



Memo

To: Jay Fountain, Interim Director of OPM

Date: Jan. 9, 2017

Subject: Request for City of Stamford FY18 funding for East Side Community Center Utilities

From: Mike Duggan, Executive Director, Domus

1. Mission Statement & Program Description: The City of Stamford requires the inclusion of a Mission Statement and a Program Description in the submitted budget package.

Domus began as a single residential group home for ten boys in 1972. In 1991, we started expanding our programs to meet the growing needs of the youth we serve. Today, Domus is a multifaceted human service organization serving more than 1,200 of the most struggling youth in Stamford, plus operating a small middle school in New Haven.

We find and love young people who are shut out, unwanted, unloved, and afraid; young people society has failed and discarded; young people who, without our intervention, would drop out of their schools and communities and wind up incarcerated, homeless, or dead. Our kids are often referred to as the “bad kids”—those young people that society has labeled as undeserving of additional resources and sympathy and whose lives are seen as having little or no value to the larger community. At best they are seen as incapable of change and at worst as dangerous criminals or criminals-in-training. Because our young people have been chronically exposed to adverse childhood experiences and because they have reacted to this trauma by harming or threatening to harm themselves or others, they are feared and shunned. Because they are difficult, disconnected, and disengaged, they have not received the interventions they need to not only achieve their goals but to even understand that they can strive for goals and that their lives can be better.

We strive to create the conditions necessary for these young people to get on a path toward health and opportunity so they can engage and succeed in school and ultimately lead satisfying and productive lives. In order to help these youth stay in school and catch up academically so they can achieve the important milestone of high school graduation, Domus focuses on three interventions:

1. High-quality remedial academic instruction.
2. Effective out-of-school-time programming.
3. Support in overcoming non-academic barriers to academic success.

In 2009 the City offered Domus a lease for part of the 83 Lockwood Avenue building to house the Trailblazers Academy charter middle school, its out-of-school-time programs, and to offer programs that are operated for the benefit of the local neighborhood, and we have done so ever since: The building currently houses a police substation, a youth workforce development program, The East Side Partnership, Childcare Learning Centers, the Stamford Youth Foundation, the Stamford Public Schools Alternative Routes to Success program, Child Guidance, and FSW. This

space is a resource for many local groups looking to organize regular meetings for recreational, social, local service, and educational needs. For example, we host basketball, soccer, and volleyball leagues to engage and supervise youth who might otherwise participate in negative behaviors. The center acts as an IRS site where low-income neighbors get help with tax return preparation. We regularly act as a polling place for primary and mid-term elections, and we host events such as Martin Luther King celebrations, weddings, christenings, other family events, an international food fair showcasing local businesses and spurring economic development, Three Kings Day, Ecuadorean Independence Day Festival, the Crisol/Acuarela event in support of the Leslie Ann Padilla Foundation, and East Side Day. Over the course of a year, thousands of people visit the center.

From January 2016 to December 2016:

- We operated a free summer camp for 185 youth who live in Stamford and are not students at Trailblazers Academy middle school or participants in any other Domus programs.
- Local organizations like Literacy Volunteers offered 12 ESL classes Monday through Fridays each week to at least 120 individuals (approximately 600 classes per year).
- Domus hosted and coordinated one-day activities such as East Side Day (about 300 people), Easter Egg Hunt (450), Tree Lighting (200), Hispanic Advisory Council Health Day (1,500), Three Kings Day (500), and a Sathya Sai event (300).
- Local clubs and sports leagues use our field and auditorium: Eddy's Fun Soccer for 4 to 8 year olds (200 kids, twice a week); Ecuadorian Soccer League (250 adults with over 600 people attending weekly games); Mighty Mites basketball (150 elementary, middle, and high school basketball players three times week from February to May).
- Approximately 200 tax returns were prepared at this location through the free VITA program run by the IRS.
- The East Side Partnership held monthly meetings for community discussions of such topics as the Master Plan, Urban Transitway, and Northeast Utility Substation plans.

Every year we host more events which attract more and more people. We expect to continue to serve as a gathering place for this area of Stamford, providing educational, recreational, social, and athletic events to engage the residents of this neighborhood in safe, pro-social, community-building activities.

2. Fiscal Year 2015/2016 Operating Results: Please include your most recent statement of your actual operating results. The statement should include your operating results for expenditures and revenues, compared to budget, for every line item in your budget.

Please see attached.

4. Fiscal Year 2016/2017 Operating Budget: Please include a copy of your current operating budget, year-to-date expenditures and revenues as of October 31, 2016, and projected operating results for the current fiscal year.

Please see attached.

5. Proposed Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2017/2018: Please include a copy of your proposed operating budget, including revenues and expenditures by line item, which has been approved by your respective board. Please include any capital improvement plans that may not be reflected in the forwarded budget.

Please see attached.

6. Audited Financial Statement:

- **Entities receiving more than \$50,000 from the City of Stamford in any one fiscal year are required to submit an organization-wide financial statement prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles audited by, and with the report of, an independent certified public accountant.**

Please see attached.

7. Budget Narrative: As part of the budget submission process, all outside agencies are requested to submit a narrative overview of their expenditure budget request. This overview should identify any significant areas of change or concerns related to funding levels, levels of service and key issues you feel should be identified. In addition, any organizations requesting additional staffing or program expansions to be funded by the City of Stamford should outline those requests in this overview. Please address this memorandum to Mayor Martin but forward it to the Director of OPM by the due date identified in the attached budget schedule.

Through this submission, we hereby request ongoing operating expense support from the City of Stamford for \$50,000 to apply toward utility expenses associated with the facility at 83 Lockwood Avenue. This location serves the surrounding neighborhood through employment programs, recreational programs, parent-focused programming, holiday celebrations, and other programs which operate in this facility for all local residents. The center hosts the IRS' VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) Program, which offers free tax help to low- to moderate-income people who need help preparing their tax returns, and numerous nonprofits and community groups use the center for meeting space. The East Side Partnership, Child Guidance, and FSW have permanent offices in the center, which also serves as a polling place for elections. The Domus Work & Learn Business Center opened in October 2010 and helps hundreds of local youth gain the hard and soft employment skills they need to obtain and retain employment. These young people need to learn these skills to get a job and have no other program that will take them in and teach them. Literacy Volunteers offers English classes here five days per week. An open gym session is offered to teenagers in the community on a weekly basis, providing a safe and productive activity for kids who would not otherwise be engaged in supervised activities. Our sports field and gymnasium are used for adult and youth soccer programs, football practices, cheerleading, and baseball. Adults from the community use our outside space for volleyball practice and games. During the year, there are at least six large activities hosted in this building for the community, such as East Side Day, an international food festival, East Side tree lighting, Three Kings Day, Martin Luther King celebrations, and the Community Easter Egg Hunt. We have regular celebrations here to mark birthdays, christenings, weddings, and communions. We welcome local residents and staff of the Childcare Learning Centers (which shares the building with Domus) to join our physical education teacher in regular fitness workouts. Our garden and greenhouse grow produce used in our programs and donated to the community, acting as important educational vehicles to teach local residents healthy living. This location also houses Trailblazers Academy middle school and its out-of-school-time program called Lion's Den, which serve 131 students. We also host an after-school program for Toquam Magnet Elementary School. This program is run by members of that school's staff, and Domus staff provides social and emotional skills training groups. We do not charge Toquam for the use of our facility or for the social and emotional programming we provide.

The people who use the facility as a center for social, recreational, educational, and public service activities are residents of Stamford, and the vast majority come from the East Side. Many are people

of color. The population of students at Trailblazers Academy middle school, for example, is 50% Black, 44% Latino, 3% Multi-Racial, and 3% Other. Most families in the neighborhood are low-income and do not have the resources to pay for the types of programming offered here for free. Hours of operation stretch well beyond the school day into the evenings and weekends.

We paid nearly \$93,000 in utilities costs last year to operate this City-owned building, a significant portion of which is incurred in order to keep the facility open and available for the myriad of programs that we organize and host for community residents during evenings and weekends. We feel fortunate to have the space to offer to run or host community gatherings and act as a hub for this previously unserved section of Stamford. We hope the City will defray part of the costs associated with providing this valuable service.

Impact on the center if funding is reduced or eliminated:

The center currently makes available its library, media center, computer lab, classrooms, cafeteria, gymnasium, outside field, parking area, and auditorium to a variety of community groups serving East Side residents and for a variety of educational and community events for the East Side. Almost all of these are offered at no cost to residents, since they simply cannot afford to pay such fees. Most services provided to the community take place during evening and weekend hours. The building also houses Childcare Learning Centers offices and classrooms and storage for the Stamford Youth Foundation sports equipment. The Stamford Police Department has a small substation in the building as well. If the City were to reduce or eliminate funding for our utilities costs, the center would have to reduce community programming by eliminating some of the evening and weekend activities or to charge community groups for using center space, which would be a great hardship for the small community groups that use this building. There are no other large spaces in this part of Stamford where groups can meet, so funding cuts would likely make it impossible for many groups to meet at all, which will negatively impact the work we have undertaken with our partners to make the East Side a cleaner, safer, more attractive, more cohesive, and more pleasant place to live.

Thank you for considering our request. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

**East Side Community Center
Budget Fiscal Year 17-18
Total Operating Expenses**

Revenues

Private	172,939.50
Other Income	20,000.00
City	50,000.00
	<u>242,939.50</u>

Expenses

Personnel Services

Salaries	78,361.37
Fringe Benefits	20,765.83
Indirect cost	10,807.79
sub total	<u>109,934.99</u>

Other Than Personnel Services

Telephone	579.89
Audit	579.89
Bookkeeping	289.43
Office Supplies	289.43
Maintenance/Cleaning Supplies	5,792.72
Utilities/Repairs	125,473.15
sub total	<u>133,004.51</u>

Total Expenses	<u>242,939.50</u>
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Net Income/(Deficit)	<u>0.00</u>
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