

# Dayton announces funding opportunities

City reveals process for awarding its \$138M in COVID federal relief.



*Dayton City Manager Shelley Dickstein and Deputy City Manager Joe Parlette at an economic development meeting in August.*

*CORNELIUS FROLIK / STAFF*

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After asking residents how the city should spend \$138 million in federal COVID relief, Dayton has revealed an application process and timeline for awarding American Rescue Plan Act funds that promise to strengthen the community long into the future, according to city leaders.

“This is truly a once in a lifetime opportunity,” said City Manager Shelley Dickstein. “If

we look down the road five and 10 years from now and we don't see a transformational impact, then we really missed it, we really missed the opportunity.”

Dayton city commissioners were presented with the timeline Wednesday and on Thursday the city issued three funding opportunity notices: one for community projects led by nonprofit and for-profit organizations; a second for small businesses and those in the hospitality sector; and a third called the “idea box,” geared toward individuals or organizations that may have ideas but lack capacity to implement and manage the project.

Applications will be taken beginning Sept. 27.

Results from a recent survey of residents and seven public listening sessions coupled with current city commission priorities yielded a common set of needs, Dickstein said.

“Demolition and housing were high priorities, addressing crime was a high priority, and supporting Black and brown businesses,” she said.

“Those were the things that people resonated around the most.”

The purpose of the projects is to meet and address emergent public health needs and respond to negative economic harm resulting from or exacerbated by the pandemic, Dickstein said.

Treasury Department interim rules allow spending on projects that disrupt multigenerational poverty and income disparity, correct inherent social and economic imbalances in qualified census tracts and address the socioeconomic disparities in low-income and minority populations, according to Dickstein.

“What I am really, truly hoping for is that this funding opportunity gives us the opportunity to build the foundation that will disrupt,” she said. “While \$138 million sounds like a lot of money, it is no way going to address the wrongs of the past.”

The city will begin taking applications Sept. 27 for projects proposed as self-sustaining capital investments or one-time expenses. The funds can generally be used to cover costs that were incurred on or after March 3, 2021. Funding will not be provided to individuals and can’t be used for an organization’s ongoing operational costs like salaries and utilities, according to the city.

Signed by President Joe Biden in March, the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act allocated \$350 billion to state and local governments.

In June, Dayton set up a framework of focus areas where its \$138 million funding will be distributed.

Dayton staff will lead efforts in four other areas:

- **Neighborhoods:** Cityled and managed projects that would support healthier lifestyles through neighborhood revitalization efforts.
- **Amenities:** Projects and investments that provide recreational and lifestyle assets to the community.
- **Major catalytic projects:** Projects and investments that address economic disparities and incent additional development and economic activity.
- **City projects:** Projects and investments that support city services.

“City staff is still working on refining work plan and recommendations with regards to

those activities with some community input from the surveys and from the general sessions,” Dickstein said.

The city has set no specific allocation for any single “bucket,” but the money will be distributed to each area strategically and intentionally, Dickstein said.

“We will be looking at a lot of an analytical and quantitative data to really help us pinpoint where the investment will be most impactful, most fruitful, and how we can leverage our \$138 million with other funding sources and other programmatic interests,” she said. “It’s about making sure that that funding opportunity is leveraged, transformative and sustained well into the future so that we continue to receive return on investment.”

Proposed projects, whether developed by city staff or submitted by the public, will go through a vetting process that will include a city review, additional public meetings, followed by a public hearing and final approval by city commissioners in December.

The Treasury Department has yet to publish final rules for the spending, but the city’s approach fits in with interim rules already issued, according to Deputy City Manager Joe Parlette.

Beginning next week, the city will hold three in-person and two virtual technical assistance workshops to walk applicants through the process and answer their questions, said Melissa Wilson, a city of Dayton purchasing agent.

“This is to make sure that everybody has the same information across the board,” she said.

The city recently added the “idea box.” With a shorter application form, it’s a way anyone in the public can submit a proposal that might otherwise be overlooked, Dickstein said.

“We want to call as much opportunity as possible from the community for out-of-the-box thinking or creative ideas that maybe staff haven’t thought about,” she said.

Projects that win approval are scheduled to be awarded in early 2022. The city has until the end of 2024 to spend the funds.

## HOW TO APPLY

Information about the funding criteria and application process is now available on the city's American Rescue Plan page at [www.daytonohio.gov/ARPADayton](http://www.daytonohio.gov/ARPADayton).

What happens next? Sept. 21-Oct. 15 — Technical assistance workshops In-person workshops

- Tuesday, Sept. 21, 5:30 p.m. - 8 p.m. — Northwest Branch Dayton Metro Library, 2410 Philadelphia Drive
- Thursday, Sept. 23, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. — Montgomery County Business Solutions Center, Suite 300, 1435 Cincinnati St.
- Monday, Sept. 27, 3 p.m. - 6 p.m. — Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, 511 Hart St.

Virtual workshops will also be held with dates and times to be determined.

- Sept. 27 — Application portal opens
- Oct. 15 — Deadline for early application review and feedback
- Oct. 15-22 — Review and feedback on applications
- Oct. 29 — Final application submission deadline, 5 p.m.
- Nov. 8-23 — Community and Neighborhood Development Advisory Board scores and recommends projects to city manager
- Dec. 1-7 — City manager report out, community sessions Public sessions
- Wednesday, Dec. 1, 10 a.m. — The Salvation Army Dayton KROC Center, 1000 N. Keowee St.

- Thursday, Dec. 2, 5:30 p.m. — Northwest Recreation Center, 1600 Princeton Drive
- Monday, Dec. 6, 5:30 p.m. — Dayton Metro Library, 215 E. Third St.
- Tuesday, Dec. 7, 5:30 p.m. — Lohrey Recreation Center, 2366 Glenarm Ave.
- Dec. 8 — City Commission work session
- Dec. 15 — Public hearing on Dayton Recovery Plan and adoption by City Commission
- First quarter 2022 — Notice of final awards and agreement approvals SOURCE:  
CITY OF DAYTON