

2022

McGruder ARP Request



Introduction



Dear ARP Review Committee,

Many hearts and hands make the daily magic happen at McGruder Center.

Despite the dilapidated conditions, community partners, neighbors, artists, funders, service providers, clients, students, and countless others have invested their time, energy, resources, and trust in this haven of hope & possibility.

With these collective efforts, we are building toward North Nashville's reparative future. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

With Gratitude & Joy,
M. Simone Boyd

The McGruder Model: Programming, Partners, and Collaboration

McGruder Family Resource Center (McGruder Center) is housed in a retired Metro Public Schools building in North Nashville supporting an intergenerational community. Currently, there are about eight partners that offer services and support to families and children.

Preston Taylor Ministries offers mentoring and after-school programming. The Nashville Food Project manages the community garden. Free Hearts supports families impacted by incarceration. Case management, counseling, food boxes, rent support, and other services are offered by Catholic Charities. Judge Rachel Bell operates the Music City Community Court, and Corner to Corner operates entrepreneurial training, coaching, and micro-loans. In addition, McGruder Center also houses workforce development training through a culinary arts program, plumbing assistant training program, and a [sewing-training academy](#) that is manufacturing and shipping regionally. There is also the potential for a child-care training facility!

McGruder Center serves as a hub for each of these partners to exist under the same roof. This unique model makes it possible for community members to visit one site for many different services. The need for connected services was amplified during the pandemic and partners stepped up to serve:

- the garden provided a safe place for community connection
- Free Hearts took their programming for families impacted by incarceration online
- and Corner to Corner supported small businesses & many received funding from the Small Business Recovery Fund.

The McGruder model also creates opportunities for deep collaboration between partners. Each week during the summer, young scholars from Preston Taylor Ministries visited the garden for tailored programming. Another example is neighbors coming to receive food boxes and staying to learn more about Catholic Charities' senior support classes.



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Neighborhood Context: North Nashville

In 2018, [Brookings Institute](#) reported that 37208 had the highest rate of incarceration in the country due to generational poverty and lack of opportunity. McGruder Center is a beacon of hope. Because it is providing opportunities, care, and has the potential to continue supporting neighbors on their paths out of poverty.

Additionally, investing in the McGruder Center insures that other organizations will not be pushed out due to rising rent. As rising property values and encroaching developers push service providers out of the neighborhood, like the [Little Pantry That Could](#), the role McGruder plays in neighbors' lives is growing. I believe the use of services will increase as access to the Center is expanded through the North Nashville Transit Center– located just two blocks away at 26th Avenue and Clarksville Highway.

The Problem

The problem is that **McGruder Center has suffered from years of neglect and is in dire need of renovation to make it ADA-compliant and expand its capacity.** In 2020, the Mayor's Office greenlighted a \$2.2 Million expenditure to begin the renovations which would have included:

- renovating the 1960s (?) bathrooms and adding an elevator to access the second floor
- removing asbestos and renovating an unusable wing
- creating several private offices for counseling
- resurfacing and paving the parking lot
- and other ADA-compliant upgrades

When I visited McGruder Center in early August, I was told that the pandemic and the rise in construction costs have reduced our purchasing power and most of the upgrades are no longer feasible. This is devastating news. Because community members, like me, have advocated for this renovation going back to the Barry Administration in 2016.

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Philanthropic Investments: Lasting Sustainable Impact

Community philanthropic organizations have also invested in the space. The Frist Foundation has provided seed funding for the Sewing Academy, and capacity-building support for The Nashville Food Project. Annie E. Casey Foundation provided funding for renovation-related community engagement. The United Way has provided operational support. The Healing Trust has provided operating support or rapid response grants to Corner to Corner, Preston Taylor Ministries, Catholic Charities, Free Hearts, and the Nashville Food Project. McGruder is also the location for a variety of community meetings that have led to important investments in the neighborhood, like the [37208 Fund](#).



I believe an ARP investment in renovating McGruder Center would have a lasting sustainable impact on North Nashville and will serve as a catalyst for further local and national philanthropic investments. I also believe renovating the building would attract additional program partners that are committed to moving North Nashville forward.

ARP Guidelines and Funding Request

Based on the [ARP Fact Sheet](#), I think this allocation would fall under the guideline for Serving the Hardest-Hit Communities by a) addressing educational disparities b) investments in housing and neighborhoods, and c) promoting healthy childhood environments.

Based on construction estimates received from Metro General Services and insight from a local construction professional, I am respectfully requesting **\$1,743,936 be allocated to complete the previously planned renovations of McGruder Center.**^[1] An ARP investment in McGruder Center would have a transformational impact on the economic future of North Nashville residents and Greater Nashville.

Access for Greater Nashville: North Nashville Transit Center

While McGruder Center is housed in the heart of North Nashville, I believe an ARP allocation has the potential to impact Greater Nashville. According to the [Nashville Business Journal](#), “Seven routes will connect at the North Nashville Transit Center, more than any other place in WeGo's network except for its main WeGo Central facility.”

McGruder Family Resource Center is a four-minute walk (0.2 miles) from the North Nashville Transit Center. The transit center is set to come online in early 2024.

As noted previously on page 4, the following items are the projects that were not included in the current renovations and are requested to be completed with ARP Act funds for a total of **\$1,750,000 (rounded from above).**

- Renovating the 1960's bathrooms and adding an elevator to access the second floor
- Removing asbestos and renovating an unusable wing
- Creating several private offices for counseling
- Resurfacing and paving the parking lot
- Other ADA-compliant upgrades

^[1] Similar to MDHA's Envision Casey request, this request is for “gap” funding to complete the planned renovation that became unfeasible due to the impact of COVID-19 and the increase in construction costs.

November 13, 2022

Dear ARP Review Committee,

This letter is to express support for the capital request for investment at the McGruder Family Resource Center. For many years, philanthropy has invested in collaborative work among the nonprofit sector. This is because we know when nonprofits work together, clients benefit.

One of the most impactful ways our community can support the nonprofit sector is through shared space models. No nonprofit can meet all of the needs of their clients. But when nonprofits share physical space, it means that clients can connect with other providers that are there to serve. Whether its food, workforce training, tax preparation services, afterschool programs, childcare - our community is built and supported through the consistent coordination of the nonprofit community.

In our work, we have supported many of these centers operationally or through capital investment, including, St. Luke's Community House, Casa Azafran, the Youth Opportunity Center and the McGruder Family Resource Center. Out of those Centers, McGruder is the only one housed in a building that is owned by Metro Nashville, making it difficult for philanthropic investment in the actual structure.

We remain committed to assisting with the programming offered at McGruder Center and have supported Nashville Food Project, Corner to Corner, Catholic Charities and United Way, among others.

We have watched the deliberations of the ARP Committee and appreciate the thoughtfulness of all members of the Committee. Based on committee conversations, we believe this aligns with the goals and strategies of ARP funding. Further, it gives Metro the opportunity to fulfill a previously approved allocation that was depleted due to the dramatic increase in construction costs. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Corinne C. Bergeron

Corinne C. Bergeron
Chief Executive Officer
The Frist Foundation

Samuel Jackson

Samuel Jackson
Vice President of Programs and Grants
The Healing Trust

