

## **Community Reinvestment and Repair Commission**

Meeting Agenda  
Thursday, September 12, 2024  
5:30 – 7:30 p.m.  
*Independence Room*  
*2664 Riva Rd, Annapolis*

### **1) Introductions**

- Beth Brush – ex. Officio ACDS
- Therese Wellman – voting
- Randall Stites – voting
- Amber Barnett – ex. Officio CE
- Donald Whitehead – voting
- Ethan Hunt – CE
- Hannah Dier – CE
- Joshua Freeman – voting
- Kathy Aytch – ex. Officio
- Bekki Leonard – ex. Officio
- Laurietta Jones – voting
- Michael Woldemariam – voting
- Sandy Jones – ex. Officio
- Laurie Benner – voting
- Latica Hicks – voting
- Tonii Gedin – ex. Officio
- Ahsun Powell – voting
- Maggie Staudenmaier – ACDS
- Tesia Mackey – ACDS
- Jessica Meyer – voting

### **2) Presentation from Office of Social Equity (*Courtney Davis*)**

- Absent from meeting and will present at next meeting

### **3) Review of local Community Reinvestment and Repair Commission (CRRC) law and available funds (*Hannah Dier and Ethan Hunt*)**

- Topics discussed included ([see](#) CE slides):
  - Statewide Cannabis Reform
  - Local Govt. Authority
  - AAC Local Bill
  - Cannabis Sales and Use Tax
  - Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund (CRRF)

- CRRF Funding Distribution
- CRRF Use of Funds
- County CRRF Financial Summary
- Brandon Davis:
  - Are the funds that are sitting in the CRRF invested?
    - Hannah: Yes, all county funds are invested, can get you more info on that if you're interested
- Adult Use Cannabis Sales Data
  - Revenue expected to grow
- Questions:
  - Dr. Tonii Gedin
    - You showed projected revenue, what was the actual revenue of cannabis sales tax?
      - Hannah: Couldn't find an answer ahead of the meeting but can try to calculate it out.

#### **4) Overview of Arundel Community Development Services (ACDS) grant processes (Elisha Harig-Blaine and Maggie Staudenmaier)**

- Guardrails on CRRF grants
  - Must benefit LMI households – based on area median income
  - Disproportionately Impacted Areas (DIAs) – areas with disproportionately high cannabis charges
    - 8 zip codes in the county
- Ahsun Powell -
  - What data was used when determining the 8 DIA zip codes? Because demographics have changed since the war on drugs. How are we making sure that we're not missing the shift in people that were actually targeted during the time so that we don't refer funds into an area populated by people that were not impacted?
    - Elisha – if you can think of ways for us to target those sub populations within those areas, that's why we're here
    - Hannah – will defer to the office of social equity
  - Ahsun – Anne Arundel County (AAC) survey showed 72% of people surveyed were white. The top priorities identified through the survey may have been identified on behalf of the disproportionately impacted communities, rather than by themselves. Are we considering re-surveying the areas to make sure the populations that were actually affected have a voice?
    - Elisha – will follow up with Courtney from OSE
- Dr. Ashworth will be joining the commission as the Chair at the request of the County Executive

- All questions will be recorded and entered into the minutes which will be voted on at the next meeting
- The 8 identified zip codes correspond with the areas in the county that have been historically disproportionately impacted
- OSE Survey Report
  - Identified priorities
    - Homelessness prevention/ housing
    - Education/ after school programing
    - Mental health/ substance abuse
  - Some nominal distinction between what the county officials wanted to prioritize vs. the community members
  - Jessica Meyer – who will be selecting the preventive services? Are there nonprofits that have been identified? How are we seeking out these service providers?
    - Elisha – this is part of the grant administration process which we will get more in to in just a moment
- ACDS administers funds through an online software platform called Neighborly
  - ACDS creates applications through Neighborly and grantees create an account and that they can use to submit an application
- ACDS Grant notification flyer
  - Placeholder language for CRRC
  - ACDS administers federal funds beginning in October
  - Local Development Council is the body that is the most similar to how the CRRC could look
- The commission needs to identify relatively soon what overall categories we want to prioritize, how do we want to prioritize them (percentage of your funds, etc.) and also the overall timeline for the creation of program guidelines
- The commission needs to have our recommendations over to the County Executive by March 1
- Does the CRRC want to create a strategic plan document?
- 35% of taxes go to the state CRRF, 7% of that goes to Anne Arundel County, we are looking at \$1-2 million a year, maybe even more, that ACDS will administer
- As a comparison, the Local Development Council:
  - Collects Video Lottery Terminal funds from Live! Casino and Hotel
  - County agencies that have a footprint in the area can get “agency grants”
  - The LDC invites organizations to come in for “Invitation grants”
  - Community organizations have the opportunity to apply for “community grants”

- We review the applications and get them in order to send off to commission who reviews them, scores them, and then makes recommendations to the County Executive
- Have the potential to have a very significant impact on a relatively small geographic area

## 5) Questions and Answers / Next meeting dates and times

- Brandon Davis – what does an average grant distribution look like?
  - Elisha – hoping to make a decision on that tonight. What do you all want that to look like? Starting at \$20,000, max \$50,000? \$100,000?
  - Hannah – The goal of this meeting is to get you all to understand what you have been appointed to do but you all are starting fresh so we have some decisions to make and its totally up to you within the parameters of state law
  - Elisha – we need two things to help us jumpstart the process
    - Funding range (min/max)
    - Priorities and guidelines
- Donald Whitehead
  - Serves on Amazon Day 1 Fund and they have had problems with offering too large of grant amounts and then organizations without the operating budget for that are excluded
  - Supportive of general operating dollars
  - Funds should have a real impact – 15,000 isn't moving things but 50,000 as a starting range is real money for organizations
  - Should look at gaps of places that have been left out of funding – the Emergency Solutions Grant program has been at the same level for the last 15 years
- Amber Barnett – Should there be two application processes? One for general operating and one for programming
  - Elisha – would this be proportional (50/50? 60/40?)
  - Amber – since it's a pilot year, we should see how many orgs are looking for general operating vs. program funding
- Asha Smith – There are often concerns about funding smaller organizations because of their ability to use resources efficiently and effectively. We should make people aware of the Nonprofit Center (NPC) and potentially require or recommend smaller or new organizations to get support from NPC in developing their operations and guidelines around using grant funds
  - Hannah – the NPC is a new initiative created to help nonprofit startups to get off the ground
- Laurie Benner
  - Would like eligibility for multi-year funding for organizations

- Would like the application and reporting process to be the least burdensome as possible
  - Elisha – agreed but... there are some basic requirements that ACDS needs. We want to make sure the effort is worth the reward so that is something to consider when determining a funding range. Organizations often struggle with insurance requirements ACDS does need documentation for audits
  - Beth – ACDS has to take very seriously that we administer taxpayer dollars and are accountable for that but we are consistently working on softening requirements
- Dr. Tonii Gedin – if funds are used for general operating expenses for an organization that is located outside of the identified DIAs but provide services in them, how do we handle that?
  - Elisha – what ACDS does with the LDC and LRCIF is that an organization does not have to be within the service area in order to receive funding but they do have to be able to provide documentation that their programmatic work is benefitting people in that community
  - Hannah – follow up with OSE about this to ensure that whatever they're looking for is what the commission will be providing
- Theresa Wellman – are these all-operating funds or are capital expenses eligible
  - Elisha – That is something the commission needs to consider. ACDS will only be able to manage at most 1 capital project per year
  - Theresa – capital funds are easier to get
  - Elisha – agreed, especially with the large investment the county has made in the affordable housing trust fund
- Latica Hicks – what is the responsibility of this commission to identify organizations that will receive funding? Are we identifying them? Are we providing someone else guidelines to identify them?
  - Elisha – we want you all to spread the word about these grants. Also, that is part of the reason ACDS has been selected as the grant administrator, we do have that experience of pushing out funding notifications. We are able to get these out to the appropriate networks that already exist in the county, such as the nonprofit center
  - Latica – are there plans to hold open public meetings to let the public know about these grant funds?
  - Hannah – all of these meetings are public and will be posted online. The County Executives communications team and public relations team are aware that this is coming. This is the first year so we will have to do a lot of work to get the word out. ACDS also holds training sessions for grant applications
  - Latica – just wanted to know if this commission is going to be intentional about going in to those 8 communities to bring awareness to these funds

- Elisha – that would be great, if you are willing and able
- Hannah – certainly, but that isn't entirely on you as commissioners. What is on you is helping to guide the County Executive's Office and ACDS to ensure we are reaching out to the right organizations and communities
- Elisha – ACDS will get the applications, review them to ensure that requirements have been met for it to be considered, then pass it off to the commission to go through and make decisions. If at that point you see that there are some people missing, that's when you would let us know and we would do outreach
- Latica – so this commission could develop the guidelines for what it is we would need from ACDS to ensure that we have the applicants applying to this grant that we want
- Elisha – absolutely and we will send out the LDC application guidelines but we will need help coming up with strategic plan, application guidelines, and then the application document itself
- Joshua Freeman – Is the commission going to require that awards are allocated to one organization per award or are we considering awarding grants to organizations that come in together such as if there is an organization that doesn't have the capacity to fulfill all of the work they want to do and partner with a larger organization when applying for funding
  - Elisha – that's a great idea. One model for that is the Continuum of Care grants and for that you just need to make sure there is an agreement around who is the primary fiscal agent. But as long as that is all in order, that seems like something the commission could do
  - Joshua – don't want to leave out organizations that have well intentions but may just not have the resources or connections to reach the areas they want to reach but there are larger organizations that can
- Michael Woldemariam - In regard to understanding the preferences of these affected communities, is it possible to engage these communities on their preferences prior to the grant going out or are we saying that the results we received in the survey are sufficient to understand or gauge the preferences of the affected communities
  - Elisha - can we? Yes. But we also need to balance this with the urgency of getting these funds out. Because what we don't want is for the County to come in, or worse, the state, and ask why we haven't spent any of this money. Also, this can be an iterative process. We can try to better identify what these communities need now, recognizing that there may be demographic changes, while also understanding that we can't stop working on this while determining that. We can't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. We need to get this money out and then adjust as we go.

- Hannah – should be approaching this as a pilot year. There may not be time to engage these communities ahead of this first grant cycle, but we can get the first year going and at the same time engage and find out more about what the AAC community needs
- Tonii – there may already be resources such as the needs assessment and there are other institutions that we could ask about what they have heard. There might be a way to get additional information from other organizations if we feel like we don't have enough.
- Beth – ACDS is in the process of doing our consolidated plan so we also are doing many listening sessions and identifying needs in the county
- Ahsun – there seems to be a lack of intentional targeting of communities. If we continue to have meetings with the stakeholders, those already receiving the grants, and we're leaving out the very people we are trying to aim for, they aren't aware of the opportunities. We all know that it exists because we're sitting here, the stakeholders know, the returning grant recipients know, but no one is going to the everyday community members and suggesting that we host a meeting in their community center for example.
- Elisha – when the commission develops a strategic document, that can outline the priorities for year one which is a pilot, and then what we also want to be doing at the same time is doing a strategic view of how the commission wants to target our funds in year two, three, and beyond. We need to be conscious and candid of how much work that will actually be.
- Asha – in the absence of a specific needs assessment, hopefully the organizations and people working in these communities are the people that are going to apply for these grants so making sure they are aware is very important. If we utilize an invitation to apply model that could serve as a proxy solution for the issue of organizations not being aware of the opportunity
- Amber Barnett – When will the funds will be distributed to the organizations?
  - Elisha – for the Fiscal Year (FY) 26 funding cycle, the county council passes the budget by June 15<sup>th</sup> every year, the local fiscal year begins that Tuesday, July 1. So July 1 2025 would be the beginning of fiscal year 2026 which runs to Tuesday, June 30, of 2026. Those funds should be getting under agreement in the month of July, sometimes it slips to August, sometimes even later with back and forth with insurance. That is for the next fiscal year cycle. As Hannah mentioned, there are funds for use in the current fiscal year (local fiscal year 2025), that we are trying to get out and that's part of the discussion between the county executive and county council as well as other organizations on what is the best use of those funds.

- Amber – will ACDS be the sole reviewers or will this commission be the sole reviewers or if there is an opportunity for there to be community reviewers involved in that process?
- Elisha – The commission are the ones reviewing the applications. ACDS does review them but just to ensure that they are in the state that they need to be in for you to review them. The commission will then make your recommendations to the County Executive to be added to his budget which he will bring to the County Council for approval. In my experience the County Executive moves the recommendations without issue because he wants and trusts the voices and opinions of you all.
- Jessica Meyer - what is the filtration the commission is using to determine who gets a grant and who doesn't?
  - Elisha – that is part of what we are trying to define as a commission as to who we want these funds to be prioritized for
  - Jessica – what are the questions we are asking in the grants applications? Are we interviewing them?
  - Hannah – we're figuring out that process here. That's what you are all here to determine. Elisha talked earlier about the LDC model which has several pots of funding. ACDS does the initial vetting and then the committee members can see the applications, they do presentations to the committees as well, and they also have an invitation only portion where only those organizations that were invited come to present. Then there is a portion set aside for county departments that only county agencies are eligible to apply for. But that is a model, the commission could decide to use one of those methods or a couple.
  - Jessica – One of those, for me, a filtration, would be do they have good community trust and have they been established in the community for a while. Do we ask those important questions in the application process?
  - Elisha – ACDS added a requirement in the Fiscal Year 24 cycle for submitting a letter of support from another organization in the community and that caused concern with applicants as another thing they have to do, so it's a balance
  - Jessica – what is the cut off? Is it time, funds, or requests
  - Elisha – the cut off would be time in a local fiscal year cycle
  - Hannah – well I think its all of those really. We certainly have a timeline, as discussed, the fund will also have a limited amount of money, theoretically we could just leave it open for a set period of time and not have a cap on the number of applicants.
  - Elisha – for context, the community support grant has 73 grantees and had 115 applicants and we had to grade and sort those and get them back to the committee before those were decided on



- Donald – the Continuum of Care is a good model for this, there is a set amount and they receive more applications than they can give out in grants and then the top tier of applicants are ranked in the process and if someone drops out they are replaced by the next on the list. I do like the idea of following the Continuum of Care model and asking for a letter of support and they also ask for matches which we could consider
- Donald Whitehead – has there been any thought given to a regranting process where one organization gets funding to work with multiple community organizations?
- Laurie Benner – in treating this first year as a pilot, and keeping the group a little tighter that might be for the better because it takes a lot of time to do application review in a meaningful and fair way so something to keep in mind
- Letica – I wanted to talk about the timeline and the \$1 million dollars for FY25, can you clarify what our role as a commission is with the FY25 funding
  - Hannah – yes so the FY25 funding we are planning to find some recommended proposed uses of those FY25 funds to bring to the commission in the second or third meeting of the commission so you can have a presentation from the proposed participant and the commission can provide feedback on if that is in line with the direction we are hoping to go with these proposed funds.
  - Elisha – yes and the strategic plan is for FY26 and beyond. For FY26 were going to be focused on just getting money out of the door while setting the groundwork for having a strategic conversation alongside that about priorities. We probably won't be able to see the things the commission is discussing wanting to see until the FY27 cycle
- Joshua Freeman – regarding the timeline, should the commission request that organizations submit a letter of intent to apply so we have a sense of what's to come
  - Elisha – that is something for the commission to consider when developing the guidelines document. And we can create a template for that to make it less burdensome on the applicants
- Elisha – Also should discuss the fiscal responsibility of commission and how we have a fluctuating amount to maintain year over year
  - Might consider withholding a portion(10%?) of the annual allocation for a reserve
  - The revenue is projected to increase but it could plateau sooner than expected and it might be good to have something to supplement with if that were to happen
  - Once organizations find out about this funding source, they are going to expect it to always be there and rely on it