

City of New London to Distribute ARPA Funds in a Radically Transformative Way
*Targeted funding supports innovation towards a city where
everyone has a fair shot at wellbeing*

New London, CT: The city is embarking on an incredible opportunity with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to continue to make transformative, systemic change for our neighbors and our community. We invite not just non-profit organizations, but also businesses, hospitals, schools and other organizations to apply for this innovation fund. There was one round of ARPA funding distributed in March 2022, and we are excited to distribute an additional round of funding.

Over time our social safety net has become increasingly focused on addressing people's challenges with an often-disconnected set of services. While good has been done, we have too often lost a focus on the whole human being we hoped to benefit. There must also be a greater focus on equity. Too often, the progress people realize from needed services is not enough for them to be able to thrive, so our community continues to struggle. Merely adding more services is not necessarily the answer. Assistance must focus on the whole person and helping our neighbors build the capacity to live the life that truly matters to them in the communities they call home. The city is targeting its ARPA funds outside the traditional service model to programs that promote healing and access to wellbeing across our community. The focus is on neighbors helping neighbors, peer-support, and similar approaches. This funding is an opportunity to reimagine how to support those hardest hit in the community by creating an environment that supports wellbeing for everyone.

This will take more than just human service programs. The work of wellbeing has implications for our infrastructure, for our schools, for how our neighborhoods are organized.

The work begins by building capacity for wellbeing as a core design principle of our upcoming procurement. The team will consist of a coalition of the willing – nonprofits, businesses, public services and neighbors—who want to form stronger collaborations and develop deeper understanding, to ensure a co-owned, inclusive, and productive process.

This is the work of the future, and it must begin today with the fierce urgency of now. We -- like those in our community turning to services for help -- have discovered that our systems must do more than fix problems. We must aim higher: building people's capacity for healing and wellbeing. That requires all of us.

If you are interested, the RFP and associated materials will be posted to www.newlondonct.org by May 4 followed by a workshop (any organization interested is encouraged to send someone) on May 11, 4:00-6:00pm at the Public Library of New London to discuss the RFP. Please submit questions to Jeanne Milstein jmilstein@newlondonct.org by Wed, May 18. We will post answers to the questions on www.newlondonct.org by Fri, May 20.