

## Housing & Neighborhood Services Newsletter: City grant opportunities, COVID-19 rent, mortgage, utility relief, & more



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### City grants help bring Little Free Pantries to Grier Heights

Alexandria Brown grew up in Washington, D.C. and remembers corner stores everywhere in her neighborhood, where anyone could quickly get the necessities they need like food, paper products, and other conveniences. The eleventh grader now lives in the Grier Heights neighborhood in Charlotte, and convenience stores are nowhere to be found. According to her mom, Stacey Brown, the president of the Grier Heights Community Improvement Association, the last corner store property in the neighborhood was bought by a developer over a decade ago, and there hasn't been a store since. More than 3,000 people live in Grier Heights and 46 percent of its residents rely on [food assistance](#). Only 56 percent live within a [half mile of a grocery store](#). For those who don't have transportation or have mobility issues and can't walk, easy access to good food can be difficult.

So, Alexandria decided to do something about it.

"I researched a lot – nationally and globally – about food insecurity," she said. For her Gold Star project for Girl Scouts, Alexandria decided that she wanted to build Little Free Pantries for her neighborhood. When COVID-19 hit, the need to access food and other necessities became even greater. Researchers predict that [one in six Americans could go hungry](#) as the pandemic continues.

Alexandria learned about the Little Free Pantry grants from the City of Charlotte's Housing & Neighborhood Services Department through her mom. As a career and college consultant, Stacey is always looking for opportunities for students, to be able to find leadership experiences and opportunities to improve resumes to help make them more competitive for college. While

normally she would learn about city grants through her role in her neighborhood association, Stacey quickly realized this grant could be a good fit for Alexandria's project, too.

With help from the grant, Alexandria built her first Little Free Pantry in May, and two more have gone up in following months. The three pantries are filled every week and a half to two weeks with canned food, non-perishables, paper goods and other personal items. Learn more about these Little Free Pantries [here](#).

Interested in bringing something like this to your own neighborhood? Learn more about our Neighborhood Matching Grant (NMG) program [here](#), and see below for more details about the next NMG workshop.



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**RAMP CLT: COVID-19 Emergency Housing & Utility Assistance Applications Reopen**

Applications for rental, mortgage, and utility assistance have reopened. If you need help paying

these bills because of a COVID-19 hardship, submit your application at [rampclt.com](http://rampclt.com).

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## Charlotte Water Pandemic Assistance

Charlotte Water customers – are you struggling to make water bill payments? There are resources to help. Act fast before disconnections resume later this year and because funding is limited.

- The COVID-19 Rent and Mortgage Assistance Program (RAMP CLT) is open to individuals and families experiencing a delay in making their rent, mortgage, utility, and Charlotte Water payments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To apply for funding through the program, visit [rampclt.com](http://rampclt.com) and complete the utility assistance application.
- Crisis Assistance Ministry provides curbside utility assistance for Mecklenburg County residents. For more information, call (704) 371-3001, visit [crisisassistance.org](http://crisisassistance.org), or in person at Crisis Assistance Ministry at 500-A Spratt St. Charlotte, NC 28206.
- Common Wealth Charlotte, a local nonprofit organization, offers 0% interest loans of up to \$300 to qualified Charlotte Water customers to avoid service disconnection. The Common Wealth COVID-19 Loan has a six-month term of repayment after a three-month no payment grace period. If interested, Text CLTWater to 474747 and complete the request form.

To make a payment anytime, go online at [charlottewater.org](http://charlottewater.org) or download the CLT+ app. You may also make a payment at 7-11, CVS, Family Dollar, or ACE Cash Express. If you have any questions, please contact 311 (or 704-336-7600).

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## Neighborhood Matching Grant Pre-Application Workshop: Feb. 16

Want to build a pocket park? Install a little free pantry? Put in a neighborhood welcome sign? Your neighborhood may qualify for up to \$25,000 in our [Neighborhood Matching Grant](#) (NMG) program!

Join us Feb. 16 at 12 p.m. for a NMG pre-application workshop. This session will help you think through project ideas, provide instruction for completing the online application, and tell you what to expect during the application and project implementation processes. Attendance at a workshop is required prior to applying for a grant. This workshop will take place via Zoom. To participate, please register [here](#). For more information, contact Jackie Clare at [jackie.clare@charlottenc.gov](mailto:jackie.clare@charlottenc.gov).

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## Keep Charlotte Beautiful \$500 Micro Grant

Have an idea for a beautification project in your community? Keep Charlotte Beautiful (KCB) is currently accepting applications for a unique microgrant opportunity. These competitive \$500

grants are open to neighborhoods, businesses, nonprofits, schools, and individuals citywide. Projects must be visible to the community, be of sound and sustainable design, and fall within the four tenets of KCB: litter prevention, waste reduction and recycling, beautification, and community greening. For more information, including examples of projects and a breakdown of scoring criteria, click [here](#). Ready to apply? Start an application [here](#). Applications are due by March 15.

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### **\$500 COVID-19 Art Grants**

Mini-grants of \$500 are available to create art and multilingual messaging that inspires trust in the COVID-19 vaccine. Messages in foreign language are encouraged! Your art must include a tagline expressing the importance of vaccinations. Your art will support a public vaccination campaign in partnership with the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. Submissions in all languages are welcome. We are especially seeking submissions in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, French, Chinese, Arabic, Tamil, Hindi, Telugu, Russian, Chin, Nepali, and Burmese.

Visual arts like graphic design, photos, paintings, and drawings are acceptable. All submissions must be original works of art. Artists must be based in Charlotte. Draft designs/sketches are due on February 21. Learn more and submit your design [here](#).

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### **Out-of-School Time Request for Proposals**

Do you have a program that helps after school youth? We've launched our Request For Proposal (RFP) process for funding eligible Out-of-School Time (OST) organizations serving youth for the 2021-2022 school year (Sept-Aug). Organizations may apply for this ONE-year RFP to receive up to \$1,200 per eligible youth up to a maximum of \$200,000 per organization. Due to current economic uncertainty, organizations will also detail within their proposal how they would operate if funding were reduced to a maximum of \$150,000 or \$100,000.

Proposals are due February 15 by 2 p.m. You can find the RFP [here](#). For more details about OST, click [here](#).

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### **Digital Navigators**

Everything from civic engagement to economic mobility is impacted by the ability to access technology safely and effectively. Digital equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services. The Digital Navigator Program helps community members navigate to and through:

- Signing up for affordable home broadband internet service
- Purchasing affordable technology

- Basic device and connectivity issues
- Learning new digital skills

Individuals can call 3-1-1 to connect to a digital navigator. Learn more about this program [here](#).

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### **LYNX Silver Line Public Meetings**

Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) is studying potential refinements to the proposed LYNX Silver Line light rail project. Beginning Tuesday, February 16, CATS will host a series of live virtual public meetings to discuss the project and get community feedback on the recommended changes. For more information, visit [ridetransit.org/LYNXSilverLine](http://ridetransit.org/LYNXSilverLine).

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