

For Release Friday, 7/1/2022

County of Berks – Press Release

Berks County Commissioners approve \$18 million in grants for community projects

Reading, PA— 7/1/2022 — The Berks County Commissioners authorized the approval of up to \$18,080,000 in County-funded grants Thursday to support projects that will have a positive and lasting impact in the community. The grants are expected to be awarded to 49 selected applicants, subject to further review and approval by the County Solicitor’s office, that include various businesses, municipalities, authorities and not-for-profit organizations. The selected projects include initiatives to create outdoor public space and trail connectivity, capital projects that address homelessness and food insecurity, and support for water and sewer infrastructure, health care facilities and educational centers.

“The County is committed to deploying resources into the community that have a long-term economic benefit for the people of Berks County,” Commissioner Christian Y. Leinbach said. “These projects will certainly provide this kind of long-term benefit while also addressing critical needs in our community.”

The Commissioners approved utilizing \$18 million for grants in 2022 and anticipate allocating an additional \$12 million in 2023. For the 2022 grants, the County specifically focused on projects that would create sustainable, long-term positive outcomes within key community sectors. The County received 110 applications throughout February and March. A grant review committee made up of community stakeholders then assessed those projects to determine which ones should be recommended for funding and submitted to the Board of Commissioners for approval. During their Board meeting Thursday, the Commissioners adopted a resolution authorizing the approval of up to \$18,080,000 to fund 49 selected projects. The grants will support projects within 25 municipalities throughout Berks County, with about \$5.6 million awarded to projects that also relate specifically to the implementation of the IMAGINE Berks economic development plan.

“We are so grateful for the incredible input from our Grant Review Committee to help get us to this point,” said Karra Mayo, Grants Coordinator for the County of Berks. “There was a lot of work that went into this program, and it is truly humbling and exciting to begin to see these dollars deployed into our community through a variety of legacy initiatives.”

Several of the selected grant applicants attended Thursday’s meeting and shared about the impact the grants will have on their organizations during the public comment section. Kenneth Borkey of the YMCA of Reading & Berks County said the funds will be utilized to renovate the fifth floor of their Washington Street facility that serves the Court of Common Pleas’ specialty and treatment court programs. Nathan Brant from the South Mountain YMCA Camps said the grant will allow them to complete the renovation of their 1948 dining hall, a project that began in 2016 and now can be completed in time for their 75th anniversary celebration in 2023. Chris Winters, CEO and President of the Olivet Boys and Girls Club, shared how the funds will help them upgrade the safety and security of their network of sites.

“Our site structures have become houses of hope,” he said. “They have become places where children can find places to be mentored by others. ... From the bottom of our hearts, thank you very much for helping us keep the blue doors open and being able to reach more children.”

More information about the grant program and a list of the selected applicants is available on the [County of Berks website](#).

###

For more information, press only:

Stephanie Weaver, Public Relations Officer

Office: 610-478-6136 x6112

Cell: 610-816-1242

Email: sweaver@countyofberks.com

www.DoYourPartBerks.com www.countyofberks.com