

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA**



Agenda Date:	October 5, 2020
Action Required:	Appropriation of Grant Funds
Presenter:	Hollie Lee, Chief of Workforce Development Strategies
Staff Contacts:	Hollie Lee, Chief of Workforce Development Strategies
Title:	Red Light Management Funds for Home to Hope for Reentry Services/Programming - \$20,000

**Background:**

In January 2020, Home to Hope staff met with Ann Kingston of Red Light Management regarding the City of Charlottesville Home to Hope program, which serves clients using authentic, lived experience to impact and inspire "time-served" individuals by introducing resources, providing peer support, and advocating for fairness. Red Light Management was interested in learning more about the new program and meeting the Home to Hope staff in order to hear more about their stories and new roles/responsibilities as Peer Navigators. After the meeting, a proposal was submitted to Red Light Management, at its invitation, requesting support for Home to Hope initiatives (see attached). In June 2020, Red Light Management requested an update on the program since the COVID-19 pandemic (see attached). In August 2020, Red Light Management issued funds to the program in the amount of \$20,000. The funding will be used to further enhance the program and offer targeted supportive services to participants.

**Discussion:**

In 2019, Mayor Nikuyah Walker proposed a program, Home to Hope, to train individuals with prior justice involvement to provide peer support services to those being released to the City. In partnership with the Office of Economic Development and other community service agencies, a curriculum was developed to provide skills in peer recovery support, wellness and recovery planning, relationship building, group facilitation, resource connecting, and other fundamentals of peer navigation. At the conclusion of the training, four graduates were offered full-time positions with the City and began to put their knowledge into practice beginning October 2019.

The Home to Hope program actively engages with individuals prior to release from ACRJ and the Department of Corrections through one-on-one meetings, as well as support and Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) classes. Prospective clients are encouraged to complete an intake for services at that time or once released. The program also accepts walk-ins and referrals from partner agencies. Once active, the participant completes a cooperative case plan to determine how to measure their individual success. Their assigned peer navigator, or another member of the team, then helps guide that participant through those identified steps. This peer relationship helps build participant confidence and skill level in steering through the labyrinth of wraparound services. Peers also help

their clients in searching for stable employment, securing housing, obtaining reliable transportation, and a myriad of other needs that are individual to each participant. Examples of supportive services include: providing clients with bus passes for job searches, gift cards for groceries, clothing and fuel, and rental assistance in crisis situations. Home to Hope staff makes determinations for such assistance on a case-by-case basis by considering individual circumstances, need, and active participation in peer recover support services.

Since its inception, Home to Hope has had 235 total enrollments, with 159 active participants as of September 15, 2020. The program has provided \$53,854 in supportive services to participants, including 192 \$30 gift cards to Kroger, Walmart, Goodwill, and Exxon for basic necessities such as food, toiletries, medicine, household items, uniforms/clothing, gas, etc. and 41 payments for housing assistance, car repair, private transportation, and other critical services. Additionally, Home to Hope has distributed 73 30-day bus passes to aid in employment search and job retention for those in transition from incarceration. Peer Navigators have helped 41 participants get placed into employment and 40 participants secure stable housing.

### **Alignment with Council Vision Areas and Strategic Plan:**

This effort supports City Council's vision of being a Community of Mutual Respect.

It also contributes to the following goals and objectives in the City's Strategic Plan:

Goal 1: An Inclusive Community of Self-sufficient Residents

- Objective 1.2: Prepare residents for the workforce
- Objective 1.5: Intentionally address issues of race and equity

Goal 4: A Strong, Creative and Diversified Economy

- Objective 4.1: Develop a quality workforce

It aligns with Chapter 3 on Economic Sustainability in the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Community Engagement:**

Like practically all of the OED's economic and workforce development efforts, Home to Hope engages numerous community agencies and organizations. Some examples include: the Albemarle Charlottesville Regional Jail, Offender Aid and Restoration, District 9 Probation, The Haven/Thomas Jefferson Area Coalition for the Homeless, the Fountain Fund, the City of Charlottesville Department of Human Services and Department of Social Services, and other reentry/community organizations.

### **Budgetary Impact:**

There is no impact to the General Fund as these funds are a donation/grant and do not require a City match.

### **Recommendation:**

Staff recommends approval and appropriation of the funds.

**Alternatives:**

If funds are not appropriated, the City will have to use existing City funds to continue programming.

**Attachments:**

- Requested proposal to Red Light Management about Home to Hope
- Letter to Red Light Management providing program updates since COVID-19

**APPROPRIATION**  
**Red Light Management Funds for Home to Hope**  
**\$20,000**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Charlottesville has received funds from Red Light Management in the amount of \$20,000; and

**WHEREAS**, the funds will be used to support the Home to Hope program through the Office of Economic Development;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, that the sum of \$20,000 is hereby appropriated in the following manner:

**Revenue – \$20,000**

\$20,000      Fund: 105      Cost Center: 1621004000      G/L: 451020

**Expenditures – \$20,000**

\$20,000      Fund: 105      Cost Center: 1621004000      G/L: 599999



Ms. Ann Kingston  
Red Light Management  
455 Second Street, SE  
Charlottesville, VA 22902

March 9, 2020

Dear Ms. Kingston,

The City of Charlottesville has demonstrably struggled with recidivism and the revolving-door nature of the local justice system. Studies done have conclusively shown that more than half of individuals released from incarceration to Charlottesville return to custody, most within the first year of release. This population experiences barriers that are explicitly addressed through the City's new Home to Hope program, an initiative of Mayor Nikuyah Walker. In addition to supportive services such as rental assistance, clothing purchases for job interviews and employment, and various gift cards to help with groceries, fuel, and other basic necessities, Home to Hope also offers one-on-one peer recovery services, navigation through the travails of reentry, and support groups where individuals can share their unique story with other peers.

Home to Hope is staffed by four Peer Support Navigators, all of whom have been successful in their own recovery process and now help others experiencing similar situations. Through shared understanding, respect, and mutual empowerment, these individuals help their clients become and stay engaged in the recovery process and reduce the likelihood of relapse. Peer support services can effectively extend the reach of treatment beyond the clinical setting into the everyday environment of those seeking a successful, sustained recovery process.

Believing strongly in the peer approach to recovery, the City has invested approximately \$400,000 in Home to Hope to not only staff the program, but also to help fund the abovementioned supportive services. Through this letter and attached proposal, we are graciously seeking grant funding from Red Light Management to supplement supportive service outreach to participating clients in order to expand the program's capacity to assist participants in addressing tangible barriers to their successful reentry to the community post-incarceration.

The Home to Hope program sincerely appreciates your consideration of grant funding to help us deliver aid to our clients in efforts to provide stability and the building of self-sufficiency in their lives. The program has grown exponentially since its development and implementation in October 2019. The assistance we are

requesting is based on to-date spending and projections moving forward to supplement the City's investment. We look forward to working with your organization to deliver effective and transformative services to our clients, thereby improving the Charlottesville community.

Sincerely,

*Hollie Lee*

Hollie Lee  
Chief of Workforce Development Strategies  
Charlottesville Office of Economic Development  
610 E. Market Street; Charlottesville, VA 22902  
[leeh@charlottesville.org](mailto:leeh@charlottesville.org) | (434) 970-3117



**Home to Hope: Peer  
Recovery Services for  
Citizens with Lived Criminal  
Justice Experience**

**ABSTRACT**

The City of Charlottesville is seeking a grant to fund supportive services for clients of the Home to Hope peer support program. The objective is to have sufficient discretionary funding to assist participants in navigating the barriers that impede lasting stability as they transition from incarceration to the community.

**SUBMITTED BY:**

The City of Charlottesville Office  
of Economic Development

## **Statement of Need**

Over a five-year period ending in 2016, 79% of individuals serving a 30+ day sentence in Albemarle Charlottesville Regional Jail (ACRJ) returned to custody to serve another 30+ day sentence. 22% returned five times or more over that timeframe. The main contributors that led to this recidivism included a lack of stable housing, unemployment, transportation issues, and the dearth of life skills and mentoring. Of those returning to incarceration, 70% of failure occurs in the first year of their release. This recidivism has a cascade effect on the Charlottesville community, placing burden on families with loved ones behind bars, stressing services providers with increasing caseloads and client responsibilities, and taxing the court and correctional systems. Providing substantive assistance to releasing offenders helps alleviate these burdens and allows individuals to have the best chance of lasting success and achieving self-sufficiency.

## **Program Description**

In 2019, Mayor Nikuyah Walker proposed a program, Home to Hope, to train individuals with prior justice involvement to provide peer support services to those being released to the City. In partnership with the Office of Economic Development and other community service agencies, a curriculum was developed to provide skills in peer recovery support, wellness and recovery planning, relationship building, group facilitation, resource connecting, and other fundamentals of peer navigation. At the conclusion of the training, four graduates were offered full-time positions with the City and began to put their knowledge into practice beginning October 2019.

The Home to Hope program actively engages with individuals prior to release from ACRJ and the Department of Corrections through one-on-one meetings, as well as support and Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) classes. Prospective clients are encouraged to complete an intake for services at that time or once released. The program also accepts walk-ins and referrals from partner agencies. Once active, the participant completes a cooperative case plan to determine how to measure their individual success. Their assigned peer navigator, or another member of the team, then helps guide that participant through those identified steps. This peer relationship helps build participant confidence and skill level in steering through the labyrinth of wraparound services.

Peers also help their clients in searching for stable employment, securing housing, obtaining reliable transportation, and a myriad of other needs that are individual to each participant. To that end, the program utilizes discretionary funding to assist in meeting these needs. Examples of this supportive service funding include



providing clients with bus passes for job searches, gift cards for groceries, clothing and fuel, and rental assistance in crisis situations. Home to Hope staff makes determinations for such assistance on a case-by-case basis by considering individual circumstances, need, and active participation in peer recover support services.

## **By the Numbers**

The Home to Hope program was integrated into the Office of Economic Development the week of November 18, 2019. Since that time, 61 participants have been enrolled, with 45 being active as of February 17, 2020. For 2019, Home to Hope provided 53 supportive services for 25 participants totaling \$5,414.98. January 2020 saw 56 supportive services for 33 clients at a total of \$3,616.57. The majority of services were for work clothing, food, and basic necessities, with the largest amounts of money spent on emergency housing situations.

Over the four-month duration that the program has been in operation, Home to Hope has also provided 30-day bus passes to 55 clients. These allow access to the Charlottesville Area Transit bus system and are used to seek employment, get to and from jobs, and make scheduled appointments for other services, doctor's visits, or probation meetings.

Only one participant that has been involved with Home to Hope has reentered, or 1.6%. Virginia's statewide reentry rate is just over 20% and, as previously mentioned, Charlottesville has a much higher rate. Repeat offenders represent 76.1% of all police bookings in Charlottesville. The clear takeaway, even over this limited sample size, is that interactions with peers who can assist with facing the diverse challenges of release has a positive impact on those who choose to enroll in the program. The mission of Home to Hope is vital in addressing the reentry needs of the Charlottesville community and its citizens who struggle with finding stability after release.

## **Goals**

Home to Hope exists to serve clients using authentic, lived experience to impact and inspire time-served individuals by introducing resources, providing peer support, and advocating for fairness in order to help our community. This program seeks to make contact with all individuals who are being released from local jails and the Department of Corrections who identify Charlottesville as their home plan. Home to Hope will remain a voluntary program, and participants are encouraged to be active participants and engage with staff and each other.

Participants will be eligible to receive monetary assistance on a case-by-case basis for services that benefit their self-efficacy.

## Budget

Given current growth rates for the program, it is anticipated that 200 participants will be enrolled in the Home to Hope program over the duration of 2020. Projections on the dollar amount of supportive services given to clients based on weekly totals thus far is \$33,129.45. See the table below for a breakdown of supportive service spending.

**Table 1:**

Week Ending	Bus Pass	Gift Card	Credit Card	Housing	Total
11/22/2019	-	90	130.55	-	220.55
11/29/2019	-	-	-	-	-
12/6/2019	44	89.71	216.80	625	975.51
12/13/2019	88	29.06	14.97	1,036.94	1168.97
12/20/2019	154	174.40	89.75	411.94	830.09
12/27/2019	-	60	-	2,025.00	2,085.00
1/3/2020	66	119.41	170	-	355.41
1/10/2020	176	220.54	129.82	362.72	889.08
1/17/2020	154	104.52	212.42	-	470.94
1/24/2020	88	52.30	220.00	1,280.00	1,640.30
1/31/2020	88	30	498.25	-	616.25
2/7/2020	66	55	-	-	121.00
2/14/2020	110	25	62.70	-	197.70
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$1,834.00</b>	<b>\$1,049.94</b>	<b>\$1,745.26</b>	<b>\$5,741.60</b>	<b>\$9,570.80</b>

Please note that this forecast is based on a flat number of participants. If the number of monthly intakes continues to increase at a steady rate, the supportive services projection rises concurrently. Numbers are also expected to fluctuate based on funding levels of other agencies/organizations. (For example, partner funds tend to be expended towards the end of the calendar year, leaving more demand placed on Home to Hope – especially for rent assistance.) Believing strongly in the peer approach to recovery, the City has already invested approximately \$400,000 in Home to Hope to not only staff the program, but also to help fund the abovementioned supportive services. For this reason, we are asking that Red Light Management match up to \$100,000 in order for the program to be able to expand its capacity and deliver even more effective supportive services for participants.

## Home to Hope Staff Information

**Shadeé Gilliam** is a Peer Navigator for the City of Charlottesville Home to Hope Program. Shadeé walks alongside “time-served” individuals who have reentered the Charlottesville community, helping them rebuild their lives post-incarceration. He navigates participants to resources, assisting/addressing basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, clothing, etc.). He is also a WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) certified facilitator and has received training as a Peer Support Specialist. In his spare time, Shadeé coaches boy’s junior varsity basketball at the Covenant School and for the non-profit AAU program Team Thrill. He is also a husband and father of two.

**Ramanda Jackson** is one of four Peer Navigators for the City of Charlottesville initiative “Home to Hope.” Through Home to Hope, she helps individuals who are newly released from incarceration. She works with participants on a one-on-one basis as well as in group form. Ramanda is a certified WRAP facilitator and has received training as a Peer Support Specialist. Prior to working with Home to Hope, Ramanda worked in the mental health and behavioral health field with at-risk youth and in alternative education with the school system for 15 years. She has worked as a volunteer for the City of Charlottesville School System, and in her spare time, she has worked with high school girl’s afterschool to encourage positive self-esteem and to give them a place to exhale from their day.

**Whitmore Merrick** is a Peer Navigator with Home to Hope. He specializes in peer support and facilitating Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) groups. He helps individuals who have been incarcerated and recently released to society, connecting them to resources such as housing, food, clothing, and transportation. In addition to his work with Home to Hope, Whitmore has been employed with Charlottesville Area Transit as a bus operator for three years. He is also a business owner and created a movement known as Freedom For Felons, which informs those reentering the community of opportunities related to entrepreneurship, inspiring change advocating for a second chance. Whitmore is a graduate of Charlottesville High School.

**Stacey Washington** is a Peer Navigator for the City of Charlottesville Home to Hope Program. Her passion is to help her peers in any areas that may be hindering them from achieving success and walking with them in recovery. She has certification in WRAP Facilitation Training and also completed Peer Support Specialist training. Prior to joining the Home to Hope team, Stacey worked in food management. In her spare time, she enjoys relaxing at home with her family and watching television.



Ms. Ann Kingston  
Red Light Management  
455 Second Street, SE  
Charlottesville, VA 22902

June 3, 2020

Dear Ms. Kingston,

Please find this letter as an addendum to Home to Hope's original request for grant funding from Red Light Management to supplement supportive services to participating clients in order to expand the program's capacity and assist these individuals with successful reentry into the community.

As mentioned in the previous proposal, Home to Hope enrolled 65 participants in the program from late November 2019 to late February 2020. During this time, staff provided \$9,570.80 in supportive services to 58 individuals. The majority of services were for work clothing, food, and basic necessities, with the largest amounts of money spent on emergency housing situations.

On March 16, 2020, Home to Hope suspended operations in its physical location in the lower level of the Jefferson Madison Regional Library due to COVID-19. Despite this however, staff has continued to enroll new clients in the program virtually. From mid-March to the end of May, Home to Hope has experienced an increase of approximately 30 clients (from 65 to 94), with many of these individuals coming to Home to Hope directly from the Albemarle Charlottesville Regional Jail (ACRJ) after being released from incarceration on Home Electronic Monitoring (HEM) due to the coronavirus.

Since mid-March, Home to Hope has also continued to offer clients supportive services, primarily as a result of individuals being released from jail or being laid off or furloughed from employment because of COVID-19. During this time, Home to Hope has expended nearly \$12,000 to clients in supportive services to help them address basic needs. The table below provides an overview of expenditures by week from mid-March to the end of May.

<b>Week Ending</b>	<b>Food &amp; Care Bags</b>	<b>Gift Cards</b>	<b>Credit Card</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Total</b>
March 20, 2020	\$257.32				\$257.32
March 27, 2020	\$926.51		\$175.46	\$1,540.00	\$2,641.97

April 3, 2020		\$219.28	\$245.29	\$640.00	\$1,104.57
April 10, 2020		\$204.31	\$20.53	\$440.93	\$665.77
April 17, 2020		\$289.77	\$562.51	\$920.00	\$1,772.28
April 24, 2020		\$105.06	\$117.98		\$223.04
May 1, 2020		\$101.62	\$290.00		\$391.62
May 8, 2020	\$65.23	\$77.11	\$1,000.00		\$1,142.34
May 15, 2020		\$148.68		\$1,611.00	\$1,759.68
May 22, 2020		\$58.07	\$240.76	\$334.00	\$632.83
May 29, 2020	\$249.49	\$30.00	\$444.75	\$590.00	\$1,314.24
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$1,498.55</b>	<b>\$1,233.90</b>	<b>\$3,097.28</b>	<b>\$6,075.93</b>	<b>\$11,905.66</b>

A majority of the supportive services have been for food and basic household necessities (food/care bags, Kroger and Walmart gift cards, and individual credit card purchases exceeding \$30). As part of this, Home to Hope even held two food drives when the pandemic first began to address immediate needs for food since food pantries and soup kitchens were at maximum capacity. Additionally, quite a bit of funding has been used to help participants with rent – many people who lost employment or experienced reduced hours have not been able to make their rent payments. There are also a handful of first month rent and deposit supportive services for individuals being released from ACRJ on HEM.

The original estimate was that Home to Hope would have approximately 200 clients by the end of 2020 and expend approximately \$33,000 over the course of the year on supportive services. Based on more recent numbers and increased need from clients due to COVID-19, the supportive services estimate could ultimately be closer to \$50,000, as Home to Hope has been providing higher dollar support to clients (e.g., rental assistance, car down payments, private transportation to and from employment (those on HEM cannot use public transportation), etc.).

Home to Hope will be reopening its physical location in phases beginning Monday, June 15, 2020. Staff looks forward to continuing its partnership with the jail as more individuals are released into the community, as well as serving others in the City with lived experience. Again, thank you for your consideration of our proposal to Red Light Management. If you have questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

*Hollie Lee*

Hollie Lee  
 Chief of Workforce Development Strategies  
 Charlottesville Office of Economic Development  
 610 E. Market Street; Charlottesville, VA 22902  
[leeh@charlottesville.org](mailto:leeh@charlottesville.org) | (434) 970-3117