations, vaccine locations, etc.
- Ensure a culturally competent approach to sharing information and provide services by making resources available in multiple languages such as English, Spanish and Portuguese, etc., in addition to having translation services available
- Provide and coordinate testing and vaccine sites with numerous community, faith based, and housing organizations. In addition, coordinate with hospitals, homeless shelters, schools, businesses, and other stakeholders
- The City established contact tracing protocols, coordinated contact tracing teams and epidemiological investigation units (EIUs) to investigate clusters of infection in order to prevent further transmission
- The City ensured the availability of testing and vaccines, and related personnel
- Coordinated with the state health department to deploy community health workers in neighborhoods with high vaccine hesitancy and low vaccine coverage rates to provide health education, dispel myths, and share information regarding vaccine locations and other frequently asked questions.

Through July 30, 2021, Newark has experienced 38,385 positive cases of COVID-19 and 1,014 deaths. Cases and deaths have had a disproportionate impact on our city where the social determinants of health adversely impact low-income and minority populations. This health disparity is even greater in our North, South and West wards, where vaccine rates are the lowest and positivity rates are the highest, compared to the other two wards in the city.

Given that cases and deaths have had a disproportionate impact on low-income individuals, minority populations, and other vulnerable groups, our pandemic response operations are especially important when considering the demographic makeup of Newark. Among our population, 50% are Black/African-American, 36% are Hispanic/Latinx, 2% are Asian, and 3% are Other or Two or More Races.

In addition, racial disparities from the pandemic have been well documented. According to recent data published by the CDC, black individuals are almost three times more likely to require hospitalization and two times more likely to die from COVID-19 compared to White individuals. Hispanic individuals are three times more likely to require hospitalization and over two times more likely to die from COVID-19 compared to White individuals. Newark's population is 86% Black and Hispanic, which are higher percentages than the national demographics of 31%.

Among the city's diverse population, limited English proficiency and cultural norms create further challenges when trying to advertise and properly inform residents about vaccinations. A total of 32% of Newark's population are foreign born, and 48% speak a language other than English.

In addition to demographic, cultural, and linguistic barriers, financial barriers are also prevalent across our region. Newark's poverty rate is 27%, which is higher than the national average of 10.5%. Over 78,000 residents are living in poverty. Financial disparities presented by poverty create barriers to healthcare access, such as increased difficulties taking off work to receive a vaccination or having transportation to vaccination sites. City-wide, more than 19% of residents under 65 years of age have no health insurance.

The City of Newark has utilized various grant and funding opportunities to implement key programs throughout this pandemic. Funding to initiate and sustain these programs will continue on an ongoing basis until it is determined that they are no longer needed during this pandemic. Most of the funding streams currently sustaining these vital programs will be exhausted at the end of calendar year 2022 at which time the City intends to have funding continuity through its federal and state partners. These programs include but may not be limited to:

- Vaccination distribution and COVID testing including communication and health education efforts to reach vulnerable populations
- Purchase of PPE to mitigate the threat and spread of the COVID 19 virus
- Rental Assistance and Eviction Prevention
- Meal Distribution for vulnerable populations that are experiencing food instability.

- Isolation and quarantine assistance for those who cannot shelter safely in their normal living environment.

SLFRF Expenditures

2. Expenditure Category: Negative Economic Impacts

2.7 Job Training Assistance – These funds are being used to cover workforce development for ex-offenders who are city residents and micro-enterprise development for small city owned businesses. The services provided by the ex-offenders and micro-enterprises will be focused directly on maintaining a safer and cleaner Newark.

2.13 Other Economic Support - These funds will be used for a city-wide blight abatement, lot clearance, excavation, and demolition of hazardous building. The funds will also be used for development of structures to increase resident access and stimulate the local economy.

3. Expenditure Category: Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities

3.9 Health Childhood Environments: Other – These Funds are being used to upgrade the City parks and recreation, such as, rehabilitation of recreational facilities, upgrades to the parks, better access, programming, and security at the City's watershed and improved recreational service delivery and services. These funds will also be used to pay for summer youth programs.

3.11 Housing Support: Services for Unhoused persons – These funds are being used to cover cost associated with City-wide homelessness. The services will be used for but not limited to homeless shelter operations, the development of additional container homes, supportive services, mental health services, bed nights, etc.

5. Expenditure Category: Infrastructure

5.2 Clean Water: Centralized wastewater collection and conveyance – The funds will be used to capital upgrades to the Cities water and sewer infrastructure.

5.17 Broadband: Other projects – These funds will be used to allow for a City-wide free broadband service.

7. Administrative and Other

7.1 Administrative Expenses – The use of consultants is needed for the purposes of proper and transparent reporting of all expenditures related to the SLFRF funding.

Revenue Shortfall – The City of Newark used management practices to avert the need for a reduction in staff during the COVID pandemic. Tele work policies and procedures were put into place and technological advances were purchased and utilized so that there was little to no disruption of vital City services during this period. The redeployment of staff to operate was critical to the overall mitigation mission. Where the City experienced revenue shortfall was in the following areas:

1. Reduction in the expected revenue special taxes, parking taxes, hotel taxes, payroll taxes, motor vehicle rental taxes, property taxes.
2. Reduction in the expected revenue of court fees.
3. Reduction in the expected revenue of water and sewer fees.