



Devan Filchak | The Journal Gazette

Joshua Gale, executive director of Just Neighbors Interfaith Homeless Network, introduces the Same City food truck the organization will pilot with grant money on Thursday. Photo by Devan Filchak

Friday, May 28, 2021 1:00 am

City giving \$540,000 to 19 local nonprofits

Leaders announce use of federal funds for grants

DEVAN FILCHAK | The Journal Gazette

Fort Wayne is investing nearly \$540,000 in grants to 19 local nonprofit programs.

The federal funding comes from the Emergency Solutions Grant and the Community Development Block Grant. Nonprofit leaders and city officials filled the lobby of Wellspring Interfaith Social Services for the news conference Thursday.

Nonprofit organizations apply for the grants, and a volunteer committee scores the applications to make recommendations on funding. The funds announced Thursday are more than the typical annual grant allocations because the city received additional funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Two of the funded projects were highlighted during the news conference. Joshua Gale, executive director of Just Neighbors Interfaith Homeless Network, introduced the Same City Food Truck, a pilot program using a food truck to bring high-quality meals to “the most vulnerable population.”

The Same City truck will also connect the organization to the homeless population and will build trust, which Gale said is the best longterm solution to solving homelessness.

“When families are in crisis, what we look to do is to be where they are and help them in the place that they are at,” he said Thursday.

For Wellspring, the funding is helping it do something it already does – provide personal hygiene kits. But now it can do so at a higher rate, which will serve the anticipated 7,700 low-income and homeless residents, said Melissa Rinehart, executive director of Wellspring.

The kits, which cost between \$6 and \$10, include soap, shampoo, razors, deodorant, toothpaste, shaving cream, toothbrushes, toilet paper and supplemental feminine products.

“We know firsthand that when you look good, you feel good, and you do better,” Rinehart said.

Mayor Tom Henry said that helping find funding for the nonprofit partners the city has is “imperative, particularly in today's environment.”

“It's obvious that cities cannot take care of all of their residents by themselves. We need to have partners,” Henry said.

dfilchak@jg.net

Nonprofit grant recipients

- A Mother's Hope, case management program
- Building a Stronger Family, Shadows for Success and Workshops
- Language Services Network, English Innovations – ESL classes
- The Literacy Alliance, Pre-HSE and ESOL classes
- Lutheran Social Services, LSSI Works
- YMCA, college and career readiness
- Brightpoint (two grants), Coordinated Entry program and rapid re-housing/homelessness prevention
- Just Neighbors Interfaith Homeless Network, Same City food truck
- Catholic Charities, Mission Possible
- Amani Family Services, coordinated multicultural outreach
- HealthVisions, wellness initiative
- The League, Advocacy: Helping People with Disabilities Achieve Self-Sufficiency

- Wellspring Interfaith Social Services, hygiene kits
- YWCA NEIN, shelter operations
- Vincent Village, shelter operations and essential services
- St. Joseph Missions, essential services
- Housing Opportunity Program, rapid re-housing