



Planning and Development Committee

Meeting Agenda

City Hall, Second Floor
425 E. State Street
Rockford, IL 61104
www.rockfordil.gov

Monday, June 8, 2026
5:30 PM

The following represents, in general, the chronological order of proceedings at the City Council/Committee Meetings: Call to Order, Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, Public Speaking and City Council/Committee Agendas.

Meeting will be live streamed on Channel 17 and via this link:
<https://rockfordil.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Approval of the proposed Funding Agreement with Comprehensive Community Solutions (CCS) to expand prevention and intervention programming in collaboration with the City of Rockford's Community Healing Center in the amount of \$400,000. The funding source is Cannabis Funds. [26-00662](#)
2. Approval of the proposed Funding Agreement with Goodwill in partnership with IBEW Local 364 for Electrical Workers Trades Program to better prepare individuals for IBEW application process in the amount of \$85,172. The funding source is Casino Funds. [26-00663](#)
3. Approval of the proposed Funding Agreement with Angelic Organics Learning Center Inc., an Illinois not-for-profit corporation d/b/a Farmers Rising in partnership with City Center Market for the establishment of a Mobile Grocery Store in the amount of \$822,000. The funding source is 2025 and 2026 Casino Funds. [26-00664](#)
4. Approval of the proposed Funding Agreement with Cited Foundation for Early Birds Social Work Development Program at Auburn High School in the amount of \$25,000. The funding source is Cannabis Funds. [26-00665](#)
5. Approval of the proposed Funding Agreement with Zion West for Youth Training and Mowing Program to better prepare individuals for future opportunities in the amount of \$25,000. The funding source is Cannabis Funds. [26-00666](#)
6. Approval of the proposed Development Agreement with Cord Construction (1322 E. STATE STREET, LLC) for the rehabilitation of 1322 East State Street in an amount not to exceed \$100,000. The funding source is the Jackson School TIF District. [26-00668](#)

III. ADJOURNMENT

THE CITY OF ROCKFORD INTENDS TO COMPLY WITH THE INTENT AND SPIRIT OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT. IF A SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER, PERSONAL P.A. SYSTEM, OR OTHER SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS ARE NEEDED, PLEASE CALL THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT AT (779) 348-7391 AT LEAST 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE, SO WE CAN BE PREPARED TO ASSIST YOU.



Thomas P. McNamara, Mayor

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council
Planning and Development Committee

FROM: Todd Cagnoni, City Administrator
Jennifer Cacciapaglia, Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Prevention

RE: Proposed funding agreement with Comprehensive Community Solutions (CCS) to expand prevention and intervention programming in collaboration with the City of Rockford's Community Healing Center.

DATE: June 8, 2026

For your consideration, is a proposed funding agreement with Comprehensive Community Solutions (CCS) to expand prevention and intervention programming in collaboration with the City of Rockford's Community Healing Center utilizing Cannabis Funds in the amount of \$400,000.

Comprehensive Community Solutions, Inc. (CCS) Alive & Free Program is a year-round, trauma-informed youth development and violence prevention initiative serving youth throughout Rockford, Illinois, particularly within the city's most economically distressed and violence-impacted neighborhoods. Alive & Free utilizes a holistic framework that integrates mentoring, emotional intelligence development, restorative practices, violence prevention, leadership development, conflict resolution, career awareness, and service learning.

The program has demonstrated measurable and significant outcomes during the 2025-2026 fiscal year with a 20% increase in math performance, a 3% increase in school attendance, and a 50% reduction in school referrals at McIntosh Elementary and Guilford High School.

Attached to this memo is a detailed explanation of the program, the approach and outcomes.

To sustain and expand these critical services, CCS respectfully requests \$400,000 in funding support from the City of Rockford that will be matched by an additional \$100,000 in matching funds provided through The Winnebago County Mental Health Board (WCMHB). This funding will allow Alive & Free to continue serving approximately 100 youth annually through trauma-informed mentoring, behavioral health support, social-emotional learning, violence prevention programming, case management, restorative practices, therapeutic services, and family stabilization supports.

Staff recommends approval of the proposed funding agreement as the request is consistent with City's efforts for community investment. Please let me know should you have any questions.

COMMITTEE REPORT

TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKFORD:

Council Members:

The Committee on Planning and Development, to whom was referred the matter of the approval of the proposed Funding Agreement with Comprehensive Community Solutions (CCS) to expand prevention and intervention programming in collaboration with the City of Rockford's Community Healing Center in the amount of \$400,000. The funding source is Cannabis Funds, hereby begs leave to report **recommending approval** of the request as recommended.

Janessa Neal (Chair)

Tim Durkee (Vice Chair)

Karen Hoffman

Dawn Granath

Gina Meeks

Committee Action Taken: June 8, 2026

Neal: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Durkee: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Hoffman: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Granath: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Meeks: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___

FUNDING AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT (“AGREEMENT”), entered into this ____ day of _____, 2026, by and between the City of Rockford, an Illinois municipal corporation ("City"), and Comprehensive Community Solutions, Inc., an Illinois not-for-profit corporation, (“Recipient”) at 917 South Main Street, Rockford Illinois (the "Parties”).

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the City 3% Cannabis Recreation Tax has a designated purpose of funding programs for economic and business development; education; youth programming; job training; health; or other financial assistance to individuals, businesses, and communities within the City of Rockford that have been disproportionately impacted by cannabis-related laws; and

WHEREAS, Recipient operates Alive & Free Program, a year-round, trauma-informed youth development and violence prevention initiative serving youth throughout Rockford, Illinois, particularly within the city’s most economically distressed and violence-impacted neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, Alive & Free was designed to address the root causes of violence while helping youth strengthen social-emotional learning, improve academic engagement, reduce behavioral incidents, and develop the tools necessary to make healthy decisions, build positive relationships, and become productive community leaders; and

WHEREAS, Alive & Free operates through school partnerships, after-school programming, mentoring, workshops, case management, family engagement, and community-based activities grounded in evidence-based trauma-informed practices; and

WHEREAS, the program has demonstrated measurable and significant outcomes during the 2025–2026 fiscal year. Alive & Free exceeded its annual assessment goal by completing over 60 new assessments—200% of its target—with three months still remaining in the fiscal year. Participants achieved a 20% increase in math performance, a 3% increase in school attendance, and a 50% reduction in school referrals at McIntosh Elementary and Guilford High School;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the City and Recipient mutually agree as follows:

1. **RECITALS.** The above recitals are incorporated by reference and made a part of this Agreement.
2. **TERM.** The term of this Agreement shall be from July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027.
3. **PAYMENTS.** Subject to the terms of this Agreement, applicable law, and appropriation by the City Council, during the term of this Agreement the City will provide funding to the

Recipient in a total amount not to exceed Four Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$400,000) for the expenses, activities and costs as more fully set forth in the document attached as Exhibit “A”, which is incorporated herein by reference, pursuant to the following schedule:

(i) Within Sixty (60) days of the execution of this Agreement the City shall provide funds to Recipient in the amount of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000);

(ii) Subject to the acceptance and approval of the documentation required pursuant to Section 6, on 1/1/27 the City shall provide funds to the Recipient in the amount of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000).

4. **NON-APPROPRIATION.** Funding for this Agreement is subject to the availability of funds and their appropriation by the City Council. If no funds or insufficient funds are appropriated and budgeted in any fiscal period of the City for payments to be made under this Agreement, then the City will notify Recipient in writing of that occurrence, and this Agreement will terminate on the earlier of the last day of the fiscal period for which sufficient appropriation was made or whenever the funds appropriated for payment under this Agreement are exhausted. No payments will be made or be due under this Agreement beyond those amounts appropriated and budgeted by the City to fund payments under this Agreement. The City’s payment obligations under this Agreement shall constitute a current expense payable exclusively from legally available, unencumbered funds appropriated in the then-current fiscal year. Nothing in this Agreement shall constitute a pledge, loan, or extension of the City's faith and credit, general obligation, or taxing authority, nor shall it create any indebtedness, special fund, or multiple-fiscal year financial obligation within the meaning of any constitutional, statutory, or municipal code provision.

5. **USE OF FUNDS.**

5.1 Recipient shall use funds to support operational costs, including staff salaries, in the operation of Alive and Free Program consistent with Exhibit A and this Agreement.

5.2 All funds provided by the City pursuant to this Agreement will be held, managed and expended by Recipient and shall be used solely for operation and capital costs in the operation of the Alive and Free Program consistent with Exhibit A and this Agreement.

5.3 Upon the natural expiration or earlier termination of this Agreement, Recipient shall immediately cease all further expenditures of City funds. Within thirty (30) calendar days following such expiration or termination, Recipient shall conduct a final financial accounting of the program and return all unutilized or unexpended funds to the City. Any funds expended by Recipient in violation of this Agreement, or remaining unspent after the designated program period, shall constitute a debt owed to the City and must be repaid in full within the same thirty (30) day period.

6. **DOCUMENTATION, RECORDS AND AUDIT.**

6.1 *Record Retention and Accounting Standard.* The Recipient shall maintain comprehensive financial, administrative, and programmatic records—including itemized receipts, payroll ledgers,

and evidence of expenditures—sufficient to fully verify all costs incurred under this Agreement. This accounting system must comply with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). The Recipient shall retain all such records for at least three (3) years following the final payment of any City moneys pursuant to this Agreement.

6.2 *Reporting Requirements.* During the term of this Agreement, the Recipient shall submit these financial and programmatic tracking documents to the City on a quarterly basis, and within ten (10) business days of any written request by the City.

6.3 *Shared Cost Allocations.* If the Recipient utilizes personnel, equipment, or facilities for both this program and separate operations, it must maintain detailed, contemporaneous records justifying the percentage-based allocation of those shared costs to this Agreement.

6.4 *Inspections and Site Visits.* The City retains the right to conduct physical inspections of the Recipient's equipment, program sites, and administrative premises to confirm Agreement compliance. The City will make reasonable efforts to provide advance notice and coordinate scheduling, provided such coordination does not compromise the purpose of the inspection.

6.5 *Statutory Access.* No provision in this Agreement shall impair, limit, or affect any statutory right of access to records, documents, or data that the City, State, or any other government agency possesses under applicable law.

7. **PERMITTING AND CODES.** Recipient shall comply with all applicable federal, state, county, municipal or administrative laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, codes and orders relating in any way to the operation of the Alive & Free Program.

8. **NO AGENCY, PARTNERSHIP, JOINT VENTURE, OR EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP. NO THIRD-PARTY BENEFICIARY.** Nothing in this Agreement, including the City's funding of the program, review of documentation, right to monitor grant compliance, or approval of payment requests, shall be construed to create an agency, partnership, joint venture, employment, borrowed-servant, franchise, or other representative relationship between the City and Recipient, or between the City and any of the Recipient's directors, officers, employees, volunteers, contractors, vendors, customers, or agents. Recipient shall not represent that it has authority to bind the City or that the City operates, controls, sponsors, endorses, or manages the Alive & Free Program, except to the limited extent expressly stated in this Agreement. Recipient shall perform as an independent contractor with sole control of the manner and means of performing this Agreement. Recipient shall complete this Agreement according to Recipient's own means and methods of work, which shall be in the exclusive charge and control of Recipient and which shall not be subject to control or supervision by the City except as to the result of the work. Recipient is, for all purposes arising out of this Agreement, an independent contractor, and neither Recipient employees nor its affiliates, assigns, agents or subcontractors shall be deemed an employee, agent, partner, or joint-venturer of the City, by reason of this Agreement. Nothing contained in this Agreement or any act of the City or Recipient shall be deemed or construed by any of the Parties hereto, or third persons, to create any relationship of third-party beneficiary.

9. REQUIRED INSURANCE.

9.1 During the Term of this Agreement, the Recipient shall procure and maintain, at its sole cost and expense, insurance coverage from insurers authorized to do business in the State of Illinois and reasonably acceptable to the City. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the City, the Recipient shall maintain at least the following minimum coverages:

(i) *Commercial General Liability*: Written on an occurrence basis, with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 general aggregate, covering bodily injury, property damage, personal injury, and contractual liability. This policy must explicitly include Sexual Abuse and Molestation (SAM) coverage with a limit of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence, either as an endorsement or a standalone policy.

(ii) *Professional Liability (Errors & Omissions)*: Covering claims arising out of the performance of professional youth counseling, mentoring, or intervention services under this Agreement, with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per claim and \$2,000,000 aggregate.

(iii) *Business Automobile Liability*: Covering all owned, leased, hired, and non-owned vehicles utilized in connection with the Alive & Free Program (including any participant transportation activities), with a combined single limit of not less than \$1,000,000 per accident.

(iv) *Workers' Compensation and Employer's Liability*: Statutory benefits in full compliance with the Illinois Workers' Compensation Act (820 ILCS 305/1 *et seq.*). Employer's Liability limits must be not less than \$500,000 per accident for bodily injury, \$500,000 per employee for disease, and \$500,000 total policy limit for disease.

(v) *Commercial Property*: Covering all equipment, technology, fixtures, and supplies used in the operation of the Alive & Free Program against loss or damage by theft, fire, or other standard perils.

9.2 *Additional Insured and Proof of Coverage*. The City of Rockford must be named as an Additional Insured on all liability policies except Workers' Compensation. Prior to the disbursement of any City funds, the Recipient shall file with the City a Certificate of Insurance (COI) along with a Waiver of Subrogation endorsement in favor of the City.

9.3 The Recipient shall require any subcontractor or third party materially involved in the operation of the Alive & Free Program to maintain insurance appropriate to that party's role and matching the risk standards required of the Recipient herein.

9.2 *Evidence of Insurance*. Prior to the disbursement of any City funds or the commencement of any services under this Agreement, and upon each policy renewal thereafter, the Recipient shall provide the City with Certificates of Insurance (COI) and copies of the actual policy endorsements evidencing all required coverages. The Recipient acknowledges that a COI alone is insufficient to grant additional insured status, and the City's receipt or acceptance of any insurance

documentation shall not waive the Recipient's strict obligation to maintain the specific coverages required herein.

9.3 *Notice of Cancellation or Material Change.* The Recipient shall maintain all required insurance policies in full force without lapse throughout the term of this Agreement. The Recipient shall provide written notice to the City within three (3) business days of receiving any notice of cancellation, non-renewal, lapse, or material reduction in coverage. If any required insurance coverage is threatened with cancellation or material reduction, the Recipient shall immediately procure replacement coverage matching the standards of this Agreement to ensure there is no gap in protection.

10. **INDEMNIFICATION.** Recipient agrees to release, defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City of Rockford, its representatives, officers, agents and employees from any and all claims, causes of action, demands for damages, suits, either in law or in equity, or expenses or liabilities of any kind, arising out of or by virtue of the execution and performance of this Agreement or any other agreement entered into pursuant to this Agreement. Recipient shall ensure that all subcontracts executed in connection with this Agreement contain a provision requiring the subcontractor to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City to the same extent required of Recipient herein. In the event that any action or proceeding is brought against the City, or its representatives, officers, agents and/or its employees, by reason of any such claim or demand, Recipient will at its sole cost and expense, resist or defend such action or proceeding.

11. **NON-ASSIGNABILITY.** Recipient shall not assign, transfer, convey, pledge, delegate, subcontract, or otherwise dispose of this Agreement, any interest in this Agreement, any right to receive funds under this Agreement, or any duty or obligation under this Agreement, in whole or in part, without the prior express written consent of the City. Any attempted assignment, transfer, delegation, or subcontracting without such prior written consent shall be void and shall constitute a material breach of this Agreement. For purposes of this section, an assignment includes, without limitation, any transfer of this Agreement or program responsibilities to another entity, any transfer of the right to receive payment, and any merger, consolidation, dissolution, reorganization, change in control, or other transaction that results in a material change in the entity responsible for performance under this Agreement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Recipient may use ordinary-course vendors, suppliers, employees, volunteers, or contractors in connection with the mobile grocery program, provided that Recipient remains solely responsible for performance of this Agreement and for the acts and omissions of such persons or entities.

12. **LEGAL COMPLIANCE.** Recipient shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, codes, rules and regulations in performing its duties, responsibilities and obligations pursuant to this Agreement.

13. **NON-DISCRIMINATION.** Recipient shall comply, and shall cause its officers, directors, employees, agents, volunteers, contractors, subcontractors, vendors, and any other persons or entities acting on its behalf to comply, with all applicable federal, state, and local non-discrimination, equal opportunity, civil rights, fair employment, public accommodation, accessibility, language-access, and anti-retaliation laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, executive

orders, grant conditions, and funding-source requirements, including, without limitation, the Illinois Human Rights Act, 775 ILCS 5/1-101 *et seq.*; applicable rules and regulations of the Illinois Department of Human Rights; applicable federal civil rights laws and regulations; and, to the extent applicable, the City of Rockford Code of Ordinances, including the City's Equal Opportunity Employment requirements, in its operation and provision of services contemplated by this Agreement.

14. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST.** No member of the Rockford City Council, nor any other public official or employee who exercises any functions or responsibilities with respect to this program during their tenure or for one year thereafter, shall have any personal or financial interest, direct or indirect (other than employee salary), in this Agreement or its proceeds. Recipient, including its employees, successors, and assigns, shall strictly comply with all applicable conflict of interest laws, including the Illinois Public Officer Prohibited Activities Act (50 ILCS 105/0.01 *et seq.*), the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/1-1-1 *et seq.*), and the City of Rockford Code of Ordinances. The obligations and restrictions of this Section shall survive the expiration or earlier termination of this Agreement.

15. **TERMINATION.**

15.1 *Events of Termination.* The City may terminate this Agreement immediately upon written notice if Recipient: (i) undergoes voluntary or involuntary dissolution; (ii) requests termination in writing, subject to the City's sole approval; or (iii) fails to cure a default under Section 15.2.

15.2 *Termination for Cause.* If Recipient breaches any obligation or covenant, the City shall issue a written notice of default. If Recipient fails to cure the default to the City's sole satisfaction within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving notice, the City may terminate this Agreement immediately.

15.3 *Liabilities upon Termination.* Upon termination, Recipient is entitled only to reimbursement for eligible, non-refundable expenses properly incurred before receiving the termination notice. The City may permanently withhold or set off any remaining grant funds to cover damages caused by the breach, and Recipient remains fully liable for all resulting damages.

15.4 *Alternative Remedies.* Instead of or prior to termination, the City may temporarily withhold, reduce, or suspend funding for any nonconformance. Exercising an alternative remedy does not waive the City's right to subsequently terminate this Agreement.

16. **WAIVER.** Either party to this Agreement may elect to waive any remedy hereunder, provided that such waiver shall be in writing. No such waiver shall operate or be construed as a waiver of any other right or remedy, nor shall it constitute a continuing waiver of any subsequent, separate, or ongoing breach.

17. **ADMINISTRATION.** The terms and provision of this Agreement shall be administered on behalf of the City by its Director of Community and Economic Development or designee. Unless law otherwise requires, all necessary notices, submissions, and approvals shall be given to or by the Director.

18. **NOTICES.** All notices, approvals, demands, requests, or other documents required or permitted under this Agreement, other than routine communications necessary for the day-to-day operation of this program, shall be deemed properly given if hand delivered or sent by United States registered mail, postage prepaid, at the following addresses:

AS TO THE CITY:

Director,
Community & Economic Development Department
City of Rockford
425 E. State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61104

With copies to:
Legal Director
City of Rockford
425 E State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61104

AS TO COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS, INC., AN ILLINOIS NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION:

CCS, Inc.
917 South Main Street
Rockford Illinois 61101

19. **AMENDMENTS.** This Agreement may be amended by written instrument executed by the Parties hereto, acting therein by their duly authorized representatives. Any amendment(s) hereto must be approved by the City Council of the City of Rockford by resolution.

20. **SEVERABILITY.** If any term or provision of this Agreement or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, shall to any extent, be held invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of this Agreement, or the application of such term or provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is held invalid or unenforceable, shall not be effected thereby, and each remaining term and provision hereof shall be deemed valid and be enforced to the fullest extent permitted by law.

21. **GOVERNING LAW.** This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Illinois and the Ordinances of the City of Rockford.

22. **COUNTERPARTS.** This Agreement may be signed in any number of counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

23. **ENTIRE AGREEMENT.** This Agreement, including any exhibits or attachments hereto,

constitutes the entire agreement between the Parties regarding its subject matter and supersedes all prior or contemporaneous oral or written agreements, understandings, representations, or negotiations.

24. **FORCE MAJEURE.** Neither party shall be liable or responsible to the other party, or be deemed to have defaulted under or breached this agreement, for any failure or delay to fulfill its obligations under this Agreement when and to the extent such failure or delay is caused by or results from acts beyond the impacted party's reasonable control, including, but not limited to, the following force majeure events: acts of God, acts of the public enemy, wars, invasions, hostilities, state or federal governmental action, laws, orders, or rules, acts of terrorism, fires, floods, earthquakes, epidemics, pandemics, quarantine restrictions, national or regional emergencies, labor difficulties, freight embargoes, and transportation shortages. The party claiming excuse from performance ("Claiming Party") must take reasonable efforts to remove the cause of its inability to perform or its delay in performance. The Claiming Party must give prompt written notice to the other party of the Force Majeure Event, specifying its nature and anticipated duration, and provide an estimate of when performance may continue.

25. **AUTHORITY.**

25.1 *Actions.* The City covenants to Recipient and agrees that the City will take such actions as may be required and necessary to enable the City to execute this Agreement and to carry out fully and perform the terms, covenants, agreements, duties, and obligations on its part to be kept and performed as provided by the terms and provisions hereof.

25.2 *Powers.* The City hereby represents and warrants to Recipient that the City has full constitutional and lawful right, power, and authority under currently applicable law to execute, deliver, and perform the terms and obligations of this Agreement, and all of the foregoing have been or will be duly and validly authorized and approved by any necessary City proceedings, findings, and actions. Accordingly, this Agreement constitutes the legal, valid and binding obligation of the City, is enforceable in accordance with its terms and provisions, and does not require the consent of any other governmental authority. Comprehensive Community Solutions, Inc., an Illinois not-for-profit corporation hereby represents and warrants that it is a duly organized, validly existing Illinois corporation and that it has the right, power, and authority to execute, deliver, and perform the terms and obligations of this Agreement, and that this Agreement constitutes the legal, valid, and binding obligation of Comprehensive Community Solutions, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation, enforceable in accordance with its terms and provisions.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the City and Recipient have executed this Agreement on the date above first written.

CITY OF ROCKFORD
A Municipal Corporation

BY: _____
Thomas P. McNamara, Mayor Date _____

ATTEST: _____
Angela L. Hammer, Legal Director Date _____

Comprehensive Community Solutions, Inc., an Illinois not-for-profit corporation

BY: _____ Date _____

Title: _____



ALIVE & FREE

A PROGRAM OF COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS, INC.

Supporting Youth Impacted by Violence in Rockford

Program Overview, Impact, Budget & A Request for Sustainability Funding

The purpose of this document is to request funding to sustain Comprehensive Community Solutions' Alive & Free Program following the loss of state-supported RPSA funding, which is ending due to the expiration of federal COVID-19 relief funding allocated through the State of Illinois.

Prepared by:

William Chatman,

Executive Director/CEO,

Comprehensive Community Solutions, Inc.

Program Summary & Impact

Comprehensive Community Solutions, Inc. (CCS) Alive & Free Program is a year-round, trauma-informed youth development and violence prevention initiative serving youth throughout Rockford, Illinois, particularly within the city's most economically distressed and violence-impacted neighborhoods. Alive & Free was designed to address the root causes of violence while helping youth strengthen social-emotional learning, improve academic engagement, reduce behavioral incidents, and develop the tools necessary to make healthy decisions, build positive relationships, and become productive community leaders. The program operates through school partnerships, after-school programming, mentoring, workshops, case management, family engagement, and community-based activities grounded in evidence-based trauma-informed practices.

Alive & Free utilizes a holistic framework that integrates mentoring, emotional intelligence development, restorative practices, violence prevention, leadership development, conflict resolution, career awareness, and service learning. Youth receive individualized support through structured mentoring sessions, social-emotional learning workshops, behavioral health assessments, and positive youth development activities. CCS staff work collaboratively with schools, families, and community partners to reinforce positive behavioral outcomes and create safe, supportive environments where youth can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

The program has demonstrated measurable and significant outcomes during the 2025–2026 fiscal year. Alive & Free exceeded its annual assessment goal by completing over 60 new assessments—200% of its target—with three months still remaining in the fiscal year. Participants achieved a 20% increase in math performance, a 3% increase in school attendance, and a 50% reduction in school referrals at McIntosh Elementary and Guilford High School. Staff also facilitated approximately 1,800 workshops and supported youth in completing 360 community service hours while participating in 16 educational and cultural outings throughout the region.

Alive & Free places a strong emphasis on trauma-informed care and emotional wellness. Participants demonstrated substantial growth in emotional intelligence, self-regulation, communication skills, decision-making, and conflict resolution. Through interactive SEL workshops, restorative practices, and mentoring, youth developed the ability to recognize emotions, manage stress, resist negative peer influence, and navigate challenges peacefully. Surveys showed that 92% of participants reported increased workforce readiness and improved emotional wellness, while many participants demonstrated stronger leadership skills, healthier peer relationships, and greater confidence in school and community settings.

CCS's organizational commitment to trauma-informed care further strengthens the Alive & Free Program. In FY26, CCS earned an overall trauma-informed organizational score of 112.09 on the Capacity Building Assessment Tool for Organizations (CBAT-O), significantly exceeding the benchmark required to be considered trauma-informed. The

assessment highlighted CCS's strengths in cultural responsiveness, staff support, trauma-informed supervision, and evidence-based practices.

Through Alive & Free, CCS continues to build safer schools, healthier relationships, stronger families, and more resilient communities. By combining trauma-informed behavioral health strategies with mentorship, education, leadership development, and community engagement, Alive & Free is creating measurable, lasting change for youth and families throughout Rockford.

Who Does The Alive & Free Program Serve

The Alive & Free Program serves youth ages 11 through young adults age 24 throughout Rockford, Illinois, particularly those living in communities disproportionately impacted by poverty, trauma, violence, school disengagement, and limited access to supportive resources. The program primarily works with elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and youth programs through partnerships with schools and community partners, while also supporting at-risk youth involved in broader CCS community programming.

Alive & Free is specifically designed to support youth who may be struggling with behavioral challenges, emotional regulation, exposure to violence, academic difficulties, peer conflict, family instability, or other trauma-related stressors. The program provides trauma-informed mentoring, social-emotional learning, behavioral health support, restorative practices, leadership development, and violence prevention services to help young people build resilience, improve decision-making, strengthen relationships, and successfully transition into healthy adulthood.

Program Model

Alive & Free delivers a comprehensive trauma-informed model built around four core components: Screening & Assessment, Trauma-Informed Psychoeducation, Therapeutic Services, and Service Linkage & Resource Navigation. This framework is designed to identify trauma early, provide behavioral health support, stabilize youth and families, and connect participants to long-term community resources and services.

Youth receive individualized assessments using evidence-based tools such as the IM+CANS, ACES Questionnaire, Mental Health Diagnostic Screening Tools, Suicide Assessments, Nutritional Assessments, and Trauma Assessments to identify emotional, behavioral, environmental, and trauma-related needs that may contribute to violence, instability, or school disengagement. Through trauma-informed psychoeducation, Alive & Free helps youth and families understand the effects of trauma, violence exposure, toxic stress, and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) while teaching emotional regulation, self-awareness, stress management, communication skills, and healthy coping strategies to interrupt cycles of violence and retaliation.

The program also provides access to a wide range of evidence-based therapeutic interventions through partnerships with behavioral health professionals, including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Trauma-Focused CBT, EMDR Therapy, Solution-

Focused Therapy, Psychodynamic Therapy, Multisystemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy, Crisis Intervention, and Intensive Retaliation & Gun Violence Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Groups.

A key component of the model is mentoring and the development of positive adult relationships. Alive & Free utilizes both one-to-one and group mentoring models that connect youth with trusted adults who provide encouragement, accountability, leadership development, and long-term support centered around each participant's individualized case plan and personal goals.

Alive & Free also creates structured, trauma-informed environments where youth can safely process emotions, build self-confidence, improve communication skills, and learn peaceful conflict resolution through mentoring, fitness activities, group engagement, classroom learning, and non-combative de-escalation strategies. Through structured life skills development, youth strengthen emotional regulation, healthy stress responses, social awareness, problem-solving, decision-making, relationship management, and strategies to avoid violence and retaliation.

Recognizing that trauma impacts entire families, Alive & Free also provides whole-family and wraparound support services, including case management, transportation assistance, substance abuse referrals, crisis intervention, educational support, housing referrals, and connections to mental health and domestic violence services to help stabilize both youth and families.

The program operates through strong collaboration with schools, law enforcement, the Mayor's Office on Domestic and Community Violence Prevention, the Family Peace Center, behavioral health agencies, and grassroots organizations to address the root causes of violence through coordinated prevention and intervention strategies. The model is intentionally culturally responsive, equity-focused, and community-informed, ensuring that services are accessible and relevant to youth living in neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by poverty, trauma, racism, domestic violence, and firearm violence.

Why This Model Matters

The Alive & Free Model matters because it addresses the root causes of violence rather than simply responding to its symptoms. The program recognizes that trauma, poverty, domestic violence, toxic stress, and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are strongly connected to youth violence, school disengagement, emotional instability, and future justice involvement. Local data found that approximately 70% of first-time justice-involved youth had previously experienced or witnessed violence and trauma, demonstrating the urgent need for early intervention and trauma-informed care.

Alive & Free responds to these realities by creating safe, supportive, and relationship-centered environments where youth can heal, grow, and develop the skills needed to successfully navigate conflict and adversity. Through mentoring, social-emotional

learning, restorative practices, behavioral health support, and violence prevention education, youth strengthen emotional regulation, communication, problem-solving, self-awareness, and peaceful conflict resolution skills.

The program also provides wraparound support and service linkage for youth and families, recognizing that long-term stability and healing require coordinated community support systems. By partnering with schools, behavioral health providers, community organizations, grassroots leaders, and families, Alive & Free builds trust, increases protective factors, and strengthens community resilience.

Most importantly, Alive & Free has demonstrated measurable outcomes in improving school engagement, emotional wellness, workforce readiness, and reductions in behavioral incidents, helping create safer schools, stronger families, and healthier communities throughout Rockford.

Key Highlights

- **Trauma-Informed Violence Prevention Model:** Alive & Free addresses violence at its root by combining trauma-informed care, social-emotional learning (SEL), mentoring, behavioral health support, restorative practices, and conflict resolution strategies for youth exposed to violence, trauma, and chronic stress.
- **Demonstrated Reduction in Behavioral Incidents:** The program achieved a 50% reduction in school referrals among participating youth at McIntosh Elementary and Guilford High School, demonstrating measurable success in reducing behaviors often linked to future violence and school disengagement.
- **Strong School & Community Partnerships:** Due to the program’s effectiveness, McIntosh Elementary expanded CCS’s presence from 3 days per week to full-day programming 5 days per week, while both McIntosh Elementary and Guilford High School renewed partnerships for the upcoming school year.
- **Mental Health & Emotional Wellness Focus:** Alive & Free completed 100% of its annual mental health assessment goals and equips youth with emotional regulation, self-awareness, stress management, and decision-making skills that reduce aggression and improve long-term resilience.
- **Safe Spaces & Positive Adult Relationships:** The program creates structured, trauma-informed environments where youth develop trusting relationships with mentors and caring adults, increasing feelings of safety, belonging, accountability, and hope—critical protective factors against violence involvement.
- **High-Impact Social Emotional Learning (SEL):** Alive & Free delivers daily SEL workshops focused on emotional awareness, peer influence, self-control, empathy, conflict resolution, leadership, and healthy decision-making. Approximately 1,800 workshops have been completed across CCS programming this year alone.
- **Community Trust & Violence Prevention:** The program intentionally builds positive relationships between youth, families, law enforcement, schools, and community leaders through collaborative SEL outreach events designed to increase trust, reduce fear, and strengthen community cohesion.



- **Youth Voice & Community Safety Leadership:** Alive & Free helped administer the City of Rockford Youth GAP Survey to identify youth perspectives on violence, trauma, unsafe schools, lack of opportunity, distrust of systems, and gaps in prevention services. This ensures youth voices directly inform violence prevention strategies across the city.
- **Academic & Workforce Outcomes as Violence Prevention:** Participants achieved a 20% increase in math performance, improved attendance, stronger classroom engagement, and 92% increased workforce readiness—protective factors strongly associated with reduced violence involvement and improved long-term stability.
- **Restorative Practices & Conflict Intervention:** CCS’s restorative classroom and SEL interventions have shown strong outcomes among high-risk youth, including improved behavior, emotional regulation, conflict resolution skills, and academic improvement among students previously exhibiting aggressive behaviors.
- **Evidence-Based & Trauma-Informed Organizational Capacity:** CCS earned a trauma-informed organizational score of 112.09 on the FY26 CBAT-O assessment, significantly exceeding the benchmark for trauma-informed service delivery and demonstrating CCS’s ability to provide high-quality behavioral health and violence prevention services.
- **Community Engagement & Positive Identity Development:** Youth completed 360 hours of community service and participated in educational outings, leadership activities, and civic engagement opportunities that strengthen positive identity, community connection, and social responsibility.

Budget Overview

The table below outlines the request of funding from the City of Rockford to sustain the Alive & Free Programming through July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027.

BUDGET OVERVIEW		
CATEGORY	Requested Funding From The City of Rockford	Match Funding Provided By WCMHB
Personnel	\$133,120.00	\$42,990.00
Fringe Benefits	\$37,753.00	17,010.00
Program Costs (Supplies)	\$79,969.00	
Contractual Costs	\$50,000.00	\$25,000
Occupancy Cost	\$23,200.62	
Telecommunications Cost	\$2,261.61	
Other Costs	\$13,695.77	
Indirect Costs (15%)	\$60,000.00	\$15,000.00
Total	\$400,000.00	\$100,000.00

This funding allows CCS's Alive & Free program to service 100 youth a year with the services outlined in this document.

Request For Funding

Comprehensive Community Solutions, Inc. (CCS) respectfully requests funding to sustain the Alive & Free Program for the July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027 program year following the loss of state-supported RPSA funding due to the expiration of federal COVID-19 relief funding allocated through the State of Illinois. Alive & Free is a year-round, trauma-informed youth development and violence prevention initiative serving youth ages 11–24 throughout Rockford, Illinois, particularly within communities disproportionately impacted by poverty, trauma, domestic violence, school disengagement, and firearm violence. The program addresses the root causes of violence through mentoring, social-emotional learning, restorative practices, behavioral health support, violence prevention education, case management, and wraparound support services designed to help youth heal, build resilience, strengthen relationships, and successfully transition into healthy adulthood.

Alive & Free has demonstrated measurable impact throughout Rockford during the 2025–2026 fiscal year. The program exceeded its annual assessment goal by completing over 60 new assessments—200% of its target—with three months remaining in the fiscal year. Participating youth demonstrated a 20% increase in math performance, a 3% increase in school attendance, and a 50% reduction in school referrals at McIntosh Elementary and Guilford High School. Additionally, staff facilitated approximately 1,800 workshops and supported youth in completing 360 hours of community service while participating in 16 educational and cultural outings throughout the region. Surveys also showed that 92% of participants reported increased workforce readiness and improved emotional wellness. These outcomes demonstrate Alive & Free's ability to reduce behavioral incidents, strengthen protective factors, improve academic engagement, and increase emotional stability among youth most impacted by violence and trauma.

To sustain and expand these critical services, CCS respectfully requests \$400,000 in funding support from the City of Rockford that will be matched by an additional \$100,000 in matching funds provided through The Winnebago County Mental Health Board (WCMHB), for a total program investment of \$500,000. This funding will allow Alive & Free to continue serving approximately 100 youth annually through trauma-informed mentoring, behavioral health support, social-emotional learning, violence prevention programming, case management, restorative practices, therapeutic services, and family stabilization supports. Continued investment in Alive & Free represents an investment in safer schools, healthier families, stronger neighborhoods, and long-term violence prevention throughout the Rockford community.



Thomas P. McNamara, Mayor

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council
Planning and Development Committee

FROM: Todd Cagnoni, City Administrator

RE: Proposed funding agreement with Goodwill in partnership with IBEW Local 364 for Electrical Workers Trades Program to better prepare individuals for IBEW application process.

DATE: June 8, 2026

For your consideration, is a proposed funding agreement with Goodwill in partnership with IBEW Local 364 for Electrical Workers Trades Program to better prepare individuals for IBEW application process utilizing Casino in the amount of \$85,172.

Many young adults who want to get into the Electrical trade lack the math skills, as well as necessary soft skills and understanding of the application process. Goodwill in partnership with IBEW have created an 8-week program for young adults to provide guidance in understanding and navigating the process, enhancing soft skills and necessary reading and critical thinking skills needed, and completing the IBEW math program, which meets the criteria for math requirements for the application process.

The attached includes the key components of the program and overall budget. Including a structure for the student while they learn as follows.:

- Students will be paid \$15/hour for all class time = \$120/week and \$960/program
- Students will earn a \$250 bonus if the following 2 conditions are met:
 - They complete the full 8 weeks and graduate
 - Complete IBEW Apprenticeship application and take the aptitude test

Eligibility for the program includes:

8th grade math and reading level,
High School Diploma or GED,
Lives in the city of Rockford,
17-25 years old
Has Driver's license or able to get it with Goodwill assistance

Staff recommends approval of proposed funding agreement with Goodwill in partnership with IBEW Local 364 for Electrical Workers Trades Program to better prepare individuals for IBEW application process utilizing Casino up to an amount of \$85,172.

Please let me know should you have any questions.

COMMITTEE REPORT

TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKFORD:

Council Members:

The Committee on Planning and Development, to whom was referred the matter of the approval of the proposed Funding Agreement with Goodwill in partnership with IBEW Local 364 for Electrical Workers Trades Program to better prepare individuals for IBEW application process in the amount of \$85,172. The funding source is Casino Funds, hereby begs leave to report **recommending approval** of the request as recommended.

Janessa Neal (Chair)

Tim Durkee (Vice Chair)

Karen Hoffman

Dawn Granath

Gina Meeks

Committee Action Taken: June 8, 2026

Neal: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Durkee: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Hoffman: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Granath: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Meeks: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___

FUNDING AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT (“AGREEMENT”), entered into this ____ day of _____, 2026, by and between the City of Rockford, an Illinois municipal corporation ("City"), and GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS AND WISCONSIN STATELINE AREA, INC., an Illinois not for profit (“Recipient”) at 850 North Church Street, Rockford IL (“Parties”).

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the City has available Casino Tax revenues to support projects that provide a direct economic and social benefit to the Rockford community; and

WHEREAS, the Recipient is a Rockford-headquartered nonprofit organization providing workforce training and support services across northern Illinois and the Wisconsin Stateline region; and

WHEREAS, the Recipient operates a specialized Building and Construction Trades program designed to equip participants with foundational math, technical construction, and essential soft skills required to secure family-sustaining careers in the skilled trades; and

WHEREAS, many aspiring local workers lack the specific mathematical proficiency, professional soft skills, and institutional knowledge necessary to successfully navigate the highly competitive union application process; and

WHEREAS, the Recipient has developed a targeted 8-week intensive program that delivers essential reading, critical thinking, and soft-skills training, while guiding participants through the complete International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) math curriculum; and

WHEREAS, successful completion of this 8-week curriculum directly fulfills the rigorous prerequisite mathematics criteria required to apply for the local union apprenticeship program; and

WHEREAS, the Recipient actively partners with IBEW Local 364 in Rockford to streamline pathways into high-quality, high-wage apprenticeship and employment opportunities within Winnebago, Boone, and DeKalb counties; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to allocate a portion of its Casino Tax revenues to support this program, which fosters local workforce development, enhances community safety, and expands access to premium-wage industrial trade careers;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the City and Recipient mutually agree as follows:

1. **RECITALS.** The above recitals are incorporated by reference and made a part of this Agreement.

2. **TERM.** The term of this Agreement shall be for one (1) year from the date of execution of this Agreement.

3. **PAYMENTS.** Subject to the terms of this Agreement, applicable law, and appropriation by the City Council, the City shall provide funds to Recipient in one (1) installment of Eighty-Five Thousand One Hundred Seventy-Two Dollars (\$85,172.00) within 60 days of the execution of this Agreement for the expenses, activities and costs as more fully set forth in the document attached as Exhibit “A”, which is incorporated herein by reference.

4. **NON-APPROPRIATION.** Funding for this Agreement is subject to the availability of funds and their appropriation by the City Council. If no funds or insufficient funds are appropriated and budgeted in any fiscal period of the City for payments to be made under this Agreement, then the City will notify Recipient in writing of that occurrence, and this Agreement will terminate on the earlier of the last day of the fiscal period for which sufficient appropriation was made or whenever the funds appropriated for payment under this Agreement are exhausted. No payments will be made or be due under this Agreement beyond those amounts appropriated and budgeted by the City to fund payments under this Agreement. The City’s payment obligations under this Agreement shall constitute a current expense payable exclusively from legally available, unencumbered funds appropriated in the then-current fiscal year. Nothing in this Agreement shall constitute a pledge, loan, or extension of the City's faith and credit, general obligation, or taxing authority, nor shall it create any indebtedness, special fund, or multiple-fiscal year financial obligation within the meaning of any constitutional, statutory, or municipal code provision.

5. **USE OF FUNDS.**

5.1 All funds provided by the City pursuant to this Agreement will be held, managed and expended by Recipient and shall be used solely for operational and capital costs in the operation of the Building and Construction Trades Program consistent with Exhibit A and this Agreement.

5.2 Upon the natural expiration or earlier termination of this Agreement, Recipient shall immediately cease all further expenditures of City funds. Within thirty (30) calendar days following such expiration or termination, Recipient shall conduct a final financial accounting of the program and return all unutilized or unexpended funds to the City. Any funds expended by Recipient in violation of this Agreement, or remaining unspent after the designated program period, shall constitute a debt owed to the City and must be repaid in full within the same thirty (30) day period.

6. **DOCUMENTATION, RECORDS AND AUDIT.**

6.1 *Record Retention.* The Recipient shall maintain complete financial and programmatic records—including invoices, itemized receipts, payroll logs, and expense reports—sufficient to fully verify all expenditures funded under this Agreement. The Recipient shall retain all such

records for a period of two (2) years following the final grant payment.

6.2 *Reporting Requirements.* The Recipient shall provide expenditure documentation and program progress updates to the City on a quarterly basis, and within ten (10) business days of any written request by the City.

6.3 *Cost Allocation.* If the Recipient utilizes personnel, facilities, or equipment for both this trade program and separate operations, it must maintain a clear, reasonable log showing how those shared costs are allocated and billed to this grant.

6.4 *Right to Inspect.* The City retains the right to review the Recipient's program records and conduct scheduled site visits at the training premises during normal business hours to verify compliance with this Agreement. The City will provide reasonable advance notice of any such visit.

7. **PERMITTING AND CODES.** Recipient shall comply with all applicable federal, state, county, municipal or administrative laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, codes and orders relating in any way to the operation of the Building and Construction Trades Program.

8. **NO AGENCY, PARTNERSHIP, JOINT VENTURE, OR EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP. NO THIRD-PARTY BENEFICIARY.** Nothing in this Agreement, including the City's funding of the program, review of documentation, right to monitor grant compliance, or approval of payment requests, shall be construed to create an agency, partnership, joint venture, employment, borrowed-servant, franchise, or other representative relationship between the City and Recipient, or between the City and any of the Recipient's directors, officers, employees, volunteers, contractors, vendors, customers, or agents. Recipient shall not represent that it has authority to bind the City or that the City operates, controls, sponsors, endorses, or manages the Building and Construction Trades Program, except to the limited extent expressly stated in this Agreement. Recipient shall perform as an independent contractor with sole control of the manner and means of performing this Agreement. Recipient shall complete this Agreement according to Recipient's own means and methods of work, which shall be in the exclusive charge and control of Recipient and which shall not be subject to control or supervision by the City except as to the result of the work. Recipient is, for all purposes arising out of this Agreement, an independent contractor, and neither Recipient employees nor its affiliates, assigns, agents or subcontractors shall be deemed an employee, agent, partner, or joint-venturer of the City, by reason of this Agreement. Nothing contained in this Agreement or any act of the City or Recipient shall be deemed or construed by any of the Parties hereto, or third persons, to create any relationship of third-party beneficiary.

9. **REQUIRED INSURANCE.**

9.1 *Minimum Policy Limits.* The Recipient shall procure and maintain, at its sole cost, insurance coverage from carriers authorized to do business in the State of Illinois. Unless waived or modified in writing by the City, the Recipient shall maintain:

(i) *Commercial General Liability:* Written on an occurrence basis, with limits of not less

than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 aggregate, covering bodily injury, property damage, and premises operations arising from the Building and Construction Trades Program.

(ii) *Professional Liability (Errors & Omissions)*: Covering claims arising out of negligence or omissions in the delivery of educational, classroom instructional, or workforce training services under this Agreement, with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per claim.

(iii) *Business Automobile Liability*: Covering all owned, leased, hired, and non-owned vehicles utilized in connection with the program, with a combined single limit of not less than \$1,000,000 per accident.

(iv) *Workers' Compensation*: Statutory benefits in full compliance with the Illinois Workers' Compensation Act (820 ILCS 305/1 et seq.), with Employer's Liability limits of not less than \$500,000 per accident.

9.2 *Evidence of Insurance and Additional Insured*. Prior to the disbursement of any City funds, the Recipient shall provide the City with Certificates of Insurance (COI) and actual policy endorsements naming the City of Rockford as an Additional Insured on all liability policies except Workers' Compensation. A COI alone is insufficient to grant additional insured status.

9.3 *Notice of Cancellation*. The Recipient shall maintain all required policies without lapse throughout the term of this Agreement. The Recipient shall provide written notice to the City within three (3) business days of receiving any notice of cancellation, non-renewal, lapse, or material reduction in coverage.

10. **INDEMNIFICATION**. Recipient agrees to release, defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City of Rockford, its representatives, officers, agents and employees from any and all claims, causes of action, demands for damages, suits, either in law or in equity, or expenses or liabilities of any kind, arising out of or by virtue of the execution and performance of this Agreement or any other agreement entered into pursuant to this Agreement. Recipient shall ensure that all subcontracts executed in connection with this Agreement contain a provision requiring the subcontractor to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City to the same extent required of Recipient herein. In the event that any action or proceeding is brought against the City, or its representatives, officers, agents and/or its employees, by reason of any such claim or demand, Recipient will at its sole cost and expense, resist or defend such action or proceeding.

11. **NON-ASSIGNABILITY**. Recipient shall not assign, transfer, convey, pledge, delegate, subcontract, or otherwise dispose of this Agreement, any interest in this Agreement, any right to receive funds under this Agreement, or any duty or obligation under this Agreement, in whole or in part, without the prior express written consent of the City. Any attempted assignment, transfer, delegation, or subcontracting without such prior written consent shall be void and shall constitute a material breach of this Agreement. For purposes of this section, an assignment includes, without limitation, any transfer of this Agreement or program responsibilities to another entity, any transfer of the right to receive payment, and any merger, consolidation, dissolution, reorganization, change in control, or other transaction that results in a material change in the entity responsible for

performance under this Agreement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Recipient may use ordinary-course vendors, suppliers, employees, volunteers, or contractors in connection with the mobile grocery program, provided that Recipient remains solely responsible for performance of this Agreement and for the acts and omissions of such persons or entities.

12. **LEGAL COMPLIANCE.** Recipient shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, codes, rules and regulations in performing its duties, responsibilities and obligations pursuant to this Agreement.

13. **NON-DISCRIMINATION.** Recipient shall comply, and shall cause its officers, directors, employees, agents, volunteers, contractors, subcontractors, vendors, and any other persons or entities acting on its behalf to comply, with all applicable federal, state, and local non-discrimination, equal opportunity, civil rights, fair employment, public accommodation, accessibility, language-access, and anti-retaliation laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, executive orders, grant conditions, and funding-source requirements, including, without limitation, the Illinois Human Rights Act, 775 ILCS 5/1-101 et seq.; applicable rules and regulations of the Illinois Department of Human Rights; applicable federal civil rights laws and regulations; and, to the extent applicable, the City of Rockford Code of Ordinances, including the City's Equal Opportunity Employment requirements, in its operation and provision of services contemplated by this Agreement.

14. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST.** No member of the Rockford City Council, nor any other public official or employee who exercises any functions or responsibilities with respect to this program during their tenure or for one year thereafter, shall have any personal or financial interest, direct or indirect (other than employee salary), in this Agreement or its proceeds. Recipient, including its employees, successors, and assigns, shall strictly comply with all applicable conflict of interest laws, including the Illinois Public Officer Prohibited Activities Act (50 ILCS 105/0.01 et seq.), the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/1-1-1 et seq.), and the City of Rockford Code of Ordinances. The obligations and restrictions of this Section shall survive the expiration or earlier termination of this Agreement.

15. **TERMINATION.**

15.1 *Events of Termination.* The City may terminate this Agreement immediately upon written notice if Recipient: (i) undergoes voluntary or involuntary dissolution; (ii) requests termination in writing, subject to the City's sole approval; or (iii) fails to cure a default under Section 15.2.

15.2 *Termination for Cause.* If Recipient breaches any obligation or covenant, the City shall issue a written notice of default. If Recipient fails to cure the default to the City's sole satisfaction within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving notice, the City may terminate this Agreement immediately.

15.3 *Liabilities upon Termination.* Upon termination, Recipient is entitled only to reimbursement for eligible, non-refundable expenses properly incurred before receiving the termination notice. The City may permanently withhold or set off any remaining grant funds to cover damages caused by the breach, and Recipient remains fully liable for all resulting damages.

15.4 *Alternative Remedies.* Instead of or prior to termination, the City may temporarily withhold, reduce, or suspend funding for any nonconformance. Exercising an alternative remedy does not waive the City's right to subsequently terminate this Agreement.

16. **WAIVER.** Either party to this Agreement may elect to waive any remedy hereunder, provided that such waiver shall be in writing. No such waiver shall operate or be construed as a waiver of any other right or remedy, nor shall it constitute a continuing waiver of any subsequent, separate, or ongoing breach.

17. **ADMINISTRATION.** The terms and provision of this Agreement shall be administered on behalf of the City by its Director of Community Development. Unless law otherwise requires, all necessary notices, submissions, and approvals shall be given to or by the Director.

18. **NOTICES.** All notices, approvals, demands, requests, or other documents required or permitted under this Agreement, other than routine communications necessary for the day-to-day operation of this program, shall be deemed properly given if hand delivered or sent by United States registered mail, postage prepaid, at the following addresses:

AS TO THE CITY:

Director,
Community & Economic Development Department
City of Rockford
425 E. State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61104

With copies to:
Legal Director
City of Rockford
425 E State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61104

AS TO GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS AND WISCONSIN
STATELINE AREA, INC., AN ILLINOIS NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION:

19. **AMENDMENTS.** This Agreement may be amended by written instrument executed by the Parties hereto, acting therein by their duly authorized representatives. Any amendment(s)

hereto must be approved by the City Council of the City of Rockford by resolution.

20. **SEVERABILITY.** If any term or provision of this Agreement or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, shall to any extent, be held invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of this Agreement, or the application of such term or provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is held invalid or unenforceable, shall not be effected thereby, and each remaining term and provision hereof shall be deemed valid and be enforced to the fullest extent permitted by law.

21. **GOVERNING LAW.** This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Illinois and the Ordinances of the City of Rockford.

22. **COUNTERPARTS.** This Agreement may be signed in any number of counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

23. **ENTIRE AGREEMENT.** This Agreement, including any exhibits or attachments hereto, constitutes the entire agreement between the Parties regarding its subject matter and supersedes all prior or contemporaneous oral or written agreements, understandings, representations, or negotiations.

24. **FORCE MAJEURE.** Neither party shall be liable or responsible to the other party, or be deemed to have defaulted under or breached this agreement, for any failure or delay to fulfill its obligations under this Agreement when and to the extent such failure or delay is caused by or results from acts beyond the impacted party's reasonable control, including, but not limited to, the following force majeure events: acts of God, acts of the public enemy, wars, invasions, hostilities, state or federal governmental action, laws, orders, or rules, acts of terrorism, fires, floods, earthquakes, epidemics, pandemics, quarantine restrictions, national or regional emergencies, labor difficulties, freight embargoes, and transportation shortages. The party claiming excuse from performance ("Claiming Party") must take reasonable efforts to remove the cause of its inability to perform or its delay in performance. The Claiming Party must give prompt written notice to the other party of the Force Majeure Event, specifying its nature and anticipated duration, and provide an estimate of when performance may continue.

25. **AUTHORITY.**

25.1 *Actions.* The City covenants to Recipient and agrees that the City will take such actions as may be required and necessary to enable the City to execute this Agreement and to carry out fully and perform the terms, covenants, agreements, duties, and obligations on its part to be kept and performed as provided by the terms and provisions hereof.

25.2 *Powers.* The City hereby represents and warrants to Recipient that the City has full constitutional and lawful right, power, and authority under currently applicable law to execute, deliver, and perform the terms and obligations of this Agreement, and all of the foregoing have been or will be duly and validly authorized and approved by any necessary City proceedings, findings, and actions. Accordingly, this Agreement constitutes the legal, valid and binding

obligation of the City, is enforceable in accordance with its terms and provisions, and does not require the consent of any other governmental authority. GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS AND WISCONSIN STATELINE AREA, INC., an Illinois not-for-profit corporation hereby represents and warrants that it is a duly organized, validly existing Illinois corporation and that it has the right, power, and authority to execute, deliver, and perform the terms and obligations of this Agreement, and that this Agreement constitutes the legal, valid, and binding obligation of Goodwill Industries of Northern Illinois and Wisconsin Stateline Area, Inc., an Illinois not-for-profit corporation, enforceable in accordance with its terms and provisions.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the City and Recipient have executed this Agreement on the date above first written.

CITY OF ROCKFORD
A Municipal Corporation

BY: _____
Thomas P. McNamara, Mayor Date _____

ATTEST: _____
Angela L. Hammer, Legal Director Date _____

GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS AND WISCONSIN STATELINE AREA, INC., an Illinois Non-For-Profit Corporation

BY: _____ Date _____
Title: _____

Electrical Workers Trades Program

IBEW Local 364, located in Rockford, IL is a labor union representing professional electrical workers in Northern Illinois. They train and provide skilled electricians for construction and maintenance, focusing on safety and high-quality work in counties like Winnebago, Boone, and DeKalb.

Goodwill Industries is a local nonprofit organization headquartered in Rockford, IL that serves 18 counties in Northern Illinois and the Wisconsin Stateline Area. Goodwill provides training and support services including a Building and Construction Trades program that works with the local trade unions to help individuals learn foundational math, construction, and building skills and apply to and work in the trades.

Many young adults who want to get into the Electrical trade lack the math skills, as well as necessary soft skills and understanding of the application process. This 8 week program will work with young adults and provide guidance in understanding and navigating the process, enhancing soft skills and necessary reading and critical thinking skills needed, and completing the IBEW math program, which meets the criteria for math requirements for the application process.

Key components of the program to be held in Fall 2026:

- 8 weeks in length, 2 nights per week for 4 hours per night = 64 hour program
- Each week =
 - One night focused on math program with IBEW
 - One night focused on reading comprehension and soft skills with Goodwill team
- Program goal = to better prepare individuals for IBEW application process including completion of the math module to satisfy application requirement
- Eligibility =
 - 8th grade math and reading level,
 - High School Diploma or GED,
 - Lives in the city of Rockford,
 - 17-25 years old
 - Has Driver's license or able to get it with Goodwill assistance
- Students will be paid \$15/hour for all class time = \$120/week and \$960/program
- Students will earn a \$250 bonus if the following 2 conditions are met:
 - They complete the full 8 weeks and graduate
 - Complete IBEW Apprenticeship application and take the aptitude test

- Additional support and coaching can be provided for students to include transportation help, assistance getting transcripts, etc.
- 70% of enrolled students should be minorities and/or women
- Goodwill will be responsible for reviewing all applications and selecting candidates for the program
- Goodwill will be on site for all classes to help students with any support needs or additional tutoring support.
- Students will have assistance applying to IBEW 364 including help with any fees for applications.
- Students who are not accepted into IBEW 364 will be able to attend an expo with other trades to learn about opportunities and obtain assistance applying.

Curriculum Modules include:

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
Pre-class orientation	Introduction to the Program, expectations, paperwork completed for stipend and other requirements (can be any day)	N/A
Week 1	Tour of the training center, introduction to math program and login, walk through expectations for completion rate	Tools and materials – Safety with tools and materials Safety at work Walkthrough for safety at training center
Week 2	Math program work with IBEW	Expectations at work -- Understanding of employers' expectations in regard to attendance, punctuality, behavior and attitude on the job Understanding of the employment contract – what you will bring to work and what the employer will provide Understanding how to advocate for your needs Learn to complete and interpret a timecard properly

Week 3	Math program work with IBEW	Ethics and teamwork – Self-awareness of ethics and boundaries Awareness of your effect on others in your team
Week 4	Math program work with IBEW	Critical thinking and conflict resolution - Understanding how to analyze and interpret information Understanding of how to handle conflict effectively at work Learn to review employment handbooks and understand content
Week 5	Math program work with IBEW	Communicating clearly – Understanding different methods of communication Understanding the differences in Communication with peers vs. communication with supervisors How to handle conflict effectively at work
Week 6	Math program work with IBEW	Interviewing and employment docs – Understand how to prepare for an interview, elevator pitches Ability to understand and complete employment paperwork Complete tax paperwork for employment
Week 7	Math program work with IBEW	Interview prep. Complete a mock interview and panel interview
Week 8	Math program work with IBEW	Test Prep & Test

Completion ceremony	Ceremony and completion certificate given
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Costs for the program

Item	Cost per student	Number of students	Notes	Total
Stipends for students for 64 hours each	\$960.00	30	\$15/hour for students for all class time	\$28,800.00
Completion bonus for applying to trade	\$250.00	30	\$250 bonus for completion which includes applying to the trade program	\$7,500.00
Barrier reduction costs (help with Driver's license, application fees, transportation, steel toe boots, other)	250	30	\$250 max per student, some may use all, some may use very little	\$7,500.00
Program materials for Goodwill	250	30	Workbooks, tools for students to use	\$7,500.00
Program materials for IBEW including math program access	200	30		\$6,000.00
Staffing costs for Goodwill staff			4 staff including Intake to create, screen applicants and do all assessment testing, Case Manager and Program Instructor to be at all classes, Program Manager to help guide and oversee program and fringe for all positions	\$27,872.00
TOTAL				\$85,172.00



Thomas P. McNamara, Mayor

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council
Planning and Development Committee

FROM: Todd Cagnoni, City Administrator
Sara Leys, Community and Development Director
Anna, Economic Development Manager

RE: Proposed funding agreement with Angelic Organics Learning Center Inc., an Illinois not-for-profit corporation d/b/a Farmers Rising in partnership with City Center Market for the establishment of a Mobile Grocery Store.

DATE: June 8, 2026

For your consideration, is a proposed funding agreement with Angelic Organics Learning Center Inc., an Illinois not-for-profit corporation d/b/a Farmers Rising in partnership with City Center Market for the establishment of a Mobile Grocery Store. Funding Source is 2025 Casino Funds in the amount of \$200,000 and 2026 Casino Funds in the amount of \$358,944 for a total amount up to \$558,944. This includes startup costs and support for 3 years of operations.

Farmers Rising, City Center Market and Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence (NICNE) support a food insecurity action committee with a number of community partners working to address food insecurity. As they have evaluated ideas and needs across the community, a Mobile Grocery has been identified as solution for access. As they advanced forward, they utilized Northern Illinois Food Bank as a resource to assist and evaluate a service delivery model supported by a business plan.

This proposal is supported by the City's Policy on Addressing Food Insecurity, which states:

It is the policy of the City of Rockford to address food insecurity through coordinated municipal action, cross-sector partnerships, and strategic investment in community-based food systems. The City will work with community partners to eliminate barriers to food access, particularly in neighborhoods identified as food deserts or disproportionately impacted by poverty and systemic inequities.

GOALS OF POLICY:

1. Increase Access: Expand the availability of healthy and affordable food options, especially in underserved neighborhoods.

2. Support Local Food Initiatives: Partner with local farmers, growers, and community organizations, farmer markets, grocery stores to strengthen regional food systems.
3. Promote Equity: Prioritize investments in communities most impacted by food insecurity and ensure culturally appropriate food options.
4. Support Coordination: Support ongoing efforts to integrate nonprofits, schools, and healthcare partners to streamline food-related programs and services. Measure and Report Impact: Use data to prioritize projects, understanding the effect of proximity and cost on households, and track and report progress through regular data collection and evaluation of food insecurity trends.
5. Sustainability: Identify gaps and works towards a sustainable foundation that would provide for improved health outcomes related to nutrition for the future Rockford families.

Attached to this memo is a representation of their work, including a need analysis, community survey, business plan, and multiple year proforma. Terms of a funding agreement would set forth \$372,00 in startup costs which covers the following:

Uses of Funds	Amount
Vehicles (Semi-Tractor + Refrigerated Trailer)	\$340,000.00
Office & Other Equipment	\$8,500.00
Capitalized Start-Up Costs	\$23,500.00
Total Uses of Funds	\$372,000.00

In addition to startup costs, operational support over a 3-year period up to \$450,000 in City funds matched with private funding. A set \$150,000 in year one and up to \$150,000 in each of years two and three depending on the amount of dollars privately raised and overall operational costs. The below shows a lesser amount of City contribution in years two and three based on current goals and pricing.

OPERATING FUNDS

Sources of Funds	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Sponsorships — Public (City of Rockford)	\$150,000.00	\$25,490.00	\$11,454.50
Grants — Foundation	\$48,000.00	\$50,400.00	\$52,920.00
Corporate / Private Donations	\$25,020.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
10% Profit Share — City Center Market*	\$72,000.00	\$165,600.00	\$190,440.00
Total Sources of Funds	\$295,020.00	\$266,490.00	\$279,814.50

*Profit sharing begins in Month 6 (10% of City Center Market monthly food sales = \$12,000/month in Year 1). Grows at 15% annually with food sales.

Uses of Funds	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Operations (wages, utilities, insurance, etc.)	\$153,708.00	\$168,510.00	\$181,834.50
Food Subsidy Program	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
Depreciation	\$67,980.00	\$67,980.00	\$67,980.00
Total Uses of Funds	\$251,688.00	\$266,490.00	\$279,814.50

Staff recommends approval of the proposed funding agreement for a total amount not to exceed \$822,000. The request is consistent with City's Policy on Addressing Food Insecurity. Please let Sarah, Anna or I know should you have any questions.

COMMITTEE REPORT

TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKFORD:

Council Members:

The Committee on Planning and Development, to whom was referred the matter of the approval of the proposed Funding Agreement with Angelic Organics Learning Center Inc., an Illinois not-for-profit corporation d/b/a Farmers Rising in partnership with City Center Market for the establishment of a Mobile Grocery Store in the amount of \$822,000. The funding source is 2025 and 2026 Casino Funds, hereby begs leave to report **recommending approval** of the request as recommended.

Janessa Neal (Chair)

Tim Durkee (Vice Chair)

Karen Hoffman

Dawn Granath

Gina Meeks

Committee Action Taken: June 8, 2026

Neal: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Durkee: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Hoffman: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Granath: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Meeks: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___

FUNDING AGREEMENT

THIS FUNDING AGREEMENT (“AGREEMENT”), entered into this _____ day of _____, 2026, by and between the City of Rockford, an Illinois municipal corporation (“City”), and Angelic Organics Learning Center Inc., an Illinois not-for-profit corporation d/b/a Farmers Rising (“Farmers Rising”) 1936 Rockton Road, Caledonia, IL 61011-9572 (the “Parties”).

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the City has established a citywide framework to reduce food insecurity by improving access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food. The City recognizes that access to food is a basic human need and a fundamental component of public health, economic stability, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the City has determined that addressing food insecurity through coordinated municipal action, cross-sector partnerships, and strategic investment in community-based food systems is necessary, and works with various community partners to eliminate barriers to food access, particularly in neighborhoods identified as food deserts or disproportionately impacted by poverty and systemic inequities; and

WHEREAS, a fully equipped, movable retail unit that travels on a rotating or scheduled basis to underserved communities, food deserts, or target neighborhoods within the municipality to sell a consistent inventory of fresh, nutritious food, and essential household staples at affordable or subsidized prices (a “Mobile Grocery”) has been identified as one potential solution for access;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the City and Farmers Rising mutually agree as follows:

1. **RECITALS.** The above recitals are incorporated by reference and made a part of this Agreement.
2. **TERM.** The term of this Agreement shall be for four (4) year from date of execution of this Agreement.
3. **PAYMENTS.** Subject to the terms of this Agreement, applicable law, and appropriation by the City Council, during the term of this Agreement the City will provide funding to Farmers Rising in a total amount not to exceed Eight Hundred Twenty-Two Thousand Dollars (\$822,000), with \$372,000 directed to initial startup costs, and up to \$450,000 directed to operating costs over a three (3) year period, as more fully estimated in the Project Plan which is attached hereto as Exhibit “A” and incorporated herein by reference, pursuant to the following schedule:
 - (i) Within Sixty (60) days of the execution of this Agreement the City shall provide funds to Farmers Rising in the amount of Three Hundred Seventy-Two Thousand Dollars (\$372,000) for startup cost as identified in Exhibit A.

(ii) Within Sixty (60) days of written notification to the City by Farmers Rising that it has purchased and taken delivery of the “Fixed Assets” identified on Page 12 of Exhibit A, the City shall provide funds to Farmers Rising in the amount of One Hundred Fifty Thousand (\$150,000) for operational cost as identified in Exhibit A.

(iii) On the first anniversary of the start of operations of the Mobile Grocery Store (365 days following the placement into service of the equipment and personnel and the offering of goods for sale to the general public on a continuing and regular basis as contemplated by this Agreement), Farmers Rising will be eligible for up to One Hundred Fifty Thousand (\$150,000) for operational cost as last dollar of funding raised.

(iv) On the second anniversary of the start of operations of the Mobile Grocery Store (730 days following the placement into service of the equipment and personnel and the offering of goods for sale to the general public on a continuing and regular basis as contemplated by this Agreement), Farmers Rising will be eligible for up to One Hundred Fifty Thousand (\$150,000) for operational cost for operational expenses as last dollar of funding raised.

4. **NON-APPROPRIATION.** Funding for this Agreement is subject to the availability of funds and their appropriation by the City Council. If no funds or insufficient funds are appropriated and budgeted in any fiscal period of the City for payments to be made under this Agreement, then the City will notify Farmers Rising in writing of that occurrence, and this Agreement will terminate on the earlier of the last day of the fiscal period for which sufficient appropriation was made or whenever the funds appropriated for payment under this Agreement are exhausted. No payments will be made or be due under this Agreement beyond those amounts appropriated and budgeted by the City to fund payments under this Agreement. The City’s payment obligations under this Agreement shall constitute a current expense payable exclusively from legally available, unencumbered funds appropriated in the then-current fiscal year. Nothing in this Agreement shall constitute a pledge, loan, or extension of the City's faith and credit, general obligation, or taxing authority, nor shall it create any indebtedness, special fund, or multiple-fiscal year financial obligation within the meaning of any constitutional, statutory, or municipal code provision.

5. **USE OF FUNDS.**

5.1 Within Sixty (60) days of the receipt of the Three Hundred Thousand Seventy-Two Dollars (\$372,000) in funds per Section 3(i) Farmers Rising shall establish a Mobile Grocery Store consistent with Exhibit A and this Agreement.

5.2 All funds provided by the City pursuant to this Agreement will be held, managed and expended by Farmers Rising and shall be used solely for operation and capital costs in the operation of Mobile Grocery Store consistent with Exhibit A and this Agreement.

5.3 Upon the natural expiration or earlier termination of this Agreement, Farmers Rising shall immediately cease all further expenditures of City funds. Within thirty (30) calendar days following such expiration or termination, Farmers Rising shall conduct a final financial accounting of the program and return all unutilized or unexpended funds to the City. Any funds expended by

Farmers Rising in violation of this Agreement, or remaining unspent after the designated program period, shall constitute a debt owed to the City and must be repaid in full within the same thirty (30) day period.

5.4 To secure Farmers Rising's obligations under this Agreement, Farmers Rising grants the City a security interest in the tractor, trailer, and equipment purchased with City funds. Farmers Rising authorizes the City to file a UCC financing statement covering that property and to be listed as a secured party/lienholder on the certificate(s) of title for the tractor and trailer, and Farmers Rising shall sign any documents and take any actions the City reasonably requests to do so.

6. **DOCUMENTATION, RECORDS AND AUDIT.**

6.1 During the term of this Agreement and for a period of two (2) years following the final payment of any amount by the City pursuant to this Agreement Farmers Rising shall maintain documentation for all expenditures, including expense reports and evidence of expenditures, sufficient to reflect and verify all costs of whatever nature claimed to have been incurred and anticipated to be incurred for or in connection with the performance of this Agreement. This system of accounting must be in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and practices. During the term of this Agreement Farmers Rising shall provide such documentation to the City on a quarterly basis and additionally within ten (10) business days of any request for such documentation by the City.

6.2 To the extent that Farmers Rising conducts any business operations separate and apart from the activities required under this Agreement using, for example, personnel, equipment, supplies or facilities also used in connection with this Agreement, then Farmers Rising must also maintain and make similarly available to the City detailed records supporting the allocation to this Agreement of the costs and expenses attributable to any such shared usages.

6.3 The City shall have the right to make physical inspections of Farmers Rising's equipment and premises to confirm the information reflected in the documentation provided and Farmers Rising's compliance with the terms of this Agreement. The City will make reasonable efforts, consistent with the City's reason for making such inspection(s), to provide Farmers Rising with advance notice and coordinate the scheduling of any such inspections with Farmers Rising.

6.4 No provision in this Agreement granting the City a right of access to records and documents is intended to impair, limit or affect any right of access to such records and documents which the City, or any other government agency, would have in the absence of such provisions.

7. **PERMITTING AND CODES.** Farmers Rising shall comply with all applicable federal, state, county, municipal or administrative laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, codes and orders relating in any way to the operation of a Mobile Grocery Store.

8. **NO AGENCY, PARTNERSHIP, JOINT VENTURE, OR EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP. NO THIRD-PARTY BENEFICIARY.** Nothing in this Agreement, including the City's funding of the program, review of documentation, right to monitor grant compliance, or approval of payment requests, shall be construed to create an agency, partnership,

joint venture, employment, borrowed-servant, franchise, or other representative relationship between the City and Farmers Rising, or between the City and any of the Farmers Rising's directors, officers, employees, volunteers, contractors, vendors, customers, or agents. Farmers Rising shall not represent that it has authority to bind the City or that the City operates, controls, sponsors, endorses, or manages the mobile grocery store, except to the limited extent expressly stated in this Agreement. Farmers Rising shall perform as an independent contractor with sole control of the manner and means of performing this Agreement. Farmers Rising shall complete this Agreement according to Farmers Rising's own means and methods of work, which shall be in the exclusive charge and control of Farmers Rising and which shall not be subject to control or supervision by the City except as to the result of the work. Farmers Rising is, for all purposes arising out of this Agreement, an independent contractor, and neither Farmers Rising employees nor its affiliates, assigns, agents or subcontractors shall be deemed an employee, agent, partner, or joint-venturer of the City, by reason of this Agreement. Nothing contained in this Agreement or any act of the City or Farmers Rising shall be deemed or construed by any of the Parties hereto, or third persons, to create any relationship of third-party beneficiary.

9. **REQUIRED INSURANCE.**

9.1 During the Term of this Agreement, and for any longer period required by the applicable policy or this Agreement, Farmers Rising shall procure and maintain, at its sole cost and expense, insurance coverage sufficient to cover the risks arising from Farmers Rising's operation of the mobile grocery store and performance of this Agreement. Such insurance shall be issued by insurers authorized to do business in the State of Illinois and reasonably acceptable to the City. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the City's risk manager or authorized representative, Farmers Rising shall maintain at least the following coverage:

(i) Commercial General Liability Insurance, written on an occurrence basis, including coverage for bodily injury, property damage, personal and advertising injury, contractual liability, premises/operations, products and completed operations, and liability arising from the handling, storage, distribution, or sale of food and grocery products, with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 general aggregate.

(ii) Business Automobile Liability Insurance, covering all owned, leased, hired, borrowed, and non-owned vehicles used in connection with the mobile grocery store or this Agreement, including the mobile grocery vehicle and loading/unloading activities, with a combined single limit of not less than \$1,000,000 per accident.

(iii) Workers' Compensation Insurance Statutory benefits in full compliance with the Illinois Workers' Compensation Act (820 ILCS 305/1 et seq.), as amended, and Employer's Liability Insurance with limits of liability of not less than \$500,000 per accident for bodily injury by accident, \$500,000 per employee for bodily injury by disease, and \$500,000 policy limit for bodily injury by disease, unless Farmers Rising has no employees and is exempt under applicable law.

(iv) Property, Equipment, Cargo, Spoilage, or Similar First-Party Coverage, as appropriate, covering vehicles, equipment, fixtures, refrigeration units, inventory, supplies, and other

property used in the mobile grocery store operation, including loss or damage from theft, fire, refrigeration failure, spoilage, transit, or other risks reasonably associated with the funded program.

(v) Farmers Rising shall require any subcontractor, vendor, vehicle operator, food supplier, or other third party materially involved in the operation of the mobile grocery store to maintain insurance appropriate to that party's role and the risks of its activities.

9.2 *Evidence of Insurance.* Before receiving funds or commencing funded activities, and upon each renewal thereafter, Farmers Rising shall provide the City with certificates of insurance evidencing the required coverage. Upon request, Farmers Rising shall also provide copies of applicable additional-insured endorsements or blanket additional-insured policy provisions. A certificate of insurance, by itself, shall not be deemed to amend, extend, or create coverage not otherwise provided by the applicable policy or endorsement.

9.3 *Notice of Cancellation or Material Change.* All insurance policies shall provide that they may not be cancelled or modified, except for increase in coverage, without thirty (30) days prior-written notice to the City. Farmers Rising shall provide written notice to the City within five (5) business days after Farmers Rising receives notice of any cancellation, non-renewal, lapse, or material reduction of any insurance required under this Agreement. Farmers Rising shall not allow any required insurance to lapse and shall promptly replace any cancelled, non-renewed, or materially reduced coverage.

10. **INDEMNIFICATION.** Farmers Rising agrees to release, defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City of Rockford, its representatives, officers, agents and employees from any and all claims, causes of action, demands for damages, suits, either in law or in equity, or expenses or liabilities of any kind, arising out of or by virtue of the execution and performance of this Agreement or any other agreement entered into pursuant to this Agreement. Farmers Rising shall ensure that all subcontracts executed in connection with this Agreement contain a provision requiring the subcontractor to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City to the same extent required of Farmers Rising herein. In the event that any action or proceeding is brought against the City, or its representatives, officers, agents and/or its employees, by reason of any such claim or demand, Farmers Rising will at its sole cost and expense, resist or defend such action or proceeding.

11. **NON-ASSIGNABILITY.** Farmers Rising shall not assign, transfer, convey, pledge, delegate, subcontract, or otherwise dispose of this Agreement, any interest in this Agreement, any right to receive funds under this Agreement, or any duty or obligation under this Agreement, in whole or in part, without the prior express written consent of the City. Any attempted assignment, transfer, delegation, or subcontracting without such prior written consent shall be void and shall constitute a material breach of this Agreement. For purposes of this section, an assignment includes, without limitation, any transfer of this Agreement or program responsibilities to another entity, any transfer of the right to receive payment, and any merger, consolidation, dissolution, reorganization, change in control, or other transaction that results in a material change in the entity responsible for performance under this Agreement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Farmers Rising may use ordinary-course vendors, suppliers, employees, volunteers, or contractors in connection

with the mobile grocery program, provided that Farmers Rising remains solely responsible for performance of this Agreement and for the acts and omissions of such persons or entities.

12. **LEGAL COMPLIANCE.** Farmers Rising shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, codes, rules and regulations in performing its duties, responsibilities and obligations pursuant to this Agreement.

13. **NON-DISCRIMINATION.** Farmers Rising shall comply, and shall cause its officers, directors, employees, agents, volunteers, contractors, subcontractors, vendors, and any other persons or entities acting on its behalf to comply, with all applicable federal, state, and local non-discrimination, equal opportunity, civil rights, fair employment, public accommodation, accessibility, language-access, and anti-retaliation laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, executive orders, grant conditions, and funding-source requirements, including, without limitation, the Illinois Human Rights Act, 775 ILCS 5/1-101 et seq.; applicable rules and regulations of the Illinois Department of Human Rights; applicable federal civil rights laws and regulations; and, to the extent applicable, the City of Rockford Code of Ordinances, including the City's Equal Opportunity Employment requirements, in its operation and provision of services contemplated by this Agreement.

14. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST.** No member of the Rockford City Council, nor any other public official or employee who exercises any functions or responsibilities with respect to this program during their tenure or for one year thereafter, shall have any personal or financial interest, direct or indirect (other than employee salary), in this Agreement or its proceeds. Farmers Rising, including its employees, successors, and assigns, shall strictly comply with all applicable conflict of interest laws, including the Illinois Public Officer Prohibited Activities Act (50 ILCS 105/0.01, et seq.), the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/1-1-1, et seq.), and the City of Rockford Code of Ordinances. The obligations and restrictions of this Section shall survive the expiration or earlier termination of this Agreement.

15. **TERMINATION.**

15.1 *Events of Termination.* The City may terminate this Agreement immediately upon written notice if Farmers Rising: (i) undergoes voluntary or involuntary dissolution; (ii) requests termination in writing, subject to the City's sole approval; or (iii) fails to cure a default under Section 15.2.

15.2 *Termination for Cause.* If Farmers Rising breaches any obligation or covenant, the City shall issue a written notice of default. If Farmers Rising fails to cure the default to the City's sole satisfaction within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving notice, the City may terminate this Agreement immediately.

15.3 *Liabilities upon Termination.* Upon termination, Farmers Rising is entitled only to reimbursement for eligible, non-refundable expenses properly incurred before receiving the termination notice. The City may permanently withhold or set off any remaining grant funds to cover damages caused by the breach, and Farmers Rising remains fully liable for all resulting damages.

15.4 *Collateral*. In addition to its other remedies, the City may proceed against the collateral as a secured party and lienholder under Section 5.4 and applicable law, including repossessing and disposing of it.

15.5 *Alternative Remedies*. Instead of or prior to termination, the City may temporarily withhold, reduce, or suspend funding for any nonconformance. Exercising an alternative remedy does not waive the City's right to subsequently terminate this Agreement.

16. **WAIVER**. Either party to this Agreement may elect to waive any remedy hereunder, provided that such waiver shall be in writing. No such waiver shall operate or be construed as a waiver of any other right or remedy, nor shall it constitute a continuing waiver of any subsequent, separate, or ongoing breach.

17. **ADMINISTRATION**. The terms and provision of this Agreement shall be administered on behalf of the City by its Director of Community Development. Unless law otherwise requires, all necessary notices, submissions, and approvals shall be given to or by the Director.

18. **NOTICES**. All notices, approvals, demands, requests, or other documents required or permitted under this Agreement, other than routine communications necessary for the day-to-day operation of this program, shall be deemed properly given if hand delivered or sent by United States registered mail, postage prepaid, at the following addresses:

AS TO THE CITY:

Director,
Community & Economic Development Department
City of Rockford
425 E. State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61104

With copies to:
Legal Director
City of Rockford
425 E State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61104

AS TO ANGELIC ORGANICS LEARNING CENTER INC., AN ILLINOIS NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION D/B/A FARMERS RISING:

Angelic Organics Learning Center, Inc.
1545 Rockton Road
Caledonia, IL 61011-9572

19. **AMENDMENTS**. This Agreement may be amended by written instrument executed by the Parties hereto, acting therein by their duly authorized representatives. Any amendment(s)

hereto must be approved by the City Council of the City of Rockford by resolution.

20. **SEVERABILITY.** If any term or provision of this Agreement or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, shall to any extent, be held invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of this Agreement, or the application of such term or provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is held invalid or unenforceable, shall not be effected thereby, and each remaining term and provision hereof shall be deemed valid and be enforced to the fullest extent permitted by law.

21. **GOVERNING LAW.** This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Illinois and the Ordinances of the City of Rockford.

22. **COUNTERPARTS.** This Agreement may be signed in any number of counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

23. **ENTIRE AGREEMENT.** This Agreement, including any exhibits or attachments hereto, constitutes the entire agreement between the Parties regarding its subject matter and supersedes all prior or contemporaneous oral or written agreements, understandings, representations, or negotiations.

24. **FORCE MAJEURE.** Neither party shall be liable or responsible to the other party, or be deemed to have defaulted under or breached this agreement, for any failure or delay to fulfill its obligations under this Agreement when and to the extent such failure or delay is caused by or results from acts beyond the impacted party's reasonable control, including, but not limited to, the following force majeure events: acts of God, acts of the public enemy, wars, invasions, hostilities, state or federal governmental action, laws, orders, or rules, acts of terrorism, fires, floods, earthquakes, epidemics, pandemics, quarantine restrictions, national or regional emergencies, labor difficulties, freight embargoes, and transportation shortages. The party claiming excuse from performance ("Claiming Party") must take reasonable efforts to remove the cause of its inability to perform or its delay in performance. The Claiming Party must give prompt written notice to the other party of the Force Majeure Event, specifying its nature and anticipated duration, and provide an estimate of when performance may continue.

25. **AUTHORITY.**

25.1 *Actions.* The City covenants to Farmers Rising and agrees that the City will take such actions as may be required and necessary to enable the City to execute this Agreement and to carry out fully and perform the terms, covenants, agreements, duties, and obligations on its part to be kept and performed as provided by the terms and provisions hereof.

25.2 *Powers.* The City hereby represents and warrants to Farmers Rising that the City has full constitutional and lawful right, power, and authority under currently applicable law to execute, deliver, and perform the terms and obligations of this Agreement, and all of the foregoing have been or will be duly and validly authorized and approved by any necessary City proceedings, findings, and actions. Accordingly, this Agreement constitutes the legal, valid and binding

obligation of the City, is enforceable in accordance with its terms and provisions, and does not require the consent of any other governmental authority. Angelic Organics Learning Center Inc., an Illinois not-for-profit corporation d/b/a Farmers Rising hereby represents and warrants that it is a duly organized, validly existing Illinois corporation and that it has the right, power, and authority to execute, deliver, and perform the terms and obligations of this Agreement, and that this Agreement constitutes the legal, valid, and binding obligation of Angelic Organics Learning Center Inc., an Illinois not-for-profit corporation d/b/a Farmers Rising, enforceable in accordance with its terms and provisions.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the City and Farmers Rising have executed this Agreement on the date above first written.

CITY OF ROCKFORD
A Municipal Corporation

BY: _____
Thomas P. McNamara, Mayor Date _____

ATTEST: _____
Angela L. Hammer, Legal Director Date _____

Angelic Organics Learning Center Inc.,
an Illinois not-for-profit corporation d/b/a Farmers Rising

BY: _____
Date _____

Rockford

MOBILE

GROCERY STORE

 CITY CENTER MARKET

FARMERS
RISING
LEARN · GROW · CONNECT



MOBILE GROCERY STORE MISSION

The Rockford Mobile Grocery Store will provide fresh, affordable groceries to underserved neighborhoods in Rockford, IL. This project will reduce food insecurity, improve access to fresh and local food, and improve the long-term physical health of residents. Beyond immediate food access, this initiative is designed as a proof of concept toward establishing a permanent brick-and-mortar grocery presence in Rockford's most underserved communities.

NEED STATEMENT

The majority of Rockford's metropolitan area contains food access tracts where low-income residents face both distance and transportation barriers to supermarkets (USDA Food Access Research Atlas). More concerning, Winnebago County ranks in the bottom 11th percentile for food security among Illinois's 102 counties, with 41,200 food-insecure residents, equaling 15% of the population (County Health Rankings, 2025). High inflation has worsened this crisis, as food costs have increased more than 11% since 2022, disproportionately impacting communities already struggling with access (Adjemian, Michael K, et al, 2023).

Fresh produce is essential for community health because it directly supports disease prevention, mental well-being, child development, and long-term quality of life. Diets rich in fruits and vegetables help reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic conditions, while also supporting healthy growth in children and improving overall physical and emotional wellness. Ensuring access to fresh, nutritious produce strengthens families today and contributes to healthier communities for generations to come.

PROJECT HISTORY

The Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence (NICNE) organized a Food Insecurity Summit in 2024, bringing together agencies and individuals in search of solutions-focused strategies to build an equitable food system. Afterwards, more than 75 individuals formed a Food Insecurity Taskforce who met monthly and drew inspiration from the Hunger Task Force Mobile Market in Milwaukee, WI as a practical way to ensure all members of our community have access to high-quality, affordable food.

In 2025, a nonprofit lead organization and grocery store partner were recruited to the project. This initiative is now being implemented as a collaboration between Farmers Rising, City Center Market, and an Working Group made up of core members of the Food Insecurity Taskforce. Together, we aspire to increase access to nutritious food while promoting sustainability and convenience to residents in low-access neighborhoods.

ABOUT FARMERS RISING

Farmers Rising primarily serves the geographic region of southern Wisconsin and Northern Illinois. Our programs directly serve more than 1,500 individuals each year from various backgrounds who come from urban and rural areas, and are designed for individuals who contribute to building a strong regional food system that serves all communities.

In Rockford, Farmers Rising has consistently provided organically-grown fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as vital educational and employment opportunities, to public housing residents and other low-income groups via our Urban Farm Initiative. We operate a 20-member Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program on a ½ acre organic farm in Blackhawk Courts RHA community, and provide free vegetables to Blackhawk Courts residents via weekly CSA boxes and dedicated community garden beds. Farmers Rising Rockford staff also collaborate closely with Zion Outreach and Patriots Gateway Community Center on their youth and community garden programs, food preservation programs, and at Ruthie's Kitchen.

ABOUT CITY CENTER MARKET

City Center Market is the for-profit partner to this project. Owner Raj Patel is dedicated to bringing fresh food to Rockford residents living in low-access neighborhoods, and has committed to providing 1.5 FTE employees to load and staff the mobile trailer, to purchasing, handling, and safely storing the food, and to providing the Point of Sale system. City Center Market is able to accept EBT/Link and WIC vouchers, ensuring the store is accessible to all residents regardless of income.

PROJECT OUTCOMES & MEASURES OF SUCCESS

The Rockford Mobile Grocery Store is structured around four core outcomes, each with defined short-term and medium-term measures of success to ensure accountability and track community impact.

Outcome 1: Make Fresh Food Readily Accessible in Low Income/Low Access Neighborhoods

Increase availability of high-quality, fresh, and affordable food in neighborhoods with limited supermarket access, utilizing SNAP/EBT and local funding to subsidize food prices. Reduce transportation barriers which lead to consumption of highly processed food.

Measures of Success:

Short-term: 250 families/week purchase fresh food from the Mobile Grocery within 1 year of project implementation.

Medium-term: 1,000 families/week purchase fresh food from the Mobile Grocery within 3 years of project implementation.

Medium-term: Expand sales to additional low income/low access areas outside the City limits within 3 years of project implementation.

Outcome 2: Improve Overall Health of Rockford Residents

Increase the dietary diversity of low-income residents via exposure to a wider variety of fresh fruits and vegetables not available in neighborhood retail outlets. Improve diet quality for better management of chronic diseases.

Measures of Success:

Short-term: Residents report regular access to a reliable source of affordable, nutritious food.

Medium-term: Grocery store patrons report perceptions of changes or improvements in their health outcomes via informal, qualitative surveys.

Outcome 3: Increase Economic Opportunities for Local Farmers

Provide a new wholesale opportunity within the Rockford region. Enhance relationships and ties between farmers and the communities they serve.

Measures of Success:

Short-term: Identify key strategies which will enable local farmers to sell their products to the Mobile Grocery Store.

Medium-term: 15–20% of the fresh food sold by the Mobile Grocery Store will be grown by local farmers within 3 years.

Outcome 4: Demonstrate that a Brick and Mortar, Community-Centered Grocery Store is Financially Sustainable in Rockford's Food-Insecure Neighborhoods

Use data and community feedback gathered through the Mobile Grocery Store to inform the development of a permanent Brick and Mortar grocery in an underserved ward.

Measures of Success:

Medium-term: Data collected is requested and utilized by the City of Rockford, other governing bodies, and/or private corporations interested in operating a grocery store in an underserved ward.

TARGET SERVICE AREAS & PILOT ROUTE PLAN

The Mobile Grocery Store route has been developed in partnership with Champions Benchmark, the NAACP, and the Food Insecurity Taskforce. The Phase One pilot focuses on the West Side corridor, prioritizing communities with the highest concentration of SNAP households, transportation barriers, and limited proximity to full grocery retail.

Residents at select stops — particularly Rockford Housing Authority properties — will have the option to pre-order groceries, ensuring those with mobility or scheduling barriers can fully utilize the Mobile Grocery Store. Pre-ordering is expected to be especially important for North Main Manor and other RHA residents, based on feedback from Laura Snyder at RHA.

Stop #	Location / Anchor Site	Zip	Key Population Served
1	West State & Kilburn Fairgrounds / Boys & Girls Club	61102	Youth, families, SNAP households
2	South Main & Morgan Booker T. Washington / CCS	61102	Low-income families, seniors
3	Charles Street Corridor Patriots Gateway CC	61108	Reentry population, low-income
4	Broadway & 15th Blackhawk Courts (RHA)	61104	Public housing residents
5	N Rockton Ave Corridor Good Shepherd YMCA	61103	Youth, families, SNAP households
6	Sandy Hollow & 11th St Area Orton Keys / Kishwaukee-Harrison	61104	SNAP-unstable households
7	West State & Springfield Champions Park / Washington Park	61102	High-density residential, youth
8	Jackson Charter School 315 Summit St	61107	Youth, families, SNAP households
9	Auburn Street Retail Corridor Shared Retail Lot, Auburn & N Central	61102	High residential density, limited retail access
10	W Riverside Blvd Corridor Cliffbreakers Area Shared Lot	61103	Working families, seniors

PHASE ONE PILOT — WEST SIDE CORRIDOR

Area	Description
Champions Park Area	Concord Commons / Washington Park residential cluster
Auburn Corridor	High residential density with limited retail access
Haskell Avenue	Identified SNAP and transportation barrier zone
School Street	Surrounding residential clusters
RHA Properties	Blackhawk Courts, Olesen Plaza, North Main Manor, Park Terrace

The West Side pilot allows for measurable evaluation before city-wide scaling. This corridor presents the highest residential density, concentrated SNAP households, and strong existing engagement pathways through Farmers Rising's established presence in the community.

EVENT-SPECIFIC COLLABORATIONS & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The Rockford Mobile Grocery Store is designed not just as a retail operation, but as a community presence – one that can align with existing programs, institutions, and nonprofits to maximize impact at every stop. The following partnerships and collaboration opportunities have been identified through ongoing dialogue with the City of Rockford and community stakeholders.

Partner / Program	Type of Collaboration	Details
LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program)	Co-Tabling at Mobile Grocery Stops	LIHEAP outreach staff will table alongside the Mobile Grocery Store at designated stops, connecting residents with utility assistance and energy bill relief at the same visit. Farmers Rising is open to expanding this into additional service coordination as the partnership develops.
Rockford Public Schools (RPS)	Event-Based Stops	The Mobile Grocery Store will make scheduled stops during RPS Parent-Teacher Conference nights, as well as at the beginning and end of the school year for family-focused events. These stops place fresh, affordable groceries directly where families are already engaged – reducing barriers and reaching households with children at a critical moment.
Northern Illinois Food Bank (NIFB)	Co-Location Events	Farmers Rising will coordinate with NIFB to park the Mobile Grocery Store near NIFB distribution sites and events, allowing community members to access emergency food resources and fresh retail groceries in a single trip. This model reinforces both organizations’ missions while reducing the burden on residents to make multiple stops.
Local Nonprofits & Community Organizations	Anchor Site Partnerships	Farmers Rising will actively seek partnerships with nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and community centers across the West Side to host Mobile Grocery Store stops. These organizations serve as trusted anchors in the community – their endorsement and co-presence strengthens participation and ensures stops are well-attended and well-resourced.
Rockford Housing Authority (RHA)	Resident Outreach & Pre-Ordering	Building on Farmers Rising’s existing presence at Blackhawk Courts, the Mobile Grocery Store will integrate with RHA’s resident communication systems to promote stops, enable pre-ordering for residents with mobility limitations, and coordinate scheduling with RHA property managers.

This list reflects current opportunities under discussion. Additional collaborations will be identified and formalized as the pilot progresses.

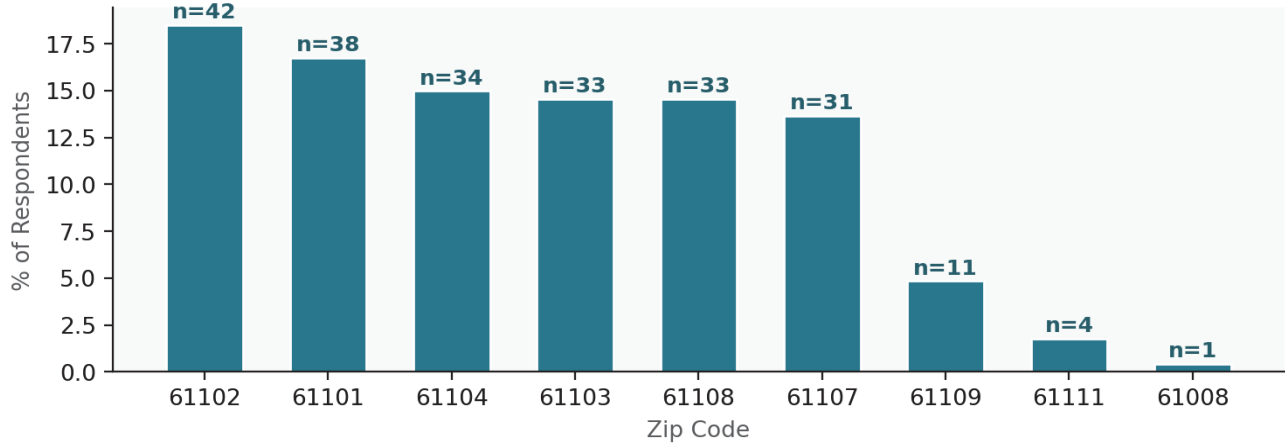
COMMUNITY INTEREST SURVEY RESULTS

Farmers Rising conducted a community interest survey to validate demand, understand shopping behaviors, and shape the operations of the Mobile Grocery Store. The survey was distributed at Rockford Housing Authority properties, community events, and through direct West Side outreach. **227 residents responded**, representing zip codes 61101 through 61111 – the core West Side corridor served by the Mobile Grocery Store's pilot route.

98%	84%	83%	91%
<i>would shop at the Mobile Grocery Store</i>	<i>report 'somewhat difficult' or worse access to groceries</i>	<i>struggle to access affordable fresh food</i>	<i>available weekday afternoons for stops</i>

Q1 – Zip Code Distribution

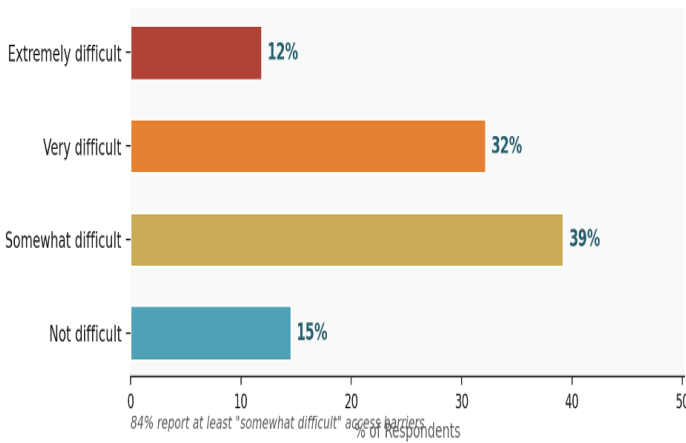
Q1 – Zip Code of Respondents (n=227)



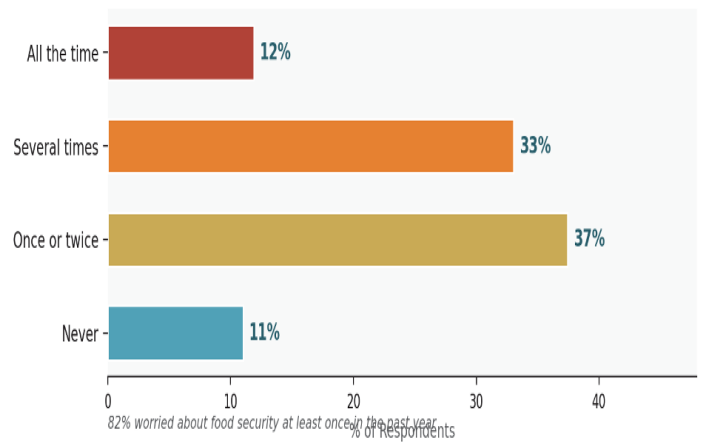
The survey reached residents across all eight West Side zip codes targeted by the pilot route, with the strongest response from 61102, 61101, 61104, 61103, and 61108 – the five zip codes that together account for 79% of respondents.

Q2 – Grocery Access Difficulty | Q3 – Food Insecurity

Q2 – Difficulty Accessing a Grocery Store (n=222)



Q3 – Worried About Running Out of Food? (n=222)

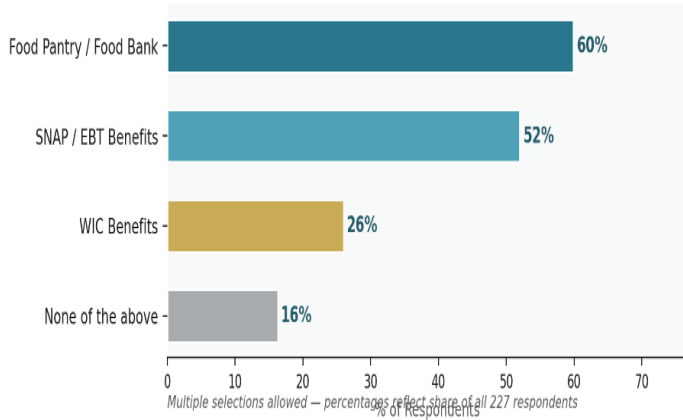


Key finding: 84% of respondents face at least "somewhat difficult" access to fresh groceries. 82% worried about running out of food at least once in the past year – with 45% reporting this happened "several times" or "all the time."

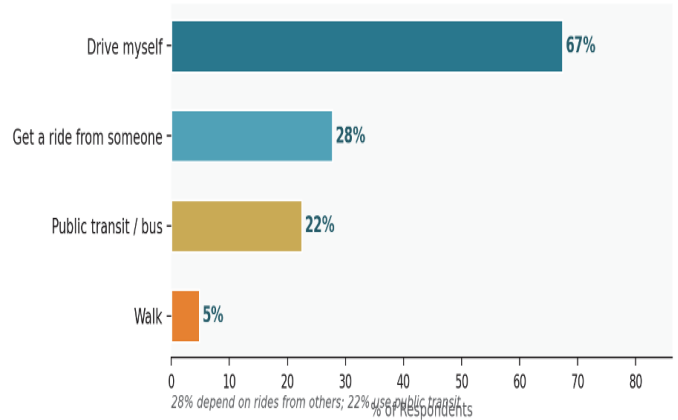
COMMUNITY INTEREST SURVEY RESULTS (CONTINUED)

Q4 – Current Food Assistance Programs | Q5 – Transportation to Grocery Stores

Q4 – Food Assistance Programs Used (n=227, multiple selections)



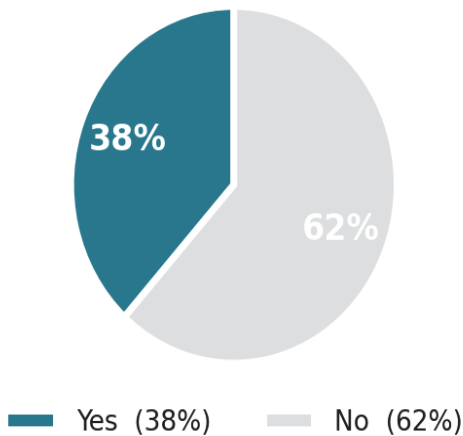
Q5 – How Do You Get to a Grocery Store? (n=227, multiple selections)



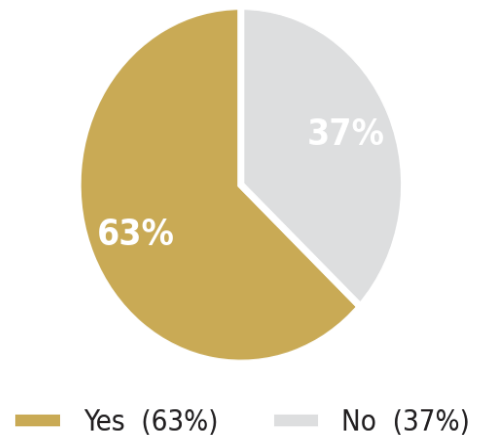
Key finding: 60% use food pantries and 52% use SNAP/EBT – the Mobile Grocery Store’s ability to accept EBT/Link is critical. 28% of respondents rely on rides from others and 22% use public transit, confirming that neighborhood-level access is not a convenience – it’s a necessity.

Q6 – Disability / Mobility Limitation | Q7 – Children Under 18 in Household

Q6 – Disability/Mobility Limitation in Household? (n=222)



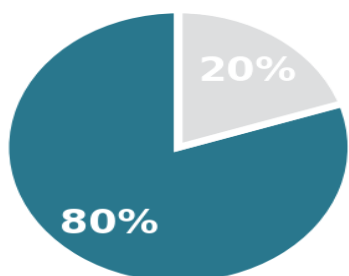
Q7 – Children Under 18 in Household? (n=222)



Key finding: 37% of households include a member with a disability or mobility limitation – reinforcing the importance of neighborhood stops and the pre-order system. 62% of households include children under 18, making fresh food access a child nutrition priority.

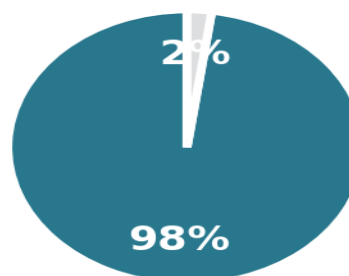
Q8 – Community Recommendation Effect | Q9 – Willingness to Shop at Mobile Grocery Store

Q8 — More Likely if Trusted Neighbor Recommended?
(n=222)



Yes (80%) No (20%)

Q9 — Would You Shop at the Mobile Grocery Store?
(n=226)



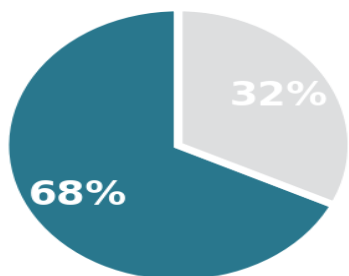
Yes (98%) No (2%)

Key finding: 98% of respondents would shop at the Mobile Grocery Store – an extraordinarily strong signal of community demand. 80% said they would be more likely to use it based on a trusted neighbor or community organization's recommendation, highlighting the value of Farmers Rising's existing community relationships.

COMMUNITY INTEREST SURVEY RESULTS (CONTINUED)

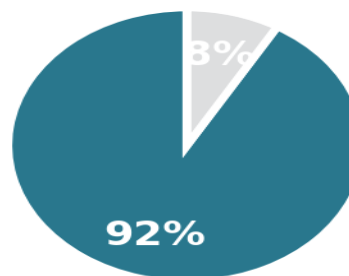
Q10 – Morning Availability | Q11 – Afternoon Availability

Q10 — Available Weekday Mornings (9:30-11:30 AM)?
(n=227)



Yes (68%) No (32%)

Q11 — Available Weekday Afternoons (2:00-4:00 PM)?
(n=226)

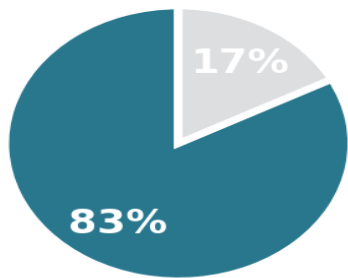


Yes (92%) No (8%)

Key finding: 92% are available for weekday afternoon stops (Mon–Fri, 2:00–4:00 PM) versus 68% for morning stops. The route schedule should prioritize afternoon hours, particularly at RHA properties and high-density residential stops.

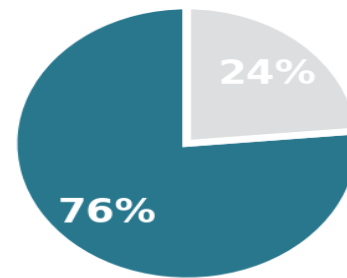
Q12 – Food Access Struggle | Q13 – Beginning-of-Month SNAP Shopping

Q12 — Struggle to Access Affordable Fresh Food?
(n=226)



■ Yes (83%) ■ No (17%)

Q13 — Shop at Beginning of Month (SNAP Replenished)?
(n=221)

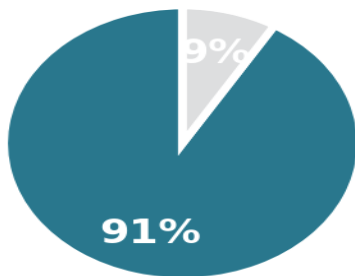


■ Yes (76%) ■ No (24%)

Key finding: 83% regularly struggle to access affordable fresh food – this is the core need the Mobile Grocery Store addresses. 76% said they'd be more likely to shop at the beginning of the month when SNAP benefits are first loaded, suggesting higher-traffic stops should be scheduled early in each month.

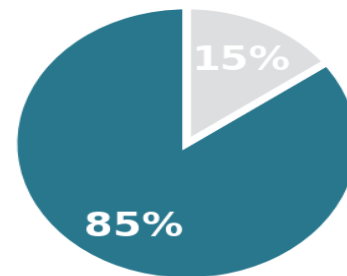
Q14 — End-of-Month SNAP Shopping | Q15 — Pre-Order App Interest

Q14 — Shop at End of Month When SNAP Runs Low?
(n=221)



■ Yes (91%) ■ No (9%)

Q15 — Would Use App/Online Pre-Order System?
(n=221)



■ Yes (85%) ■ No (15%)

Key finding: 91% would shop at end of month when SNAP benefits run low – the strongest signal of any operational planning question. 85% would use an app-based pre-order system, supporting investment in a pre-order platform, particularly for residents with mobility limitations.

SNAP IMPACT ANALYSIS – NORTHERN ILLINOIS FOOD BANK

Data from the Northern Illinois Food Bank (NIFB) further validates the urgency of this initiative. Federal policy changes currently under consideration threaten to significantly reduce SNAP benefit availability across Winnebago County. The maps below, provided by NIFB, show that the highest-impact areas – concentrated SNAP loss in the 80–100% forecast range – are precisely the West Side zip codes the Mobile Grocery Store will serve.

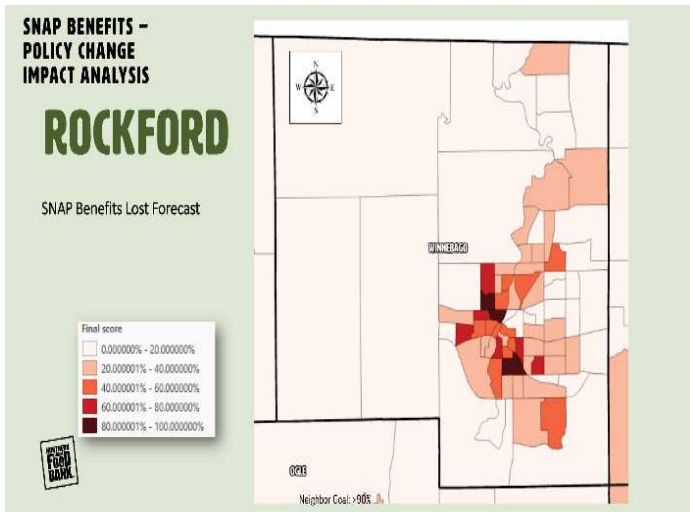


Figure 1: SNAP Benefits Lost Forecast – Rockford. Dark areas represent 80–100% projected SNAP loss – concentrated in West Side zip codes 61101–61108.

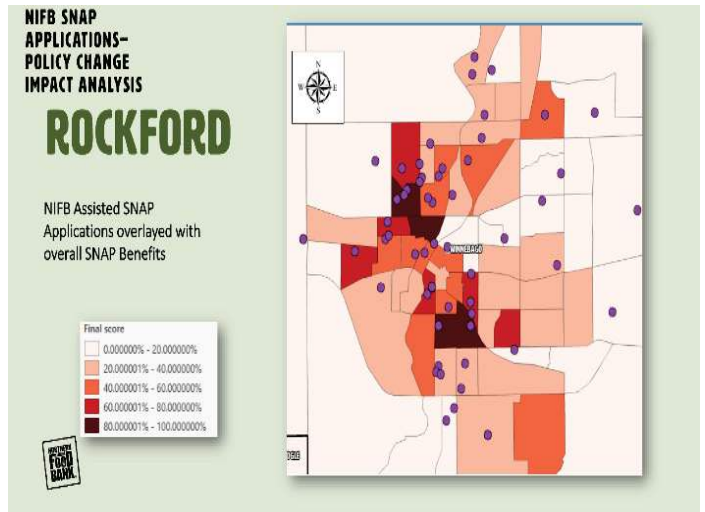


Figure 2: NIFB-Assisted SNAP Applications overlaid with SNAP benefit data. Purple dots represent NIFB service locations; density aligns with the proposed Mobile Grocery Store route.

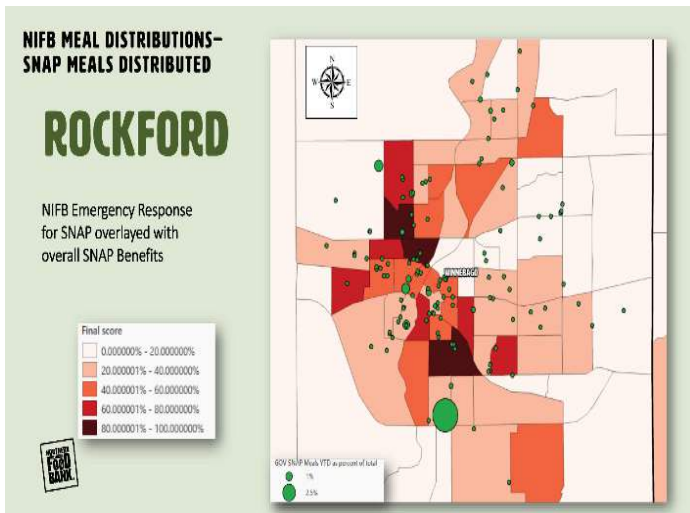


Figure 3: NIFB Meal Distributions – SNAP Meals distributed. Largest distribution sites align directly with the high-need West Side corridors targeted by the pilot route.

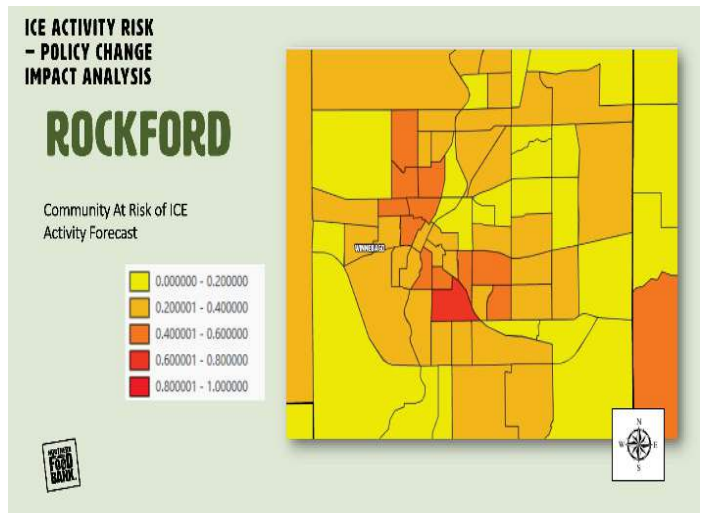


Figure 4: ICE Activity Risk Forecast. West Side communities face compounding vulnerabilities – food insecurity, SNAP exposure, and community disruption – making consistent mobile food access critical.

PILOT ROUTE MAP – WEST SIDE ROCKFORD

The map below plots all eight Mobile Grocery Store pilot stops across the West Side corridor. Stop locations were selected based on population density, SNAP household concentration, proximity to Rockford Housing Authority properties, and route efficiency.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The following financial statements represent the updated 3-Year Pro Forma for the Rockford Mobile Grocery Store. The pro forma is structured across two partner entities: **Farmers Rising** (nonprofit operations, grants, and subsidized food programming) and **City Center Market** (food retail sales, inventory, and point-of-sale operations). Startup capital requirements are presented separately from ongoing operating funds. Food sales projections reflect a **15% annual growth rate**, approved by project leadership. A **10% Profit Sharing** arrangement between City Center Market and Farmers Rising begins in Month 6 of operations.

Fixed Assets

All assets are classified as 5-year property and depreciated using the straight-line method.

Category	Description	Amount
Office & Equipment	Food Display Items	\$1,500.00
Office & Equipment	Retail Signage (price tags, etc.)	\$1,000.00
Office & Equipment	Truck Safety Items (blocks, cones, vests)	\$1,000.00
Office & Equipment	Tech (radios, computer/iPad, etc.)	\$5,000.00
	Subtotal – Equipment	\$8,500.00
Vehicles	Semi-Tractor	\$90,000.00
Vehicles	Custom Refrigerated Trailer	\$250,000.00
	Subtotal – Vehicles	\$340,000.00
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS		\$348,500.00

Capitalized Start-Up Costs

Category	Item	Amount
Advertising & Promotional	Advertising Campaign (6 months)	\$5,000.00
Advertising & Promotional	Signage – Mobile Trailer Wrap	\$4,800.00
Advertising & Promotional	Flyers, Print Needs, etc.	\$2,000.00
Admin Expenses	Legal and Accounting Fees (estimate)	\$1,000.00
Admin Expenses	Prepaid Insurance	\$4,600.00
Admin Expenses	Pre-Opening Salary – FR Admin Assistant	\$4,800.00
Admin Expenses	Health Department / Licensing Costs	\$1,000.00
Admin Expenses	DOT Certification	\$300.00
TOTAL CAPITALIZED START-UP COSTS		\$23,500.00

SOURCES & USES OF FUNDS

The project requires two distinct funding pools: Start-Up Funds to cover capital equipment and launch costs, and Operating Funds to sustain year-one program delivery. The 10% Profit Sharing structure between City Center Market and Farmers Rising ensures that as food sales grow, Farmers Rising's operating income grows with it – progressively reducing dependence on public and philanthropic funding.

START-UP FUNDS

Sources of Funds	Amount
Sponsorships – Public (City of Rockford)	\$372,000.00
Total Sources of Funds	\$372,000.00

Uses of Funds	Amount
Vehicles (Semi-Tractor + Refrigerated Trailer)	\$340,000.00
Office & Other Equipment	\$8,500.00
Capitalized Start-Up Costs	\$23,500.00
Total Uses of Funds	\$372,000.00

OPERATING FUNDS

Sources of Funds	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Sponsorships – Public (City of Rockford)	\$150,000.00	\$25,490.00	\$11,454.50
Grants – Foundation	\$48,000.00	\$50,400.00	\$52,920.00
Corporate / Private Donations	\$25,020.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
10% Profit Share – City Center Market*	\$72,000.00	\$165,600.00	\$190,440.00
Total Sources of Funds	\$295,020.00	\$266,490.00	\$279,814.50

*Profit sharing begins in Month 6 (10% of City Center Market monthly food sales = \$12,000/month in Year 1). Grows at 15% annually with food sales.

Uses of Funds	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Operations (wages, utilities, insurance, etc.)	\$153,708.00	\$168,510.00	\$181,834.50
Food Subsidy Program	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
Depreciation	\$67,980.00	\$67,980.00	\$67,980.00
Total Uses of Funds	\$251,688.00	\$266,490.00	\$279,814.50

Note: The City of Rockford contribution decreases in Years 2–3 as 10% Profit Sharing scales up, demonstrating a clear path to financial self-sufficiency. By Year 3, profit sharing covers 68% of Farmers Rising's total operating budget.

PRO FORMA INCOME STATEMENT – CONSOLIDATED

The consolidated income statement reflects revenue and expenses across both Farmers Rising (nonprofit operations) and City Center Market (food retail). Food sales projections reflect a 15% annual growth rate. A 10% Profit Sharing arrangement from City Center Market to Farmers Rising begins in Month 6 of operations. All Farmers Rising operating costs reflect a 5% annual increase.

Revenue – Farmers Rising (Operations)

Line Item	Mo. 1–6	Mo. 7–12	Year 1 Total	Year 2	Year 3
Grant Funding	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$48,000.00	\$50,400.00	\$52,920.00
Public/Private Support	\$17,120.00	\$12,050.00	\$175,020.00	\$50,490.00	\$36,454.50
CCM Profit Share @ 10%	\$0.00	\$12,000.00	\$72,000.00	\$165,600.00	\$190,440.00
Gross Revenue – FR	\$21,120.00	\$28,050.00	\$295,020.00	\$266,490.00	\$279,814.50

Profit sharing begins Month 7 (10% × \$120,000 monthly food sales = \$12,000/mo). Grows 15% annually with food sales.

Revenue – City Center Market (Food Sales) – 15% Annual Growth

Line Item	Mo. 1–6	Mo. 7–12	Year 1 Total	Year 2	Year 3
Food Sales	\$120,000.00	\$120,000.00	\$1,440,000.00	\$1,656,000.00	\$1,904,400.00
Less: 10% Profit Share to FR	\$0.00	(\$12,000.00)	(\$72,000.00)	(\$165,600.00)	(\$190,440.00)
Net Revenue – CCM	\$120,000.00	\$108,000.00	\$1,368,000.00	\$1,490,400.00	\$1,713,960.00

*10% Profit Share begins Month 7. Paid monthly to Farmers Rising from food sales revenue. Grows at 15% annually in line with food sales growth.

GROSS COMBINED REVENUE **\$1,735,020.00** **\$1,922,490.00** **\$2,184,214.50**

Expenses – Farmers Rising

Expense Item	Monthly	Year 1 Total	Year 2	Year 3
Employee Wages	\$6,587.00	\$79,044.00	\$82,996.20	\$87,146.01
Employee Payroll Taxes	\$593.00	\$7,116.00	\$7,471.80	\$7,845.39
Employee Benefits	\$988.00	\$11,856.00	\$12,448.80	\$13,071.24
Workers Comp	\$66.00	\$792.00	\$831.60	\$873.18
Advertising	\$200.00	\$2,400.00	\$2,520.00	\$2,646.00
Bank Fees	\$25.00	\$300.00	\$315.00	\$330.75
Insurance	\$450.00	\$5,400.00	\$5,670.00	\$5,953.50
Legal, Auditing, Accounting	\$200.00	\$2,400.00	\$2,520.00	\$2,646.00
Maintenance & Repairs	\$250.00	\$3,000.00	\$3,150.00	\$3,307.50
Miscellaneous Costs	\$100.00	\$1,200.00	\$1,260.00	\$1,323.00
Supplies & Postage	\$50.00	\$600.00	\$630.00	\$661.50
Utilities & Fuel	\$2,800.00	\$33,600.00	\$35,280.00	\$37,044.00
Working Group Stipends	\$500.00	\$6,000.00	\$6,300.00	\$6,615.00
Subsidized Food Expense	\$2,500.00	\$30,000.00	\$31,500.00	\$33,075.00
Depreciation	\$5,808.00	\$69,696.00	\$67,980.00	\$67,980.00
Gross Expenses – FR	\$21,117.00	\$253,404.00	\$266,074.20	\$279,377.91

PRO FORMA INCOME STATEMENT – CONTINUED

Expenses – City Center Market

City Center Market carries all food retail expenses, including staffing for the mobile unit, cost of goods sold, and the 10% Profit Share to Farmers Rising beginning Month 7.

Expense Item	Mo. 1–6	Mo. 7–12	Year 1 Total	Year 2	Year 3
Employee Wages	\$5,200.00	\$5,200.00	\$62,400.00	\$65,520.00	\$68,796.00
Employee Payroll Taxes	\$468.00	\$468.00	\$5,616.00	\$5,896.80	\$6,191.64
Employee Benefits	\$780.00	\$780.00	\$9,360.00	\$9,828.00	\$10,319.40
Workers Comp	\$52.00	\$52.00	\$624.00	\$655.20	\$687.96

Cost of Goods Sold	\$44,000.00	\$44,000.00	\$528,000.00	\$607,200.00	\$698,280.00
10% Profit Share to FR	\$0.00	\$12,000.00	\$72,000.00	\$165,600.00	\$190,440.00
Gross Expenses – CCM	\$50,500.00	\$62,500.00	\$678,000.00	\$711,900.00	\$747,495.00

10% Profit Share begins Month 7 at \$12,000/month. COGS increases 15% annually in line with food sales growth. Wages and benefits reflect 5% annual increase.

Net Revenue Summary

Combined net revenue demonstrates the initiative's financial sustainability, with the 10% Profit Share creating a growing income stream for Farmers Rising as food sales scale.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Net Revenue – Farmers Rising	\$41,616.00	\$415.80	\$436.59
Net Revenue – City Center Market	\$762,000.00	\$944,100.00	\$1,156,905.00
NET COMBINED REVENUE	\$803,616.00	\$944,515.80	\$1,157,341.59

Pro Forma Balance Sheet (Annual) – Farmers Rising

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
ASSETS			
Cash	\$111,312.00	\$181,423.80	\$251,556.39
Net Fixed Assets	\$278,800.00	\$209,100.00	\$139,400.00
Net Intangible Assets	\$23,500.00	\$23,500.00	\$23,500.00
Total Assets	\$413,612.00	\$414,023.80	\$414,456.39
OWNER'S EQUITY			
Owner Contribution	\$372,000.00	\$372,000.00	\$372,000.00
Retained Earnings	\$0.00	\$41,616.00	\$42,031.80
Current Year Income	\$41,616.00	\$415.80	\$436.59
Total Owner's Equity	\$413,616.00	\$414,031.80	\$414,468.39

Depreciation Schedule

Description	Basis	Class Life (yrs)	Method	Annual Deduction
Office and Other Equipment	\$8,500.00	5	S/L	\$1,700.00
Vehicles	\$340,000.00	5	S/L	\$68,000.00
Total Annual Depreciation	\$348,500.00			\$69,700.00

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

The following addresses questions likely to arise from city officials, council members, and community stakeholders regarding the Rockford Mobile Grocery Store Initiative.

Q: How is the Mobile Grocery Store different from food pantries and emergency food distribution?

A: The Mobile Grocery Store and food pantries serve complementary but distinct functions. Food pantries provide emergency food stabilization through free distribution. The Mobile Grocery Store provides choice-based, dignified access to fresh groceries at affordable prices – operating as structured retail infrastructure, not charity distribution. Families can use both services: pantries for emergency needs and the Mobile Grocery Store to supplement with preferred grocery items on their own terms.

Q: Why should the City of Rockford invest in the Mobile Grocery Store?

A: City investment in the Mobile Grocery Store is an investment in the long-term health and economic stability of Rockford's most underserved communities. Unlike one-time interventions, the Mobile Grocery Store is designed to be a self-sustaining operation. City support helps launch a financially viable model that grows over time, reduces dependence on emergency food systems, and positions Rockford as a leader in innovative, community-centered food access solutions.

Q: Is this initiative financially sustainable?

A: Yes. The pro forma demonstrates that the combined operation (Farmers Rising + City Center Market) generates positive net revenue beginning in Year 1, growing to over \$1.1 million by Year 3 with 15% annual food sales growth. Critically, the 10% Profit Sharing arrangement from City Center Market to Farmers Rising provides a growing, self-generated income stream – reducing the City of Rockford's contribution from \$150,000 in Year 1 to \$11,455 by Year 3, as the operation funds itself.

Q: Who accepts EBT/SNAP and WIC at the Mobile Grocery Store?

A: City Center Market, the retail partner, is fully equipped to accept EBT/Link and WIC vouchers. Additionally, Double Match integration will be pursued where available to maximize purchasing power for SNAP households.

Q: What neighborhoods will be served first?

A: Phase One focuses on the West Side corridor, including eight high-need stops: West State & Kilburn (Boys & Girls Club), South Main & Morgan (Booker T. Washington), Charles Street (Patriots Gateway), Broadway & 15th (Blackhawk Courts RHA), North Main Corridor (North Main Manor & Olesen Plaza RHA), Sandy Hollow & 11th Street, West State & Springfield (Champions Park), and Rockton Ave & Glenwood.

Q: Will residents be able to pre-order groceries?

A: Yes. Pre-ordering options will be made available, particularly for RHA residents and others who may face mobility or scheduling challenges. Our community survey found that 85% of respondents would use an app-based or online pre-order system, strongly validating this feature. This is expected to be especially important for North Main Manor and other RHA sites, based on feedback from Laura Snyder at RHA.

Q: What is Farmers Rising's existing presence in Rockford?

A: Farmers Rising already operates an organic CSA farm at Blackhawk Courts RHA, serves over 1,500 individuals annually, and collaborates with Zion Outreach, Patriots Gateway, and Ruthie's Kitchen on food access and youth programming. The Mobile Grocery Store builds directly on this established community trust and infrastructure.

Q: What does the community survey tell us about demand?

A: The survey reached 227 West Side residents and found overwhelming demand: 98% said they would shop at the Mobile Grocery Store, 84% reported at least 'somewhat difficult' access to fresh groceries, and 83% regularly struggle to afford fresh food. 91% said they'd shop specifically at end of month when SNAP benefits run low – a direct operational insight that will guide stop scheduling.

Q: What is the long-term vision beyond the mobile store?

A: The Mobile Grocery Store is designed as a proof of concept. Data and community engagement gathered during the pilot will inform the development of a permanent brick-and-mortar grocery store in an underserved Rockford ward, creating a lasting anchor for food access and economic investment on the West Side.

Q: How will success be measured?

A: Success will be tracked through weekly patronage numbers, SNAP/EBT transaction volume, community surveys on food access and health perceptions, local farmer participation rates, and financial performance against pro forma projections. Data and outcome reports will be shared with stakeholders on an annual basis and be made available upon request.

Q: What role does the Working Group play?

A: The Working Group, made up of core members of the Food Insecurity Taskforce, provides route refinement guidance, stop prioritization, inventory alignment, and funding coordination. A monthly Taskforce meeting ensures broader stakeholder alignment, media coordination, and city/state interface.

Q: How was the St. Louis MetroMarket funded?

A: The St. Louis MetroMarket began in 2015 as a student-run project at Washington University and was later acquired by Operation Food Search, a regional nonprofit. Its continued operations have been supported through private philanthropy - most notably a \$100,000 donation from Dierbergs Markets to sponsor the launch of its Farmers Truck, bringing fresh food directly to communities with limited grocery access. The MetroMarket model demonstrates that public-private partnership funding, combining nonprofit infrastructure with corporate and community investment, can sustain a mobile grocery operation long-term.

Q: Has a city ever publicly funded a mobile grocery store before?

A: Yes. In October 2024, the Little Rock, Arkansas Board of Directors voted to allocate \$850,000 in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to launch a city-operated Mobile Market - a truck and 44-foot refrigerated trailer making scheduled stops in food desert neighborhoods across the city. The project launched in March 2026, managed through a partnership with the University District Development Corporation and UA Little Rock. Little Rock's model is a direct precedent: a city government identifying mobile food access as a public infrastructure need and committing municipal resources to deliver it. Rockford has the same opportunity.

MOBILE GROCERY STORE – CONCEPT IMAGES

The following renderings illustrate the vision for the Rockford Mobile Grocery Store – both the exterior trailer wrap and the interior shopping experience.

interior shopping experience.



Exterior concept rendering — Mobile Grocery Store trailer wrap featuring Farmers Rising branding

Exterior concept rendering – Mobile Grocery Store trailer wrap featuring Farmers Rising branding



Interior concept rendering -- Fresh produce, refrigerated sections, and Farmers Rising branding inside the mobile s

DRAFT -- For Internal Review Only

Interior concept rendering – Fresh produce, refrigerated sections, and Farmers Rising branding inside the mobile store



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence

May 26, 2026

Dear Mayor McNamara and Rockford City Council Members,

Please accept this letter in support of the development and implementation of a mobile grocery store initiative designed to address food insecurity and improve access to healthy, affordable food within underserved neighborhoods in Rockford.

Far too many individuals and families face significant barriers to accessing fresh produce, nutritious groceries and essential household items due to limited transportation, geographic isolation, economic hardship or the absence of nearby full-service grocery stores. An estimated 15.8% of Winnebago County residents are food insecure with limited or uncertain ability to acquire adequate, safe, and nutritious food. The need is particularly acute for children, with the local youth food insecurity rate climbing to 20% compared to the state average of 11.3%.

A mobile grocery store is an innovative and practical solution that directly brings healthy food options into neighborhoods where they are needed most. With this cross-sector approach driven by a collaboration of Farmer's Rising, NICNE, City Central Markets and multiple community partners that make up the Food Insecurity Task Force, this initiative has the potential to make a meaningful long term impact by increasing food access, supporting healthier lifestyles, and reducing disparities related to nutrition and chronic health conditions. The initiative can also strengthen community connections and promote dignity and self-sufficiency among residents.

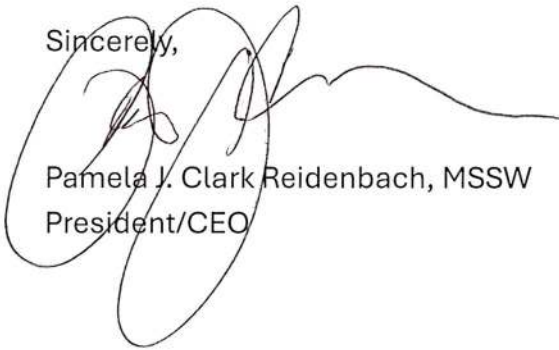
Mobile grocery services are especially valuable for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income families who may otherwise struggle to obtain nutritious food. By meeting people where they are, this program helps remove barriers that contribute to food

insecurity and poor health outcomes. The mobile grocery will bring a healthy FOOD TO PEOPLE grocery store to their neighborhoods for a discounted price but will not compete or replace the critical emergency food services provided by local pantries and food bank direct-service programs.

I fully support this effort to secure funding and community resources necessary to launch and sustain this important initiative. I believe the mobile grocery store will serve as a vital resource that improves quality of life and strengthens food security for many residents in our community. The long-term impact will be significant and the secondary results, like reduced chronic health issues due to diabetes and obesity, boosting educational outcomes, and enhancing economic stability as health care expenses are reduced and work productivity and attendance are improved will be profound and long lasting.

Thank you for your consideration and commitment to addressing food insecurity through this innovative community-based solution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pamela J. Clark Reidenbach', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Pamela J. Clark Reidenbach, MSSW
President/CEO

May 20, 2026

Mayor Tom McNamara and Rockford City Council Members
City of Rockford
425 E. State Street
Rockford, IL 61104

Dear Mayor McNamara and City Council Members,

I am writing to express strong support for the Mobile Grocery Store Initiative being developed to serve Rockford residents and neighbors through the collaboration of Farmer's Rising, NICNE, the City of Rockford, and community partners committed to ending hunger and improving equitable food access.

This initiative represents an important opportunity to expand access to healthy and affordable groceries in areas of Rockford that currently lack a local grocery store. The Mobile Grocery Store model helps preserve dignity by allowing individuals and families to purchase the foods they need while continuing to access food pantry services or food bank direct-service programs when additional support is necessary.

Food insecurity remains closely connected to poor nutrition, negative health outcomes, and increased rates of chronic disease-disproportionately impacting African American and Latino communities. Efforts such as the Mobile Grocery Store help address these inequities by bringing fresh and nutritious food directly into underserved neighborhoods while strengthening long-term community health and sustainability.

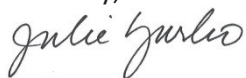
In October 2024, community leaders, neighbors, and organizations gathered at Rockford's Food Insecurity Summit to discuss solutions for eliminating barriers to food access and building amore equitable and sustainable food system. The summit created momentum toward developing sustainable community-driven strategies to address hunger in Rockford.

Along with myself, one of the featured speakers was Sherri Tussler, CEO Emeritus of, who shared the success of the Mobile Grocery Store model implemented by Milwaukee Hunger Task Force. Their work focuses on reaching neighborhoods with vulnerable populations, including families with children, seniors, and SNAP recipients. Members of our staff had opportunity to visit the organization and learn firsthand about the positive impact this model has had within the Milwaukee community.

We are encouraged by the collaboration efforts taking place in Rockford and believe this initiative has the potential to make a meaningful difference in reducing hunger, improving food access, and strengthening neighborhoods across the city.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to supporting innovative solutions that improve the health and well-being of Rockford residents.

Sincerely,



Julie Yurko
President & Chief Executive Officer

[SOLVEHUNGERTODAY.ORG](https://solvehungertoday.org)



**NEIGHBORS.
EMPOWERED.**

WEST SUBURBAN CENTER

273 Dearborn Court
Geneva, IL 60134
(630) 443 - 6910

NORTHWEST CENTER

1397 Sandy Hollow Road
Rockford, IL 61109
(815) 639 - 1257

SOUTH SUBURBAN CENTER

171 S Larkin Avenue
Joliet, IL 60436
(815) 846 - 1041

NORTH SUBURBAN CENTER

13950 W Business Center Drive
Lake Forest, IL 60045
(847) 336 - 3663

MEMBER OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**



Thomas P. McNamara, Mayor

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council
Planning and Development Committee

FROM: Todd Cagnoni, City Administrator
Jennifer Cacciapaglia, Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Prevention

RE: Proposed funding agreement with Cited Foundation for Early Birds Social Work Development Program at Auburn High School.

DATE: June 8, 2026

For your consideration, proposed funding agreement with Cited Foundation for Early Birds Social Work Development Program at Auburn High School utilizing Cannabis Funds in the amount of \$25,000.

Attached to this memo is the funding request and explanation of the Early Birds Social Worker Development Program through the Cited Foundation focused at Auburn High School. This includes the requested proposal, and past outcomes.

Early Birds is a trauma informed youth leadership and mental health initiative designed to support underserved youth disproportionately impacted by poverty, community violence, systematic inequalities and the long-term effects of marijuana criminalization policies.

They are in their fourth year serving 14-18 year old with mental health education, leadership development, mentorship, post-secondary planning and real-world apprenticeship experiences.

The funding will allow Cited Foundation to sustain and expand the Early Birds Program through additional weekly workshops and enhanced student support services, including: * Expanded workshops focused on coping skills, emotional regulation and personal development. * Continued social work education and leadership training. * Youth stipends for successful program completion. * Planning component to support college. * Apprenticeship-based mentorship. * Mental health education and wellness activities.

Cited Foundation was a previous recipient of Regrow \$10,000 funding with positive results.

Staff recommends approval of the proposed funding agreement as the request is consistent with City's efforts for community investment. Please let me know should you have any questions.

COMMITTEE REPORT

TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKFORD:

Council Members:

The Committee on Planning and Development, to whom was referred the matter of the approval of the proposed Funding Agreement with Cited Foundation for Early Birds Social Work Development Program at Auburn High School in the amount of \$25,000. The funding source is Cannabis Funds, hereby begs leave to report **recommending approval** of the request as recommended.

Janessa Neal (Chair)

Tim Durkee (Vice Chair)

Karen Hoffman

Dawn Granath

Gina Meeks

Committee Action Taken: June 8, 2026

Neal: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Durkee: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Hoffman: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Granath: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Meeks: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___

FUNDING AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT (“AGREEMENT”), entered into this _____ day of _____, 2026, by and between the City of Rockford, an Illinois municipal corporation ("City"), and Cited Foundation, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation (“Recipient”) at 1907 Jonathon Avenue, Rockford IL, 61103 (the “Parties”).

RECITALS

WHEREAS the City 3% Cannabis Recreation Tax has a designated purpose of funding programs for economic and business development; education; youth programming; job training; health; or other financial assistance to individuals, businesses, and communities within the City of Rockford that have been disproportionately impacted by cannabis-related laws; and

WHEREAS, Recipient operates the Early Birds Program, a trauma informed youth leadership and mental health initiative designed to support underserved youth disproportionately impacted by poverty, community violence, systematic inequalities and the long-term effects of marijuana criminalization policies; and

WHEREAS, Recipient is in its fourth year serving 14-18 year old individuals with mental health education, leadership development, mentorship, post-secondary planning and real-world apprenticeship experiences;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the City and Recipient mutually agree as follows:

1. **RECITALS.** The above recitals are incorporated by reference and made a part of this Agreement.
2. **TERM.** The term of this Agreement shall be for one (1) year from the date of execution of this Agreement.
3. **PAYMENTS.** Subject to the terms of this Agreement, applicable law, and appropriation by the City Council, the City shall provide funds to Recipient in one (1) installment of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) within 60 days of the execution of this Agreement for the expenses, activities and costs as more fully set forth in the document attached as Exhibit “A”, which is incorporated herein by reference.
4. **NON-APPROPRIATION.** Funding for this Agreement is subject to the availability of funds and their appropriation by the City Council. If no funds or insufficient funds are appropriated and budgeted in any fiscal period of the City for payments to be made under this Agreement, then the City will notify Recipient in writing of that occurrence, and this Agreement will terminate on the earlier of the last day of the fiscal period for which sufficient appropriation was made or whenever the funds appropriated for payment under this Agreement are exhausted. No payments

will be made or be due under this Agreement beyond those amounts appropriated and budgeted by the City to fund payments under this Agreement. The City's payment obligations under this Agreement shall constitute a current expense payable exclusively from legally available, unencumbered funds appropriated in the then-current fiscal year. Nothing in this Agreement shall constitute a pledge, loan, or extension of the City's faith and credit, general obligation, or taxing authority, nor shall it create any indebtedness, special fund, or multiple-fiscal year financial obligation within the meaning of any constitutional, statutory, or municipal code provision.

5. USE OF FUNDS.

5.1 All funds provided by the City pursuant to this Agreement will be held, managed and expended by Recipient and shall be used solely for operational and capital costs in the operation of the Early Birds Program consistent with Exhibit A and this Agreement.

5.2 Upon the natural expiration or earlier termination of this Agreement, Recipient shall immediately cease all further expenditures of City funds. Within thirty (30) calendar days following such expiration or termination, Recipient shall conduct a final financial accounting of the program and return all unutilized or unexpended funds to the City. Any funds expended by Recipient in violation of this Agreement, or remaining unspent after the designated program period, shall constitute a debt owed to the City and must be repaid in full within the same thirty (30) day period.

6. DOCUMENTATION, RECORDS AND AUDIT.

6.1 The Recipient shall maintain detailed records and receipts for all expenditures funded by this Agreement for two (2) years following its termination. The Recipient shall provide a copy of these records to the City within ten (10) business days of a written request. If any funds are used for shared personnel or equipment, the Recipient must provide a clear allocation showing exactly how the City's funds were utilized. The City retains all legal rights to inspect the funded mowing program to ensure compliance.

6.2 No provision in this Agreement granting the City a right of access to records and documents is intended to impair, limit or affect any right of access to such records and documents which the City, or any other government agency, would have in the absence of such provisions.

7. **PERMITTING AND CODES.** Recipient shall comply with all applicable federal, state, county, municipal or administrative laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, codes and orders relating in any way to the operation of the Early Birds Program.

8. **NO AGENCY, PARTNERSHIP, JOINT VENTURE, OR EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP. NO THIRD-PARTY BENEFICIARY.** Nothing in this Agreement, including the City's funding of the program, review of documentation, right to monitor grant compliance, or approval of payment requests, shall be construed to create an agency, partnership, joint venture, employment, borrowed-servant, franchise, or other representative relationship between the City and Recipient, or between the City and any of the Recipient's directors, officers, employees, volunteers, contractors, vendors, customers, or agents. Recipient shall not represent

that it has authority to bind the City or that the City operates, controls, sponsors, endorses, or manages the Early Birds Program, except to the limited extent expressly stated in this Agreement. Recipient shall perform as an independent contractor with sole control of the manner and means of performing this Agreement. Recipient shall complete this Agreement according to Recipient's own means and methods of work, which shall be in the exclusive charge and control of Recipient and which shall not be subject to control or supervision by the City except as to the result of the work. Recipient is, for all purposes arising out of this Agreement, an independent contractor, and neither Recipient employees nor its affiliates, assigns, agents or subcontractors shall be deemed an employee, agent, partner, or joint-venturer of the City, by reason of this Agreement. Nothing contained in this Agreement or any act of the City or Recipient shall be deemed or construed by any of the Parties hereto, or third persons, to create any relationship of third-party beneficiary.

9. **REQUIRED INSURANCE.**

9.1 *Minimum Policy Limits.* The Recipient shall procure and maintain, at its sole cost, insurance coverage from carriers authorized to do business in the State of Illinois. Unless waived in writing by the City, the Recipient shall maintain:

(i) *Commercial General Liability:* Written on an occurrence basis, with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 aggregate. This policy must explicitly include or endorse Sexual Abuse and Molestation (SAM) coverage with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

(ii) *Professional Liability:* Covering claims arising out of the performance of youth mentoring, counseling, or intervention services under this Agreement, with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per claim.

(iii) *Automobile Liability:* Covering any vehicles used to transport participants or conduct program business, with a combined single limit of not less than \$1,000,000 per accident, or verified personal auto policies meeting the City's satisfaction.

(iv) *Workers' Compensation:* Statutory benefits in full compliance with the Illinois Workers' Compensation Act (820 ILCS 305/1 et seq.), unless the Recipient qualifies for a legal exemption under Illinois law.

9.2 *Evidence of Insurance and Additional Insured.* Prior to the disbursement of any City funds, the Recipient shall provide the City with Certificates of Insurance (COI) and actual policy endorsements naming the City of Rockford as an Additional Insured on all liability policies. A COI alone is insufficient to grant additional insured status.

9.3 *Notice of Cancellation.* The Recipient shall maintain all required policies without lapse throughout the term of this Agreement. The Recipient shall provide written notice to the City within three (3) business days of receiving any notice of cancellation, non-renewal, lapse, or material reduction in coverage.

10. **INDEMNIFICATION.** Recipient agrees to release, defend, indemnify, and hold

harmless the City of Rockford, its representatives, officers, agents and employees from any and all claims, causes of action, demands for damages, suits, either in law or in equity, or expenses or liabilities of any kind, arising out of or by virtue of the execution and performance of this Agreement or any other agreement entered into pursuant to this Agreement. Recipient shall ensure that all subcontracts executed in connection with this Agreement contain a provision requiring the subcontractor to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City to the same extent required of Recipient herein. In the event that any action or proceeding is brought against the City, or its representatives, officers, agents and/or its employees, by reason of any such claim or demand, Recipient will at its sole cost and expense, resist or defend such action or proceeding.

11. **NON-ASSIGNABILITY.** Recipient shall not assign, transfer, convey, pledge, delegate, subcontract, or otherwise dispose of this Agreement, any interest in this Agreement, any right to receive funds under this Agreement, or any duty or obligation under this Agreement, in whole or in part, without the prior express written consent of the City. Any attempted assignment, transfer, delegation, or subcontracting without such prior written consent shall be void and shall constitute a material breach of this Agreement. For purposes of this section, an assignment includes, without limitation, any transfer of this Agreement or program responsibilities to another entity, any transfer of the right to receive payment, and any merger, consolidation, dissolution, reorganization, change in control, or other transaction that results in a material change in the entity responsible for performance under this Agreement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Recipient may use ordinary-course vendors, suppliers, employees, volunteers, or contractors in connection with the mobile grocery program, provided that Recipient remains solely responsible for performance of this Agreement and for the acts and omissions of such persons or entities.

12. **LEGAL COMPLIANCE.** Recipient shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, codes, rules and regulations in performing its duties, responsibilities and obligations pursuant to this Agreement.

13. **NON-DISCRIMINATION.** Recipient shall comply, and shall cause its officers, directors, employees, agents, volunteers, contractors, subcontractors, vendors, and any other persons or entities acting on its behalf to comply, with all applicable federal, state, and local non-discrimination, equal opportunity, civil rights, fair employment, public accommodation, accessibility, language-access, and anti-retaliation laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, executive orders, grant conditions, and funding-source requirements, including, without limitation, the Illinois Human Rights Act, 775 ILCS 5/1-101 *et seq.*; applicable rules and regulations of the Illinois Department of Human Rights; applicable federal civil rights laws and regulations; and, to the extent applicable, the City of Rockford Code of Ordinances, including the City's Equal Opportunity Employment requirements, in its operation and provision of services contemplated by this Agreement.

14. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST.** No member of the Rockford City Council, nor any other public official or employee who exercises any functions or responsibilities with respect to this program during their tenure or for one year thereafter, shall have any personal or financial interest, direct or indirect (other than employee salary), in this Agreement or its proceeds. Recipient, including its employees, successors, and assigns, shall strictly comply with all applicable conflict

of interest laws, including the Illinois Public Officer Prohibited Activities Act (50 ILCS 105/0.01 *et seq.*), the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/1-1-1 *et seq.*), and the City of Rockford Code of Ordinances. The obligations and restrictions of this Section shall survive the expiration or earlier termination of this Agreement.

15. TERMINATION.

15.1 *Events of Termination.* The City may terminate this Agreement immediately upon written notice if Recipient: (i) undergoes voluntary or involuntary dissolution; (ii) requests termination in writing, subject to the City's sole approval; or (iii) fails to cure a default under Section 15.2.

15.2 *Termination for Cause.* If Recipient breaches any obligation or covenant, the City shall issue a written notice of default. If Recipient fails to cure the default to the City's sole satisfaction within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving notice, the City may terminate this Agreement immediately.

15.3 *Liabilities upon Termination.* Upon termination, Recipient is entitled only to reimbursement for eligible, non-refundable expenses properly incurred before receiving the termination notice. The City may permanently withhold or set off any remaining grant funds to cover damages caused by the breach, and Recipient remains fully liable for all resulting damages.

15.4 *Alternative Remedies.* Instead of or prior to termination, the City may temporarily withhold, reduce, or suspend funding for any nonconformance. Exercising an alternative remedy does not waive the City's right to subsequently terminate this Agreement.

16. **WAIVER.** Either party to this Agreement may elect to waive any remedy hereunder, provided that such waiver shall be in writing. No such waiver shall operate or be construed as a waiver of any other right or remedy, nor shall it constitute a continuing waiver of any subsequent, separate, or ongoing breach.

17. **ADMINISTRATION.** The terms and provision of this Agreement shall be administered on behalf of the City by its Director of Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Prevention or designee. Unless law otherwise requires, all necessary notices, submissions, and approvals shall be given to or by the Director.

18. **NOTICES.** All notices, approvals, demands, requests, or other documents required or permitted under this Agreement, other than routine communications necessary for the day-to-day operation of this program, shall be deemed properly given if hand delivered or sent by United States registered mail, postage prepaid, at the following addresses:

AS TO THE CITY:

Director,

Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Prevention
City of Rockford
425 E. State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61104

With copies to:
Legal Director
City of Rockford
425 E State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61104

AS TO CITED FOUNDATION, AN ILLINOIS NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION:

Cited Foundation
1907 Jonathon Avenue
Rockford, IL 61103

19. **AMENDMENTS.** This Agreement may be amended by written instrument executed by the Parties hereto, acting therein by their duly authorized representatives. Any amendment(s) hereto must be approved by the City Council of the City of Rockford by resolution.

20. **SEVERABILITY.** If any term or provision of this Agreement or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, shall to any extent, be held invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of this Agreement, or the application of such term or provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is held invalid or unenforceable, shall not be effected thereby, and each remaining term and provision hereof shall be deemed valid and be enforced to the fullest extent permitted by law.

21. **GOVERNING LAW.** This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Illinois and the Ordinances of the City of Rockford.

22. **COUNTERPARTS.** This Agreement may be signed in any number of counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

23. **ENTIRE AGREEMENT.** This Agreement, including any exhibits or attachments hereto, constitutes the entire agreement between the Parties regarding its subject matter and supersedes all prior or contemporaneous oral or written agreements, understandings, representations, or negotiations.

24. **FORCE MAJEURE.** Neither party shall be liable or responsible to the other party, or be deemed to have defaulted under or breached this agreement, for any failure or delay to fulfill its obligations under this Agreement when and to the extent such failure or delay is caused by or results from acts beyond the impacted party's reasonable control, including, but not limited to, the following force majeure events: acts of God, acts of the public enemy, wars, invasions, hostilities,

state or federal governmental action, laws, orders, or rules, acts of terrorism, fires, floods, earthquakes, epidemics, pandemics, quarantine restrictions, national or regional emergencies, labor difficulties, freight embargoes, and transportation shortages. The party claiming excuse from performance (“Claiming Party”) must take reasonable efforts to remove the cause of its inability to perform or its delay in performance. The Claiming Party must give prompt written notice to the other party of the Force Majeure Event, specifying its nature and anticipated duration, and provide an estimate of when performance may continue.

25. AUTHORITY.

25.1 *Actions.* The City covenants to Recipient and agrees that the City will take such actions as may be required and necessary to enable the City to execute this Agreement and to carry out fully and perform the terms, covenants, agreements, duties, and obligations on its part to be kept and performed as provided by the terms and provisions hereof.

25.2 *Powers.* The City hereby represents and warrants to Recipient that the City has full constitutional and lawful right, power, and authority under currently applicable law to execute, deliver, and perform the terms and obligations of this Agreement, and all of the foregoing have been or will be duly and validly authorized and approved by any necessary City proceedings, findings, and actions. Accordingly, this Agreement constitutes the legal, valid and binding obligation of the City, is enforceable in accordance with its terms and provisions, and does not require the consent of any other governmental authority. Cited Foundation, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation hereby represents and warrants that it is a duly organized, validly existing Illinois corporation and that it has the right, power, and authority to execute, deliver, and perform the terms and obligations of this Agreement, and that this Agreement constitutes the legal, valid, and binding obligation of Cited Foundation, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation, enforceable in accordance with its terms and provisions.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the City and Recipient have executed this Agreement on the date above first written.

CITY OF ROCKFORD
A Municipal Corporation

BY: _____
Thomas P. McNamara, Mayor

Date

ATTEST: _____
Angela L. Hammer, Legal Director

Date

CITIED FOUNDATION

BY: _____

_____ Date

Title: _____

DRAFT

CITIED Foundation

Early Birds Social Worker Development Program

Organization: [CITIED Foundation](#)

Executive Director: Ashton Lockhart, LCSW

Service Area: Rockford, Illinois (primarily zip codes 61101 & 61102)

Funding Request: \$50,000 (SY 26-27, SY 27-28)

Program Focus: Youth Mental Health, Workforce Development, Leadership Development, Violence Prevention, and Equity for Communities Disproportionately Impacted by Marijuana Laws

Program Overview

The Early Birds Social Worker Development Program is a trauma-informed youth leadership and mental health initiative designed to support underserved youth disproportionately impacted by poverty, community violence, systemic inequities, and the long-term effects of marijuana criminalization policies.

Hosted at Auburn High School and implemented by CITIED Foundation in partnership with By Any Dreams Necessary, the program equips Black and Brown youth ages 14–18 with mental health education, leadership development, mentorship, postsecondary planning, and real-world apprenticeship experiences.

Now entering its fourth year, Early Birds continues to expand its impact within Rockford communities. During the 2025–2026 school year, the program graduated 22 students who successfully completed programming focused on emotional wellness, leadership development, social work education, and future planning.

In addition to direct programming, Early Birds participants also engage in community mental health initiatives that encourage youth voice, advocacy, and peer-to-peer engagement. In 2025, students hosted a teen mental health panel alongside State Representative West and other community leaders to discuss youth mental health challenges, stigma, and community solutions. This year, participants also facilitated a school-based peer-to-peer resource and coping skills workshop designed to help students identify healthy coping strategies and increase awareness of available support resources.

Community Need

Rockford's west side communities, particularly zip codes 61101 and 61102, continue to experience concentrated poverty, violence exposure, educational inequities, and limited access to culturally responsive mental health services. These same communities were disproportionately harmed by historical marijuana enforcement policies that contributed to incarceration, family instability, economic hardship, and long-term disenfranchisement within Black and Brown neighborhoods.

Many participating youth come from low-income households and communities heavily impacted by these systemic disparities. Students frequently experience chronic stress, trauma exposure,

emotional dysregulation, school disciplinary involvement, and limited access to prevention-focused behavioral health support.

While CITIED Foundation is still evaluating final outcomes from the current school year, preliminary program feedback and early data reviews show several consistent themes: students want programming to occur more frequently, desire continued support around emotional regulation and coping skills and benefit significantly from trusted adult mentorship and postsecondary planning support.

These findings reinforce the need for expanded prevention-focused programming that combines both social work education and personal development support in a culturally responsive environment.

How Funds Will Be Used

Requested cannabis revenue funds will allow CITIED Foundation to sustain and expand the Early Birds program through additional weekly workshops and enhanced student support services.

Funding will support:

- Expanded weekly workshops focused on coping skills, emotional regulation, communication, and personal development
- Continued social work education and leadership training
- Youth stipends for successful program completion
- Reinstatement of the program's postsecondary planning component to support college, trade, career, and workforce readiness
- Apprenticeship-based mentorship opportunities with younger students
- Community mental health events and peer-led wellness initiatives
- Mental health education and wellness activities
- Program supplies, meals, transportation, and engagement supports

Funding is especially critical following the loss of prior school-based funding support and will help ensure underserved youth continue to receive consistent prevention-focused services.

Program Impact

Through Early Birds, youth:

- Build emotional regulation and healthy coping skills
- Explore careers in mental health and social work
- Develop leadership, communication, and advocacy skills
- Participate in peer mentorship and community engagement
- Gain exposure to college, trade, and workforce pathways
- Receive mentorship from professionals with shared lived experiences

Program outcomes from the 2024–2025 year showed:

- 100% of participants reported a positive program experience
- 93% reported growth in mental health and social work knowledge

- Expanded partnerships allowed high school students to mentor elementary-aged youth through apprenticeship experiences

The program's continued growth demonstrates both strong student engagement and an ongoing need for culturally responsive mental health and youth development services within Rockford communities.

Why This Investment Matters

The City of Rockford's cannabis revenue funding presents an opportunity to reinvest directly into communities disproportionately harmed by historical marijuana laws and systemic inequities.

The Early Birds Social Worker Development Program represents prevention, healing, leadership development, and long-term community transformation. Rather than responding only after youth enter crisis systems, this program equips young people with the tools, support, mentorship, and opportunities needed to thrive before challenges escalate into crisis situations.

By investing in Early Birds, the City of Rockford will help develop emotionally aware, community-connected future leaders who are prepared to strengthen the health and well-being of Rockford neighborhoods for years to come.



**EARLY BIRDS
SOCIAL WORKER
DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM
COMPLETION
CEREMONY**



ABOUT THE PROGRAM



CITIED Foundation's Early Birds Social Worker Development Program celebrates youth achievements beyond traditional education. It aims to inspire and train future community leaders, social workers, and mental health advocates.



Participants engaged in workshops and apprenticeships to enhance their skills and recognize their roles as emerging leaders. This year, students also benefited from postsecondary support workshops hosted by By Any Dreams Necessary.



We proudly honor these students' successful completion of the Early Birds Social Worker Development Program requirements and their dedication to becoming catalysts for change.





STUDENT HONOREES



**ALEXIA SANCHEZ
AMANDA RODRIGUEZ
ANIYAH GRAHAM
ANTHONY MARTINEZ
BROOKLYN HICKEM
CAMERON LOCKHART
DE'AJAH SMITH
DANIEL GOMEZ
EFFADEA ROWE
GUSTAVO ROMERO
HOLLYROSE BORDERS
ISABELLA RUBIO
ISABELLA VARGAS-MACHUCA
IZARAYA JOHNSON
JEREMI HASSENFELDT
JOSE GONZALEZ
JAELA DACH-HENSON
LARENZO KINARD
LILIANA LEDEZMA
REYNA AGUIRRE
RUTH HARDEN
SHANIYA LEE-DAVIS**



**A HEARTFELT THANK YOU
TO THIS YEAR'S PROGRAM
FUNDERS**



ICJIA



**Illinois Children's
Healthcare Foundation**

UWHealth



**COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS**



**THE
STARBUCKS®
FOUNDATION**



Thomas P. McNamara, Mayor

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council
Planning and Development Committee

FROM: Todd Cagnoni, City Administrator

RE: Proposed funding agreement with Zion West Enterprise for Youth Training and Mowing Program to better prepare individuals for future opportunities.

DATE: June 8, 2026

For your consideration, is a proposed funding agreement with Zion West for Youth Training and Mowing Program to better prepare individuals for future opportunities utilizing Cannabis funds in the amount of \$25,000.

Zion West Enterprises respectfully requests \$25,000 from the City of Rockford's to support the launch of the 2026 Neighborhood Mowing Program, a comprehensive 10-week summer employment, violence prevention, and neighborhood beautification initiative designed to serve 10 at-risk youth from Rockford's west side.

The program will provide participants with paid employment, mentorship, financial literacy education, entrepreneurship training, and practical workforce experience while improving the appearance and cleanliness of neighborhoods throughout the 13th Ward and surrounding west side communities.

Participants will work Tuesday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., totaling 18 hours per week for 10 weeks. Youth will earn \$15 per hour, while three adult mentors will supervise the program and provide workforce coaching and life-skills development.

The program aligns directly with the City of Rockford's Cannabis Funds framework by reinvesting resources into communities disproportionately impacted by disinvestment and creating opportunities for youth development, violence prevention, entrepreneurship, environmental stewardship, and community wellness.

Please let me know should you have any questions.

COMMITTEE REPORT

TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKFORD:

Council Members:

The Committee on Planning and Development, to whom was referred the matter of the approval of the proposed Funding Agreement with Zion West for Youth Training and Mowing Program to better prepare individuals for future opportunities in the amount of \$25,000. The funding source is Cannabis Funds, hereby begs leave to report **recommending approval** of the request as recommended.

Janessa Neal (Chair)

Tim Durkee (Vice Chair)

Karen Hoffman

Dawn Granath

Gina Meeks

Committee Action Taken: June 8, 2026

Neal: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Durkee: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Hoffman: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Granath: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Meeks: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___

FUNDING AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT (“AGREEMENT”), entered into this ____ day of _____, 2026, by and between the City of Rockford, an Illinois municipal corporation ("City"), and ZION WEST ENTERPRISE, NFP, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation (“Recipient”) at 404 North Avon Street, Rockford, (the "Parties”).

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the City 3% Cannabis Recreation Tax has a designated purpose of funding programs for economic and business development; education; youth programming; job training; health; or other financial assistance to individuals, businesses, and communities within the City of Rockford that have been disproportionately impacted by cannabis-related laws; and

WHEREAS, Recipient proposes to launch the 2026 Neighborhood Mowing Program, a comprehensive 10-week summer employment, violence prevention, and neighborhood beautification initiative designed to serve 10 at-risk youth from Rockford’s west side; and

WHEREAS, the program will provide participants with paid employment, mentorship, financial literacy education, entrepreneurship training, and practical workforce experience while improving the appearance and cleanliness of neighborhoods throughout the west side;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the City and Recipient mutually agree as follows:

1. **RECITALS.** The above recitals are incorporated by reference and made a part of this Agreement.
2. **TERM.** The term of this Agreement shall be for one (1) year from the date of execution of this Agreement.
3. **PAYMENTS.** Subject to the terms of this Agreement, applicable law, and appropriation by the City Council, the City shall provide funds to Recipient in one (1) installment of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) within 60 days of the execution of this Agreement for the expenses, activities and costs as more fully set forth in the document attached as Exhibit “A”, which is incorporated herein by reference.
4. **NON-APPROPRIATION.** Funding for this Agreement is subject to the availability of funds and their appropriation by the City Council. If no funds or insufficient funds are appropriated and budgeted in any fiscal period of the City for payments to be made under this Agreement, then the City will notify Recipient in writing of that occurrence, and this Agreement will terminate on the earlier of the last day of the fiscal period for which sufficient appropriation was made or whenever the funds appropriated for payment under this Agreement are exhausted. No payments will be made or be due under this Agreement beyond those amounts appropriated and budgeted by

the City to fund payments under this Agreement. The City's payment obligations under this Agreement shall constitute a current expense payable exclusively from legally available, unencumbered funds appropriated in the then-current fiscal year. Nothing in this Agreement shall constitute a pledge, loan, or extension of the City's faith and credit, general obligation, or taxing authority, nor shall it create any indebtedness, special fund, or multiple-fiscal year financial obligation within the meaning of any constitutional, statutory, or municipal code provision.

5. USE OF FUNDS.

5.1 All funds provided by the City pursuant to this Agreement will be held, managed and expended by Recipient and shall be used solely for operational and capital costs in the operation of the Neighborhood Mowing Program consistent with Exhibit A and this Agreement.

5.2 Upon the natural expiration or earlier termination of this Agreement, Recipient shall immediately cease all further expenditures of City funds. Within thirty (30) calendar days following such expiration or termination, Recipient shall conduct a final financial accounting of the program and return all unutilized or unexpended funds to the City. Any funds expended by Recipient in violation of this Agreement, or remaining unspent after the designated program period, shall constitute a debt owed to the City and must be repaid in full within the same thirty (30) day period.

6. DOCUMENTATION, RECORDS AND AUDIT.

6.1 The Recipient shall maintain detailed records and receipts for all expenditures funded by this Agreement for two (2) years following its termination. The Recipient shall provide a copy of these records to the City within ten (10) business days of a written request. If any funds are used for shared personnel or equipment, the Recipient must provide a clear allocation showing exactly how the City's funds were utilized. The City retains all legal rights to inspect the funded mowing program to ensure compliance.

6.2 No provision in this Agreement granting the City a right of access to records and documents is intended to impair, limit or affect any right of access to such records and documents which the City, or any other government agency, would have in the absence of such provisions.

7. **PERMITTING AND CODES.** Recipient shall comply with all applicable federal, state, county, municipal or administrative laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, codes and orders relating in any way to the operation of the Neighborhood Mowing Program.

8. **NO AGENCY, PARTNERSHIP, JOINT VENTURE, OR EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP. NO THIRD-PARTY BENEFICIARY.** Nothing in this Agreement, including the City's funding of the program, review of documentation, right to monitor grant compliance, or approval of payment requests, shall be construed to create an agency, partnership, joint venture, employment, borrowed-servant, franchise, or other representative relationship between the City and Recipient, or between the City and any of the Recipient's directors, officers, employees, volunteers, contractors, vendors, customers, or agents. Recipient shall not represent that it has authority to bind the City or that the City operates, controls, sponsors, endorses, or

manages the Neighborhood Mowing Program, except to the limited extent expressly stated in this Agreement. Recipient shall perform as an independent contractor with sole control of the manner and means of performing this Agreement. Recipient shall complete this Agreement according to Recipient's own means and methods of work, which shall be in the exclusive charge and control of Recipient and which shall not be subject to control or supervision by the City except as to the result of the work. Recipient is, for all purposes arising out of this Agreement, an independent contractor, and neither Recipient employees nor its affiliates, assigns, agents or subcontractors shall be deemed an employee, agent, partner, or joint-venturer of the City, by reason of this Agreement. Nothing contained in this Agreement or any act of the City or Recipient shall be deemed or construed by any of the Parties hereto, or third persons, to create any relationship of third-party beneficiary.

9. **REQUIRED INSURANCE.**

9.1 During the Term of this Agreement, and for any longer period required by the applicable policy or this Agreement, Recipient shall procure and maintain, at its sole cost and expense, insurance coverage sufficient to cover the risks arising from Recipient's Neighborhood Mowing Program and performance of this Agreement. Such insurance shall be issued by insurers authorized to do business in the State of Illinois and reasonably acceptable to the City. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the City's risk manager or authorized representative, Recipient shall maintain at least the following coverage:

- (i) Commercial General Liability Insurance, written on an occurrence basis for bodily injury and property damage arising from mowing operations, with limits of not less than \$500,000 per occurrence.
- (ii) Automobile Liability Insurance coverage for all vehicles used in connection with the program, with limits matching at least the State of Illinois statutory minimums, or a combined single limit of \$300,000, whichever is greater.
- (iii) Workers' Compensation Insurance benefits in full compliance with the Illinois Workers' Compensation Act (820 ILCS 305/), unless the Recipient has no employees and qualifies for a legal exemption under Illinois law.

9.2 *Evidence of Insurance.* Before receiving funds or commencing funded activities, and upon each renewal thereafter, Recipient shall provide the City with certificates of insurance evidencing the required coverage. Upon request, Recipient shall also provide copies of applicable additional-insured endorsements or blanket additional-insured policy provisions. A certificate of insurance, by itself, shall not be deemed to amend, extend, or create coverage not otherwise provided by the applicable policy or endorsement.

9.3 *Notice of Cancellation or Material Change.* Recipient shall not allow any required insurance to lapse and shall promptly replace any cancelled, non-renewed, or materially reduced coverage. Recipient shall provide written notice to the City within five (5) business days after Recipient receives notice of any cancellation, non-renewal, lapse, or material reduction of any insurance required under this Agreement

10. **INDEMNIFICATION.** Recipient agrees to release, defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City of Rockford, its representatives, officers, agents and employees from any and all claims, causes of action, demands for damages, suits, either in law or in equity, or expenses or liabilities of any kind, arising out of or by virtue of the execution and performance of this Agreement or any other agreement entered into pursuant to this Agreement. Recipient shall ensure that all subcontracts executed in connection with this Agreement contain a provision requiring the subcontractor to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City to the same extent required of Recipient herein. In the event that any action or proceeding is brought against the City, or its representatives, officers, agents and/or its employees, by reason of any such claim or demand, Recipient will at its sole cost and expense, resist or defend such action or proceeding.

11. **NON-ASSIGNABILITY.** Recipient shall not assign, transfer, convey, pledge, delegate, subcontract, or otherwise dispose of this Agreement, any interest in this Agreement, any right to receive funds under this Agreement, or any duty or obligation under this Agreement, in whole or in part, without the prior express written consent of the City. Any attempted assignment, transfer, delegation, or subcontracting without such prior written consent shall be void and shall constitute a material breach of this Agreement. For purposes of this section, an assignment includes, without limitation, any transfer of this Agreement or program responsibilities to another entity, any transfer of the right to receive payment, and any merger, consolidation, dissolution, reorganization, change in control, or other transaction that results in a material change in the entity responsible for performance under this Agreement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Recipient may use ordinary-course vendors, suppliers, employees, volunteers, or contractors in connection with the mobile grocery program, provided that Recipient remains solely responsible for performance of this Agreement and for the acts and omissions of such persons or entities.

12. **LEGAL COMPLIANCE.** Recipient shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, codes, rules and regulations in performing its duties, responsibilities and obligations pursuant to this Agreement.

13. **NON-DISCRIMINATION.** Recipient shall comply, and shall cause its officers, directors, employees, agents, volunteers, contractors, subcontractors, vendors, and any other persons or entities acting on its behalf to comply, with all applicable federal, state, and local non-discrimination, equal opportunity, civil rights, fair employment, public accommodation, accessibility, language-access, and anti-retaliation laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, executive orders, grant conditions, and funding-source requirements, including, without limitation, the Illinois Human Rights Act, 775 ILCS 5/1-101 *et seq.*; applicable rules and regulations of the Illinois Department of Human Rights; applicable federal civil rights laws and regulations; and, to the extent applicable, the City of Rockford Code of Ordinances, including the City's Equal Opportunity Employment requirements, in its operation and provision of services contemplated by this Agreement.

14. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST.** No member of the Rockford City Council, nor any other public official or employee who exercises any functions or responsibilities with respect to this program during their tenure or for one year thereafter, shall have any personal or financial interest,

direct or indirect (other than employee salary), in this Agreement or its proceeds. Recipient, including its employees, successors, and assigns, shall strictly comply with all applicable conflict of interest laws, including the Illinois Public Officer Prohibited Activities Act (50 ILCS 105/0.01 *et seq.*), the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/1-1-1 *et seq.*), and the City of Rockford Code of Ordinances. The obligations and restrictions of this Section shall survive the expiration or earlier termination of this Agreement.

15. TERMINATION.

15.1 *Events of Termination.* The City may terminate this Agreement immediately upon written notice if Recipient: (i) undergoes voluntary or involuntary dissolution; (ii) requests termination in writing, subject to the City's sole approval; or (iii) fails to cure a default under Section 15.2.

15.2 *Termination for Cause.* If Recipient breaches any obligation or covenant, the City shall issue a written notice of default. If Recipient fails to cure the default to the City's sole satisfaction within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving notice, the City may terminate this Agreement immediately.

15.3 *Liabilities upon Termination.* Upon termination, Recipient is entitled only to reimbursement for eligible, non-refundable expenses properly incurred before receiving the termination notice. The City may permanently withhold or set off any remaining grant funds to cover damages caused by the breach, and Recipient remains fully liable for all resulting damages.

15.4 *Alternative Remedies.* Instead of or prior to termination, the City may temporarily withhold, reduce, or suspend funding for any nonconformance. Exercising an alternative remedy does not waive the City's right to subsequently terminate this Agreement.

16. **WAIVER.** Either party to this Agreement may elect to waive any remedy hereunder, provided that such waiver shall be in writing. No such waiver shall operate or be construed as a waiver of any other right or remedy, nor shall it constitute a continuing waiver of any subsequent, separate, or ongoing breach.

17. **ADMINISTRATION.** The terms and provision of this Agreement shall be administered on behalf of the City by its Director of Community and Economic Development or designee. Unless law otherwise requires, all necessary notices, submissions, and approvals shall be given to or by the Director.

18. **NOTICES.** All notices, approvals, demands, requests, or other documents required or permitted under this Agreement, other than routine communications necessary for the day-to-day operation of this program, shall be deemed properly given if hand delivered or sent by United States registered mail, postage prepaid, at the following addresses:

AS TO THE CITY:

Director,
Community & Economic Development Department

City of Rockford
425 E. State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61104

With copies to:
Legal Director
City of Rockford
425 E State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61104

AS TO ZION WEST ENTERPRISE, NFP, AN ILLINOIS NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION:

Zion West Enterprises
404 N. Avon Street
Rockford, IL 61101

19. **AMENDMENTS.** This Agreement may be amended by written instrument executed by the Parties hereto, acting therein by their duly authorized representatives. Any amendment(s) hereto must be approved by the City Council of the City of Rockford by resolution.

20. **SEVERABILITY.** If any term or provision of this Agreement or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, shall to any extent, be held invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of this Agreement, or the application of such term or provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is held invalid or unenforceable, shall not be effected thereby, and each remaining term and provision hereof shall be deemed valid and be enforced to the fullest extent permitted by law.

21. **GOVERNING LAW.** This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Illinois and the Ordinances of the City of Rockford.

22. **COUNTERPARTS.** This Agreement may be signed in any number of counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

23. **ENTIRE AGREEMENT.** This Agreement, including any exhibits or attachments hereto, constitutes the entire agreement between the Parties regarding its subject matter and supersedes all prior or contemporaneous oral or written agreements, understandings, representations, or negotiations.

24. **FORCE MAJEURE.** Neither party shall be liable or responsible to the other party, or be deemed to have defaulted under or breached this agreement, for any failure or delay to fulfill its obligations under this Agreement when and to the extent such failure or delay is caused by or results from acts beyond the impacted party's reasonable control, including, but not limited to, the following force majeure events: acts of God, acts of the public enemy, wars, invasions, hostilities,

state or federal governmental action, laws, orders, or rules, acts of terrorism, fires, floods, earthquakes, epidemics, pandemics, quarantine restrictions, national or regional emergencies, labor difficulties, freight embargoes, and transportation shortages. The party claiming excuse from performance (“Claiming Party”) must take reasonable efforts to remove the cause of its inability to perform or its delay in performance. The Claiming Party must give prompt written notice to the other party of the Force Majeure Event, specifying its nature and anticipated duration, and provide an estimate of when performance may continue.

25. AUTHORITY.

25.1 *Actions.* The City covenants to Recipient and agrees that the City will take such actions as may be required and necessary to enable the City to execute this Agreement and to carry out fully and perform the terms, covenants, agreements, duties, and obligations on its part to be kept and performed as provided by the terms and provisions hereof.

25.2 *Powers.* The City hereby represents and warrants to Recipient that the City has full constitutional and lawful right, power, and authority under currently applicable law to execute, deliver, and perform the terms and obligations of this Agreement, and all of the foregoing have been or will be duly and validly authorized and approved by any necessary City proceedings, findings, and actions. Accordingly, this Agreement constitutes the legal, valid and binding obligation of the City, is enforceable in accordance with its terms and provisions, and does not require the consent of any other governmental authority. Zion West Enterprise, NFP, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation hereby represents and warrants that it is a duly organized, validly existing Illinois corporation and that it has the right, power, and authority to execute, deliver, and perform the terms and obligations of this Agreement, and that this Agreement constitutes the legal, valid, and binding obligation of Zion West Enterprise, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation, enforceable in accordance with its terms and provisions.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the City and Recipient have executed this Agreement on the date above first written.

CITY OF ROCKFORD
A Municipal Corporation

BY: _____
Thomas P. McNamara, Mayor Date

ATTEST: _____
Angela L. Hammer, Legal Director Date

[Recipient]

BY: _____ Date

Title: _____

Neighborhood Mowing Program Full Program Scope

Funding Request to the City of Rockford

Requested Amount: \$25,000

Executive Summary

Zion West Enterprises respectfully requests \$25,000 from the City of Rockford's REGROW Program to support the launch of the 2026 Neighborhood Mowing Program, a comprehensive 10-week summer employment, violence prevention, and neighborhood beautification initiative designed to serve 10 at-risk youth from Rockford's west side.

The program will provide participants with paid employment, mentorship, financial literacy education, entrepreneurship training, and practical workforce experience while improving the appearance and cleanliness of neighborhoods throughout the 13th Ward and surrounding west side communities.

Participants will work Tuesday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., totaling 18 hours per week for 10 weeks. Youth will earn \$15 per hour, while three adult mentors will supervise the program and provide workforce coaching and life-skills development.

The program aligns directly with the City of Rockford's REGROW framework by reinvesting resources into communities disproportionately impacted by disinvestment and creating opportunities for youth development, violence prevention, entrepreneurship, environmental stewardship, and community wellness.

About Zion West Enterprises

Zion West Enterprises is a Rockford-based community organization dedicated to neighborhood revitalization, housing rehabilitation, workforce development, and youth empowerment. Through partnerships with local government, law enforcement, faith institutions, businesses, and residents, Zion West Enterprises creates transformative opportunities that strengthen neighborhoods and expand economic opportunity.

The organization has extensive experience implementing community-based initiatives focused on housing improvement, workforce training, and community engagement. Its mission is rooted in restoring hope, rebuilding neighborhoods, and equipping residents with the tools needed to succeed.

Statement of Need

Many young people on Rockford's west side face limited access to structured summer employment, positive mentorship, and meaningful economic opportunities. During the summer months, some youth spend significant time unsupervised and may become involved in unsafe activities that place them at risk.

At the same time, many neighborhoods continue to experience blight, overgrown lots, litter, and deferred property maintenance. These conditions negatively impact neighborhood pride, public safety, and the perception of community well-being.

The Neighborhood Mowing Program addresses both challenges by employing young people to perform visible beautification work while equipping them with the skills, discipline, and support necessary to succeed.

Program Goals

1. Provide paid summer employment to 10 at-risk youth.
2. Reduce youth exposure to unsafe activities during the summer.
3. Deliver mentorship, life skills, and workforce development training.
4. Teach financial literacy and entrepreneurship.
5. Beautify neighborhoods and improve community cleanliness.
6. Reduce blight and strengthen neighborhood pride.
7. Create pathways to small business ownership.
8. Advance the goals of the City of Rockford's REGROW Program.

Program Structure

Duration

10 weeks (Summer 2026)

Participants

10 youth ages 14–21

Schedule

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Hours

18 hours per week

Total Hours Per Participant

180 hours

Youth Wage

\$15 per hour

Total Earnings Per Youth

\$2,700

Adult Mentors

3 trained mentors

Mentor Compensation

\$22 per hour

Daily Program Components

- Morning check-in and goal setting
 - Safety instruction
 - Lawn care and landscaping assignments
 - Litter removal and beautification work
 - Lunch and team-building
 - Financial literacy and entrepreneurship lessons
 - Reflection and mentoring discussions
-

Neighborhood Beautification Scope of Work

Participants will:

- Mow vacant lots and overgrown properties
 - Trim weeds and brush
 - Pick up litter and debris
 - Maintain landscaped areas and flower beds
 - Beautify major corridors such as West State Street and Auburn Street
 - Assist seniors and residents unable to maintain their properties
-

Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurship Training

Participants will receive instruction in:

- Budgeting and saving
- Banking and credit
- Goal setting
- Customer service
- Marketing
- Equipment maintenance
- Business planning

Graduates interested in launching lawn care businesses may receive donated equipment from local partners such as Walmart, The Home Depot, and Lowe's.

Crime Prevention and Public Safety Impact

Youth employment is one of the most effective strategies for reducing violence and increasing community safety. By providing structured work, positive adult relationships, and legal income opportunities, the Neighborhood Mowing Program reduces idle time and promotes personal responsibility.

The program will also strengthen relationships among youth, residents, law enforcement officers, and community leaders, creating a more connected and safer community.

Alignment with the City of Rockford REGROW Framework

The program advances several REGROW priorities, including:

- Youth Development and Violence Prevention
 - Workforce Development
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Neighborhood Stabilization
 - Environmental Justice
 - Community Wellness
 - Economic Opportunity
-

Partnerships

The program will be implemented through collaboration among:

- Zion West Enterprises
- Alderman Tamir Bell and the 13th Ward Office
- Rockford Police Department
- Rockford Community Healing Center/Irving Strong House
- Local businesses and corporate sponsors
- Faith and community organizations
- Residents and neighborhood volunteers

Budget Summary

Youth Wages

10 × \$15/hour × 18 hours/week × 10 weeks = **\$27,000**

Mentor Wages

3 × \$22/hour × 18 hours/week × 10 weeks = **\$11,880**

Uniforms and Safety Gear

\$1,500

Equipment and Supplies

\$3,500

Snacks and Meals

\$1,200

Total Program Cost

\$45,080

Requested from the City of Rockford REGROW Program

\$25,000

Zion West Enterprises and Partner Match

\$20,080

Expected Outcomes

- 10 youth employed
- 1,800 total youth work hours completed
- 180 hours of work experience per participant
- More than 100 properties and public spaces maintained
- Financial literacy and entrepreneurship training delivered
- Improved neighborhood cleanliness and appearance
- Reduced blight and stronger neighborhood pride
- Pathways to employment and business ownership

Sustainability

Zion West Enterprises will leverage community partnerships, corporate sponsorships, equipment donations, and volunteer support to sustain and expand the program in future years.

Funding Request

Zion West Enterprises respectfully requests \$25,000 from the City of Rockford's REGROW Program to support the implementation of the 2026 Neighborhood Mowing Program.

This investment will provide young people with meaningful employment, strengthen neighborhoods, improve cleanliness and beautification, and advance the City's commitment to equitable community reinvestment.



To: Ald. Janessa Wilkins, Chair
Ald. Tim Durkee, Vice Chair
Planning & Development Committee

From: Anna Garrison, Economic Development Manager *Anna EC Garrison*

Re: Request to approve Redevelopment Agreement with Cord Construction (1322 E. STATE STREET LLC) for the rehabilitation of 1322 E. State Street, Rockford, Illinois.

Date: June 8, 2026

1322 E. STATE STREET LLC (**Developer**) has requested financial assistance from the City of Rockford (**City**) through the Jackson School TIF District to support the rehabilitation of the commercial property located at 1322 East State Street, Rockford, Illinois (**Property**).

The attached Redevelopment Agreement (**Agreement**) outlines the proposed project (**Project**), which includes an estimated One Million Four Hundred Twenty-Eight Thousand Dollars (\$1,428,000) in total redevelopment costs.

Under the Agreement, the City will provide a one-time reimbursement for eligible redevelopment costs—those permitted under the Illinois Tax Increment Allocation Redevelopment Act, 65 ILCS 5/11-74.4-1 et seq.—in an amount not to exceed \$100,000.

The Developer agrees to:

- Complete the Project within twelve (12) months of the Agreement’s execution, subject to Force Majeure delays.
- Maintain its primary corporate location within the City of Rockford for ten (10) years following Project completion.
- Comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations, including the Illinois Prevailing Wage Act, 820 ILCS 130/.01 et seq.
- Avoid all prohibited uses identified in the Agreement.



The Jackson School TIF District, established in 2006, was created primarily to stabilize a predominantly residential neighborhood with limited commercial capacity. The Property is one of the corridor's key commercial sites along East State Street and plays a significant role in supporting the district's economic health.

Cord Construction, the primary business operating at the Property, will continue its operations in Rockford as a result of the financial assistance provided through this Agreement. The ten-year location commitment ensures long-term economic stability, while the Project's improvements enhance the commercial corridor and advance the original goals of the TIF district.

The Project and Agreement have been reviewed in accordance with the City's TIF Policy Statement and found to be consistent with its requirements. The Project meets several of the City's Primary Project Priorities, including the rehabilitation of an existing commercial building and the strengthening of an established commercial district that serves as a gateway to downtown.

Staff requests the Planning and Development Committee review and recommend to the City Council the attached Development Agreement between the City of Rockford and 1322 E. State Street LLC for consideration.

Please contact me with any questions at 779.348.7449

TIF Guideline Point System

Total Points Under Scoring System: 225

The project and development agreement has been reviewed in accordance with the TIF Policy Statement and found to be consistent with the Policy. The relative sections of the TIF Point System are highlighted below.

- a. Type of project
 - i. Industrial/Manufacturing—100 Points
 - 1. New
 - 2. Existing
 - ii. Commercial—75 Points
 - 1. New commercial
 - 2. Renovation/improvement of existing commercial
 - 3. Demolition of abandoned structures
 - iii. Professional/Office—75 Points
 - iv. Residential—50 Points
 - 1. Address concentration of low-income residential
 - 2. Dangerous and abandoned buildings
 - v. Advanced education and training—30 Points
 - vi. Arts—20 Points
 - vii. Public Improvements—10 Points
 - 1. Note that this means the use of TIF funds for a public improvement standing alone, not that some part of the funding for a project in a different category would include a public improvement. For example, a new manufacturing plant might require an upgraded sewer line. That is a manufacturing project even though it includes a public improvement. The line between “stand alone” public improvements and those linked to a specific project is not an easy one to draw.
 - 2. For “stand alone” public improvements, it is hard to see how the “but for” test is met since the funding of the improvement will often be a question of the allocation of tax revenues. It is also a practice that uses the taxing authority of another jurisdiction to pay for something that the City is unable or unwilling to fund out of its own possible revenue sources.
 - viii. Tourism—10 Points
 - ix. Historic Preservation—10 Points
 - 1. Historic preservation should be considered in context, in terms

alternative development and in terms of “opportunity costs”, the impact that abandoned structures have on surrounding neighborhood.

b. Location of the project—note that these areas all presumably will have to qualify as “blighted”

i. High Priority areas—100 Points

1. Central City (broadly defined)
 - a. The Central City would encompass most of the areas that were developed by the 1950s
2. Census tracts with high unemployment
3. Census tracts with low median income
4. Riverfront

ii. Mid-Priority areas—50 Points

1. Areas that developed between 1950 – 1990.
2. Buildings that have been vacant for more than 10 years.
3. For example, the abandoned grocery store at the Charles/Alpine 5 Points area.

iii. Low Priority areas—10 Points

1. Typically “green field” locations which require the extension of public services

c. Employment Factor—number and wage rate—50 Points each

i. High/High—100

ii. Low/High—50

iii. High/Low—50

iv. Low/Low--0

d. Others—up to 100 points

- i. Indirect employment
- ii. MBE/WBE/Veterans
- iii. Targeted employment

Scale

-High Priority	Over 225 points
-Mid Priority	125 to 224 points
-Low Priority	Under 124 points

COMMITTEE REPORT

TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKFORD:

Council Members:

The Committee on Planning and Development, to whom was referred the matter of the approval of the proposed Development Agreement with Cord Construction (1322 E. STATE STREET, LLC) for the rehabilitation of 1322 East State Street in an amount not to exceed \$100,000. The funding source is the Jackson School TIF District, hereby begs leave to report **recommending approval** of the request as recommended.

Janessa Neal (Chair)

Tim Durkee (Vice Chair)

Karen Hoffman

Dawn Granath

Gina Meeks

Committee Action Taken: June 8, 2026

Neal: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Durkee: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Hoffman: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Granath: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___
Meeks: Ayes:___ Nays:___ Absent:___

REDEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

This Redevelopment Agreement (“Agreement”), dated as of this ____ day of _____, 2026, is made by and between the City of Rockford, an Illinois municipal corporation (the “City”), and 1322 E. STATE STREET LLC, an Illinois limited liability company, and its successors and assigns (“Developer”). The City and Developer are sometimes collectively referred to herein as the “Parties.”

PREAMBLES

WHEREAS, Developer is the owner of the property commonly known as 1322 E. State Street, Rockford, Illinois, located within the Jackson School Tax Increment Financing District and legally described on Exhibit A attached hereto (the “Property”);

WHEREAS, Developer proposes to renovate and improve the Property through property acquisition, roof replacement, security upgrades, HVAC upgrades, and interior remodeling. The approximate Redevelopment Project Costs are One Million Four Hundred Twenty-Eight Thousand Dollars (\$1,428,000). This project will henceforth be referred to as the (“Redevelopment Project”);

WHEREAS, the City is authorized pursuant to the Tax Increment Allocation Redevelopment Act, 65 ILCS 5/11-74.4-1 et seq. (the “Act”), to enter into redevelopment agreements and reimburse redevelopment project costs;

WHEREAS, the City has determined that the Redevelopment Project will further the goals of the Jackson School Tax Increment Financing District by promoting investment, preserving taxable property, and encouraging economic development within the City;

WHEREAS, the City has agreed to reimburse Developer for certain eligible Redevelopment Project Costs in an amount not to exceed One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000), subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement;

WHEREAS, in consideration of the City’s assistance, Developer agrees to maintain its primary corporate location within the City of Rockford for a period of ten (10) years following completion of the Redevelopment Project;

NOW, THEREFORE, for and in consideration of the mutual covenants and agreements contained herein, and for other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, the Parties agree as follows:

SECTION I

APPLICABLE LAW / DEFINITIONS

A. **Applicable Law.** This Agreement is made pursuant to and in accordance with the provisions of the Tax Increment Allocation Redevelopment Act, 65 ILCS 5/11-74.4-1 et seq., and other applicable provisions of Illinois law and Rockford City ordinances.

B. **Definitions.** For purposes of this Agreement, “Redevelopment Project Costs” shall mean those costs eligible for reimbursement pursuant to Section 11-74.4-3(q) of the Act.

C. **Term.** The term of this Agreement shall commence upon execution and continue until all obligations of the Parties have been fully satisfied unless earlier terminated in accordance with this Agreement.

SECTION II

CITY’S OBLIGATIONS

A. **Reimbursement.** Subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement, the City agrees to reimburse Developer for eligible Redevelopment Project Costs in an amount not to exceed One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000).

B. **Eligible Costs.** Eligible Redevelopment Project Costs” shall mean those redevelopment project costs authorized under the Illinois Tax Increment Allocation Redevelopment Act, 65 ILCS 5/11-74.4-1 et seq., as amended from time to time, including, without limitation, all reasonable or necessary costs incurred or estimated to be incurred and any costs incidental to the Redevelopment Plan or the Project, provided such costs are approved by the City and are eligible for payment or reimbursement under the Act.

C. **Conditions of Payment.** Following completion of the Redevelopment Project; Reimbursement shall be made in a one-time payment subject to approval by the City Council and submission of documentation reasonably satisfactory to the City evidencing eligible Redevelopment Project Costs.

D. **Documentation.** Developer shall provide invoices, receipts, lien waivers, proof of payment, contracts, and any other additional documentation as may reasonably be requested by the City.

E. **Limited Obligation.** The City’s obligation to pay Developer under this agreement is a limited obligation payable solely from taxes deposited in the special tax allocation fund for the Jackson School TIF and shall not constitute a general obligation or indebtedness of the City.

F. **Conditions Precedent.** Prior to reimbursement, Developer shall provide evidence satisfactory to the City that: (i) all property taxes and special assessments are current; (ii) all

required insurance coverages are in full force and effect; (iii) no default exists under this Agreement; and (iv) the Property is free from any liens, judgments, encumbrances, notices of violation, foreclosure actions, bankruptcy proceedings affecting the Property or Developer, receivership actions, tax sale proceedings, or any other legal or administrative action that could materially affect title to, use of, or the City's interest in the Property, except as expressly approved in writing by the City.

SECTION III

REPRESENTATIONS / WARRANTIES

A. **Developer Representations.** Developer represents and warrants that it is duly organized and in good standing under the laws of the State of Illinois and has authority to enter into this Agreement.

B. **City Representations.** The City represents that it has authority to enter into this Agreement pursuant to applicable law and ordinances.

C. **Survival.** The representations and warranties contained herein shall survive execution of this Agreement.

SECTION IV

DEVELOPER'S OBLIGATIONS

A. **Construction of Redevelopment Project.** Developer shall complete the Redevelopment Project in substantial accordance with plans approved by the City and in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, and regulations. Developer agrees to facilitate improvements including property acquisition, roof replacement, security upgrades, HVAC upgrades, and interior remodeling.

B. **Completion Date.** Developer shall complete the Redevelopment Project within twelve (12) months following execution of this Agreement, subject to Force Majeure delays.

C. **Permits and Approvals.** Developer shall obtain all required permits, approvals, and inspections necessary for completion of the Redevelopment Project.

D. **No Property Tax Protest.** In recognition of the contribution of Tax Increment financing to the Redevelopment Project, Developer agrees not to protest the assessed valuation of the Property until the earlier of (i) the termination of the Jackson School TIF District, or (ii) December 31, 2031; provided, however, that Developer may contest assessments made in error, assessments that are disproportionately higher than comparable properties, or

assessments resulting from a material change in the condition or use of the Property or a material change in applicable valuation methodology..

E. **Prohibited Uses.** In recognition of the contribution of Tax Increment to the Project, Developer agrees that the Property shall not be used for the following uses until the earlier of (i) the termination of the Jackson School TIF District, or (ii) December 31, 2031, and only while Developer or its affiliates own or occupy the Property::

- (i) Adult uses, including but not limited to an adult type bookstore or other establishment selling, renting, displaying or exhibiting pornographic or obscene materials (including without limitation: magazines, books, movies, videos, photographs or so called “sexual toys”) or providing adult type entertainment or activities (including, without limitation, any displays of a variety involving, exhibiting or depicting sexual themes, nudity or lewd acts;
- (ii) Tattoo shops;
- (iii) A massage parlor or any establishment purveying similar services;
- (iv) Gaming machine establishments, including any bar or restaurant seeking video gaming terminals ancillary to its liquor license;
- (v) Tobacco stores;
- (vi) Second Hand store;
- (vii) Cash for Gold store;
- (viii) Payday Loan store; or
- (ix) Title Loan store.

F. **Prevailing Wage:** The Agreement calls for the construction of a “public work,” within the meaning of the Illinois Prevailing Wage Act, 820 ILCS 130/.01 *et seq.* (the “Act”). Pursuant to the Act, contractors and subcontractors shall pay laborers, workers, and mechanics performing services on public work projects no less than the “prevailing rate of wages” (hourly cash wages plus fringe benefits) in the county where the work is performed.

G. **Certified Payroll:** Pursuant to the Act, any contractor and any subcontractor who participates in the public works shall file with the State of Illinois certified payroll for those calendar months during which work on the public works project occurs. Certified payrolls shall be made available to the City to monitor for compliance with the Act.

SECTION V

INSURANCE / INDEMNIFICATION

A. **Insurance.** Developer shall maintain commercial general liability insurance and such additional insurance coverage as may reasonably be required by the City during construction of the Redevelopment Project.

B. **Additional Insured.** The City shall be named as an additional insured on all applicable insurance policies.

C. **Indemnification.** Developer agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the City and its officers, employees, and agents from claims arising out of the Redevelopment Project except to the extent caused by the negligence or willful misconduct of the City.

SECTION VI

DEFAULT / REMEDIES

A. **Event of Default.** The occurrence of any of the following shall constitute an Event of Default under this Agreement: (i) failure to complete the Redevelopment Project; (ii) failure to comply with the terms of this Agreement; (iii) bankruptcy or insolvency of Developer; or (iv) failure to maintain Developer’s primary corporate location within the City of Rockford for ten (10) years following completion of the Redevelopment Project.

B. **Notice and Cure.** The City shall provide written notice of default and Developer shall have thirty (30) days to cure such default unless otherwise specified herein. All notices, demands, requests, consents, approvals or other instruments required or permitted by this Agreement shall be in writing and shall be executed by the party or an officer, agent or attorney of the party, and shall be deemed to have been effective as of the date of actual delivery, if delivered personally, or as of the fifth (5th) day from and including the date of posting, if mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, with postage prepaid, addressed as follows:

To the Developer:	To the City:
With a copy to:	City of Rockford ATTN: Community and Economic Development Director

ATTN:	425 E. State Street Rockford, IL 61104 With a copy to: City of Rockford ATTN: Legal Director. 425 E. State Street Rockford, IL 61104
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C. **Remedies.** Upon an uncured Event of Default, the City may pursue all remedies available at law or in equity, including reimbursement recapture; provided, however, that the City’s monetary remedies shall not exceed the amount of TIF funds actually disbursed to Developer under this Agreement.

SECTION VII

GENERAL PROVISIONS

A. **Assignment.** This Agreement may not be assigned by Developer without prior written consent of the City.

B. **Severability.** If any provision of this Agreement is held invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

C. **Amendment.** This Agreement may be amended only by written instrument executed by both Parties.

D. **Choice of Law / Venue.** This Agreement shall be governed by Illinois law with venue lying in Winnebago County, Illinois.

E. **Notices.** All notices required under this Agreement shall be in writing and delivered personally, by certified mail, or overnight courier to the addresses designated by the Parties.

F. **Entire Agreement.** This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the Parties concerning the Redevelopment Project and supersedes prior negotiations and understandings.

G. **Counterparts.** This Agreement may be executed in counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original.

H. **Waiver.** Either party to this Agreement may elect to waive any remedy it may enjoy hereunder, provided that such waiver shall be in writing. No waiver of any term of this agreement shall be deemed to be a continuing waiver of that term or a waiver of any other term of this agreement.

DRAFT

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have executed this Agreement as of the date first written above.

CORD CONSTRUCTION CO.

By: _____

Its: _____

CITY OF ROCKFORD,
AN ILLINOIS MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

By: _____

Mayor Thomas P. McNamara

DRAFT

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EXHIBIT A

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

1322 E. State Street, Rockford, Illinois
Parcel / APN: 11-24-356-036

EXHIBIT B

REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Redevelopment improvements including, roof replacement, security upgrades, HVAC upgrades, and interior remodeling.

DRAFT