

Resolution approving an appropriation of the City's ARPA monies earmarked for small business support.

## RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the City was awarded American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding from the U.S. Treasury; and

WHEREAS, the City Council passed a Resolution on January 13, 2022 appropriating some of these ARPA funds addressing negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency to small businesses and impacted industries; and

WHEREAS, the City Council passed a Resolution on March 10, 2022 further specifying the funding amounts and uses for this initiative as programs such as façade improvements, small business development, and upper floor renovations; and

WHEREAS, many local property owners of older buildings who lease space to small businesses on their first floors have found utilizing the upper floors of their building for other uses, primarily residential development, to be cost prohibitive in part due to the need for sprinkler system requirements; and

WHEREAS, the City has a highly successful façade grant program that can be used as a template to more easily and efficiently administer a similar program that provides financial support to property owners who add sprinkler systems; and

WHEREAS, creating such a grant program would simultaneously increase fire safety, encourage residential development, assist in redeveloping under-utilized upper floors in the City's older buildings, and stimulate more mixed-use building in the City's commercial buildings; and

WHEREAS, due to funding sources available the City's current façade grant programs have been restricted to commercial buildings in the downtown and the Highway 53 corridor on the Northside; and

WHEREAS, these same geographic restrictions are not relevant to American Rescue Plan Act funding; and

WHEREAS, the City has also maintained successful Minority Owned Business Assistance (MOBA) and Architectural & Engineering (A&E) grant programs that are currently inactive due to lack of funding, in part because the interest in utilizing these programs surpassed the available funding available; and

WHEREAS, multiple respected and impactful business support entities exist in the City with the purposed of providing targeting support to small businesses, particularly in addressing impacts resulting from the pandemic and environmental and economic changes overall.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Common Council of the City of La Crosse to allocates \$200,000 of ARPA funds to a sprinkler system grant program that will be facilitated in a similar fashion to the existing façade grant programs and that the program guidelines will be approved by the Economic and Community Development Commission (ECDC) prior to implementation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that \$100,000 will be allocated to a City-wide façade grant program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that \$50,000 will be allocated to revitalizing the MOBA and A&E grant programs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that \$100,000 will be made available through an RFP to small business support entities providing targeted support to small businesses in the City of La Crosse, and the RFP will be reviewed and approved by the ECDC prior to release.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Director of Planning, Development and Assessment are hereby authorized to take any and all steps necessary to effectuate this resolution.