

Edwards,Michelle

From: Susan Turner <sturner@terrehautechildrensmuseum.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 27, 2021 4:23 PM
To: Azar, George; DeBaun,Curtis; Boland,Tammy; Auler,Amy; Elliott,Earl; Loudermilk,Cheryl; Nation,Todd; Garrison,Neil; Crossen,Martha
Cc: Edwards,Michelle
Subject: *Ext!* American Rescue Plan Funding and THCM
Attachments: Letter to TH City Council.pdf

****External Email - Think Before You Click****

- Helpdesk

Good afternoon,

I hope this email finds you well. I wanted to reach out regarding the American Rescue Plan and the funds the city will be receiving. I know you have many options to consider when planning for the use of these funds. I wanted to share with you about the Terre Haute Children's Museum and how some of those funds can help us secure our future for years to come. I have attached a letter to this email.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this in more detail, if you are interested.

Have a wonderful evening.

Be well,

ST

Susan Turner, MLD
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Terre Haute Children's Museum
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April 27, 2021

Terre Haute City Council
17 Harding Avenue
Terre Haute, IN 47807

Dear Councilmembers,

Children's museums and science centers across Indiana remain in a crisis following a series of funding decisions that unfortunately left us out of meaningful federal relief. The good news is **you are in a powerful position to help** these community gems survive thanks to the recently approved American Rescue Plan.

The federal government has empowered local leaders to use relief funds to offer direct support for nonprofit businesses that were disproportionately affected by the on-going shutdown associated with COVID-19.

The Terre Haute Children's Museum, as you know, has been serving Terre Haute and the communities of west central Indiana as an invaluable educational resource and visitor attraction for decades. As an independent nonprofit, we have a history of working hard to carve out an existence through earned revenue, private support, and grants. The global pandemic forced the Terre Haute Children's Museum to completely shut down for over 3 months in 2020. Add insult to injury, when we reopened, the crowds were lackluster to say the least. We were hardly seeing 25% of our normal customers and our membership program had plummeted. The extended closure and marginal reopening has caused a loss of 35 percent of our earned income (62 percent if you remove the grants and unrestricted funds we received in 2020), forcing us to compete for extremely limited dollars from donors and relief programs that were not designed for us.

Section 9901 of the American Rescue Plan gives cities and counties local authority to use federal funding at their discretion to give "assistance to households, small businesses, and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries" that were left out of specific federal relief plans. Essentially, you know your community best!

Although the federal Shuttered Venues Grant was designed to help some cultural entities, the legislation included language that left out most children's museums and science centers, including the Terre Haute Children's Museum. This decision cut off any significant relief that would have helped our organization attempt to restore operations.

Children in our community need playful learning opportunities now more than ever. For the past year, children have been facing trauma, illness, and disruption in their households. Research shows play significantly helps children cope and recover from these health threats. As our community recuperates, THCM is ready to serve as a part of the solution to help children bounce back.

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We have been fortunate enough to receive two rounds of PPP and several grants, but that doesn't account for the nearly \$300,000 in lost revenue from 2020 or cover the losses we are still experiencing in 2021. We've lost over a 1/3 of our budgeted revenue, and we have still been able to serve our mission and reopen our doors to the public. I'm very proud of this fact, but it is not a sustainable course we are on. We need long term help.

The effects of the pandemic in 2020 and 2021 will force some museums to close forever, but that doesn't have to be the case for every community. You can help!

We are asking the City of Terre Haute and Vigo County to **stand with local children**, caregivers, and schools and help a hard-hit local institution remain a community asset for generations to come. **Please budget funds from the American Rescue Plan to indeed rescue our children's museums** and we vow to continue our mission to serve the children of Indiana.

I would love to hear from you and talk with you more about this request. You may contact me at sturner@terrehautechildrensmuseum.com or via my cell phone at 812-230-2340.

Thank you for your consideration and for your swift action.

Sincerely,

Susan Turner, MLD
Executive Director
Terre Haute Children's Museum

CC:

George Azar, Councilman-At-Large
Curtis DeBaun IV, Councilman-At-Large
Tammy Boland, Councilman-At-Large
Amy Auler, District 1 Councilperson
O. Earl Elliott, District 2 Councilperson
Cheryl Loudermilk, District 3 Councilperson
Todd Nation, District 4 Councilperson
Neil Garrison, District 5 Councilperson
Martha Crossen, District 6 Councilperson
Michelle Edwards

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