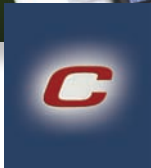
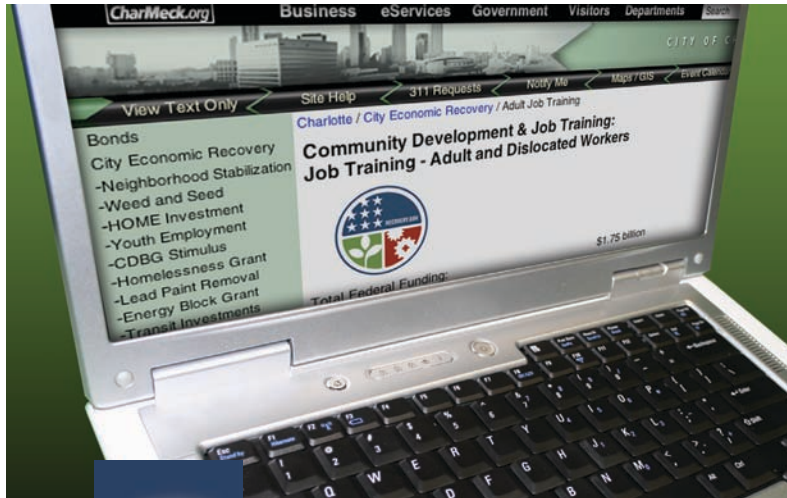


STIMULATING TIMES

J U L Y 2 0 0 9



City of Charlotte Pursues Stimulus Funds

Known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, cities can apply for funding to support eligible programs that create and save jobs; jump start the economy; and promote recovery and growth. Locally, the City is focusing its efforts on applying for grants in five categories: Public Safety, Community Development & Job Training, Environment, Energy and Transportation.

In the Public Safety category, the City of Charlotte has applied for grants that will assist the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department in accomplishing strategic goals such as hiring an additional 150 police officers, improving electronic communications, developing youth programs and equipping police vehicles. Additional grants if awarded could provide more community prosecutors and crime analysts as well as help expand efforts toward drug prevention, gang reduction, truancy intervention and prevention, and neighborhood safety.

An additional Public Safety grant of \$5 million could provide for construction of a new fire station at Eastland Mall.

Under the realm of Transportation, a number of eligible projects could assist the Charlotte region in addressing roads, providing congestion relief and improving air quality. Through a combination of stimulus grants, the state of North Carolina will be able to make necessary road improvements and the City plans to renovate the North Davidson Street Bus Garage and enhance public transit

security. In May, the City applied for a Transit Investments for Greenhouse Gas and Energy Reduction Grant to purchase up to 11 hybrid buses and to upgrade 19 new diesel buses to hybrid technology in the year 2012.

The largest category of grants in terms of the number of opportunities is Community Development & Job Training. The City has applied for a Community Development Block Grant of \$1.3 million which will be used for housing rehabilitation. Other grants include a Neighborhood Stabilization Competitive Grant to purchase foreclosed or abandoned homes and to rehabilitate, resell or redevelop these homes in order to stabilize neighborhoods. The City's Neighborhood & Business Services will manage the grant which includes up to 200 additional housing units.

This edition of *Stimulating Times* profiles two other Community Development & Job Training grants: a Lead Based Paint Grant to help rehab 250-300 homes and a Youth Employment Training and Summer Jobs program to put 453 eligible youth to work.

The largest single grant applied for is the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant (\$6.7 million) to be used to reduce fossil fuel emissions, reduce total energy use, and improve energy efficiency in the transportation, building and other sectors. The grant requires the development of an energy efficiency and conservation strategy.

For more details about the strategy and the Community-wide Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory and City Building Audits and Retrofits to be conducted, read the enclosed story "Energy Efficiency and the Quest for A Greener Charlotte."

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**AN UPDATE ON CHARLOTTE
STIMULUS FUNDING**

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timulus Leads to Healthier Homes

For 15 years Pearl Anderson lived in her home on Camp Greene Street, never knowing that her walls contained a dangerous poison. Last January, Anderson took part in a City-run program that inspects homes built before 1978 for lead paint.



The wall covering has been tied to several health problems over the years, including muscle and joint pain, nerve disorders and behavior and learning problems in children. Anderson and her family moved out of their home for a week as contractors removed the dangerous paint, replacing it with safer modern paints.

Since 1998 Charlotte has spent \$11 million to rid some 1,300 homes of the toxin, most of them in older, low-income areas. The City has now received \$2.9 million from the \$787 billion stimulus package to further the program. The stimulus money goes toward reducing lead hazards in an additional 275 homes, as well as providing outreach education and partial funding for a city-county screening program for children under the age of six.

Jamie Banks, a spokeswoman for the city's Neighborhood & Business Services, said officials are trying to figure out the best way to get the word out. "We can target these areas really well, so we may just do a grassroots kind of thing," she said. "It's going to have to be hands-on. We can't just put it on the website and hope they find it."

The problem is a serious one. According the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Charlotte could still have as many as 110,000 homes with lead-based paint. Lead paint transfers toxins through the air and by touch. Children are most at risk. Their brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to lead's damaging effects. If not detected early enough, children can suffer from brain damage, behavioral problems such as hyperactivity and slowed growth.

The paint is also harmful to adults, leading to health issues such as high blood pressure and hypertension, memory and concentration problems and any variety of nerve disorders. The City's lead-based paint program is one of the few that individuals can apply for through the City's website, charmeck.org.

"I'm glad I was able to find out about this," Anderson said. "I hope people out there living in houses built before 1978 will take part in the program."

E

Energy Efficiency and the Quest For A Greener Charlotte

It was a packed house earlier this month as more than 120 residents gathered in the Government Center

Meeting Chamber for a town hall meeting on an issue of growing importance. Such a scene would not have seemed out of place in some of the country's "green" cities, such as Seattle or Portland. But some were surprised to see the turnout in the Queen City, including the meeting's host, Councilman Edwin Peacock III.

"We have a subject that has clearly struck a chord with the public," he said.

Charlotte is applying for a \$6.7 million Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant, part of the massive \$787 billion stimulus bill.

Continued on Page 3

The City's lead-based paint program

To qualify residents must:

Own and live in a home built before 1978.

Earn no more than 80 percent of the median income, which is \$51,520 for a family of four.

Have a child under the age of 6 living in the home or as a frequent visitor.



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Energy Efficiency *Continued from page 2*

The basic goal of the block grant is to invest in projects that reduce fossil fuel emissions, reduce energy consumption and create new "green" jobs and renewable technologies.

Officials from several environmental groups attended the meeting, including the Sierra Club, the Catawba River Keeper Foundation and the Carolinas Clean Air Coalition. Though they represented different interests, most agreed it was time Charlotte tackled the issue.



Beth Clark
Charlotte Sierra Club

"It's great to see this getting some attention," said Beth Clark, of the Charlotte Sierra Club. "And I think it is exciting that the City is asking for so much public input. That's critical if you want to have the people buy into it."

Among her suggestions was an idea to create a pilot neighborhood of energy efficient homes, about 20 built or refurbished houses that could serve as an example for others. Clark said such a move could have long-lasting influence.

"It would be nice to see some of this used as seed money for a project that would outlive the three-year program," she said.

The City applied in May for the initial \$250,000 of the grant, which will be used to hire consultants. The consultants will help map out a strategy for the grant.

Assistant City Attorney Rob Phocas is spearheading Charlotte's efforts. He said that after the City is notified of its first grant award of \$250,000, officials have four months to detail their plan for spending the rest of the block grant money. The rest of the money, if approved, would come in two lump sums of about \$3.2 million apiece. The City would have three years to spend it.

"It's a beginning, especially for Charlotte," he said. "The slate of potential projects is pretty clean right now."

The City has already put together a list of shovel-ready projects, such as upgrading lighting in older buildings and looking into solar-thermal hot water systems for fire stations. But Phocas said the City is not wed to any of the ideas and will continue to solicit input from the public.

June Blotnick, executive director of the Carolinas Clean Air Coalition, said she would like to see the block grant address some transportation issues, such as idling regulation and wasted fuel. But ultimately she hopes some of the money saved by conserving energy will be reinvested in more efficiency programs.

"That amount of money sounds like a lot, but we could probably spend 10 times that much and still have work to do," she said. "But maybe this is a way to keep the momentum going and hopefully more money will come in."



stimulus Leads to Summer Jobs For Charlotte Youth

One of the goals of the \$787 billion stimulus bill is to create jobs. An important part of that plan is to help put young people to work.

About \$1.5 million in stimulus funds is being used to find jobs for about 450 Charlotteans between the ages of 16 and 24.

Brad Richardson, the City's business retention manager, said the stimulus money is being used to help find work for a segment of the population that often struggles.

The program employs only low-income participants who also have another barrier to work, such as having a child or being a high school drop-out. The stimulus money is running through four area agencies: Goodwill Industries Inc., Urban League Central-Carolinas, Arbor Education and Training and Friendship Community Development Corporation.

The money pays the youth's salaries.

"The idea is to get the most vulnerable among us into a work experience and to help get the money flowing in the economy," Richardson says.



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Stimulus Leads to Summer Jobs For Charlotte Youth *Continued from page 3*

Leola Smith, the director of A Happy Day Family Services Summer Camp, employs eight young people as a part of the program.

The camp is held at St. Luke Baptist Church, just off Norris Avenue. More than 20 students attend the 10-week academic camp.

The youth hired as a part of the stimulus program work as teacher assistants, earning \$8 an hour.

"It has been great," Smith says. "I can get the help that I need, help that I couldn't afford before, and the young people get job experience."

The state has set up a website for more info on the stimulus job program: jumpinthejobpool.com



Victoria Patton, 22 helps a young student at the A Happy Day Family Services Summer Camp

Helping young people get jobs is not a new thing for Charlotte.

For 23 years, the City has operated the Mayor's Youth Employment Program, which places high school students into jobs of their interest, including healthcare, financial services and hospitality.

About 50 kids have gone through the program this year. And last year the City started the pilot program Job Connections with Goodwill, which helps teens 14 to 18 find summer jobs.

This is the program's first full year. About 1,500 kids have been through the Youth Job Connection so far, finding jobs at places like Carowinds, as well as in department stores and at movie theaters.

For more information, visit www.youthjobconnection.com.

City of Charlotte Pursues Stimulus Funds *Continued from page 1*

In the area of Environment, the City has applied and received a \$2.8 million grant for two storm water projects which are currently being bid.

For a complete list of grants and project overviews, visit the City's Stimulus Newsroom at <http://newsroom.charmeck.org>.

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