



CITY OF ALLENTOWN

No. 52

RESOLUTION

R – 2024

Introduced by the Administration on January 17, 2024

Authorizes the participation in the 2024 cohort of the Pennsylvania Blueprint Communities program.

Resolved by the Council of the City of Allentown, That

WHEREAS, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh (FHLBank Pittsburgh), partners with the Pennsylvania Downtown Center (PDC) to implement the Blueprint Communities® initiative which serves as a catalyst for revitalizing older communities and neighborhoods by building strong local leadership, collaboration, and development capacity; developing sound local and regional planning skills; and encouraging coordinated investments in targeted communities by public and private funders; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh supports PDC in providing program grant funding and community revitalization training which emphasizes a team approach and will provide the educational components necessary for communities to begin developing long-term, strategic plans. Focusing on such fundamentals as leadership, capacity building, goal setting and strategic planning, the revitalization training will provide the necessary knowledge and skill-based learning for communities to initiate a community renewal and growth effort; and

WHEREAS, the City of Allentown, Lehigh County supports and promotes neighborhood and/or community revitalization, including adaptive reuse of older buildings, investment in public infrastructure, active transportation, supporting community engagement activity, building local leadership, developing collaborative partnerships, and practicing sound local and regional planning skills; and

WHEREAS, the City of Allentown City Council seeks to support the development of a Blueprint Communities® Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City of Allentown proposes to support the community developed Blueprint Communities® Plan;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Allentown City Council hereby authorizes Trevor Tormann, Senior Planner, to participate as the local government representative on the Blueprint Communities® community team.

Legislative Template

- What department or bureau is this bill originating from? Where did the initiative for the bill originate?
 - The Department of Community and Economic Development

- Summary and facts of the bill.
 - In November 2023, the City of Allentown DCED partnered with the Allentown Housing Authority (AHA) and Embassy Bank for the Lehigh Valley (Embassy Bank) to submit an application to the FHLBank Blueprint Communities 2024 initiative. Trevor Tormann, Senior Planner in Planning & Zoning, supported AHA, the lead applicant, prepare the coalition's application.
 - In February 2024, AHA was notified by FHLBank Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania Downtown Center of Allentown's selection as a Blueprint Community. As lead applicant, AHA is coordinating with City of Allentown staff to secure a resolution documenting city support for this community planning initiative.
 - This resolution authorizes Trevor Tormann, Senior Planner, to represent the City of Allentown as a participant in the Blueprint Communities community team. He has been the DCED project lead for this initiative during the application phase in coordination with AHA and Embassy Bank.

- Purpose – Please include the following in your explanation:
 - a. What does the bill do? What are the specific goals or tasks the bill seeks to accomplish?
 - i. This resolution authorizes Trevor Tormann, Senior Planner, to represent the City of Allentown as a participant in the Blueprint Communities community team. As a participant, he will be required to attend at least 2/3 community team training sessions and events between April 2024 and December 2025.

 - b. What are the benefits of doing this? What are the drawbacks?
 - i. The Allentown Blueprint Communities community team will engage in an 18-month community planning process with the primary deliverable being an implementable strategic plan that covers the neighborhoods within Census Tracts 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10 (i.e., The Wards, Center City). A strategic plan will address housing needs, barriers to employment, business creation and retention, infrastructure improvements, and more.

 - c. How does this bill relate to the City's vision/mission/priorities?
 - i. The Allentown Blueprint Communities community team proposes to use the community planning training process provided by this initiative to prepare an implementable strategic plan that builds on the vision of the 1st and 6th Wards Neighborhood Plan (c. 2022). This team plans to align this vision with the City of Allentown Recompete Plan and the anticipated recommendations of the Housing Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan.

- Financial Impact – Please include the following in your explanation:

- a. Cost (initial and ongoing)
 - i. n/a

- b. Benefits (initial and ongoing)
 - i. Participation in the Blueprint Communities initiative provides the following benefits:
 1. FHLBank Pittsburgh Blueprint Communities designation for 10 years.
 2. Technical assistance and expertise in developing an implementable strategic plan.
 3. Opportunities for community members to provide input and support in building and implementing the plan.
 4. Coaching from revitalization experts in both group and individual community settings tailored to each community's needs and opportunities.
 5. An implementable strategic plan.
 6. A community profile containing key indicators and trends, which will include demographic, economic, consumer spending, and housing reports.
 7. Program grant support for project implementation, marketing, and community engagement.
 8. Funding for capacity building efforts and mentorship opportunities and additional support for ongoing program activities.
 9. Funding opportunities and strengthened relationships between local leaders and regional, statewide, federal, and philanthropic funding source representatives.

- Funding Sources – Please include the following in your explanation:
 - a. If transferring funds, please make sure to give specific account names and numbers. If appropriating funds from a grant, please list the agency awarding the grant.
 - n/a

- Priority status – Are there any deadlines to be aware of?
 - A copy of this resolution is requested by the Pennsylvania Downtown Center (PDC) by **no later than April 12th, 2024**. PDC authorization of an official press release on Allentown's Blueprint Community designation is conditioned on the receipt of a resolution documenting city support of the FHLBank Pittsburgh Blueprint Communities initiative.

- Why should Council unanimously support this bill?
 - Council should unanimously support this resolution to affirm Allentown's participation in the Blueprint Communities initiative. This program is a real opportunity to organize the layers of investment the City anticipates channeling to these neighborhoods.