**Talking Points for ARPA Funding Allocation Task Force Public Input Meetings**

**What:** The City’s ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Task Force is holding meetings to receive input from the public. Members of the public are invited to provide testimony on how they would like to see ARPA funds used. The Task Force is charged with making recommendations to the City Council for spending the City’s remaining ARPA dollars.

 **When and Where**:

* This Saturday, February 4 from 10:00 a.m. to noon, Riverworks, 526 E. Concordia Ave. *\*This is the hearing where we need the most turn out\**
* Saturday, February 11 from 10:00 a.m. to noon, Mitchell Street Library, 906 W. Historic Mitchell St. (Bilingual Spanish Session)
* Wednesday, February 22 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. - Virtual meeting: bit.ly/ARPA2023

**The Goal:** Demonstrate strong community support for investing $5 million ARAP funding in a Lead-Free and Healthy Homes Fund. This seed money investment will support the establishment of a $100 million fund over the next several year.

**Talking Points**

**Defining the problem:**

* Lead exposure, at even low levels, can damage a child’s developing brain and cause lifelong, often irreversible, problems that affect education, behavior, and health.
* No amount of lead exposure is considered safe.
* Lead is a public safety issue in many ways, including that lead exposure is connected to emotional regulation, impulse control, attention and correlates to crime rates.
* Lead is a major racial justice issue. Lead-based paint and leaded dust are the primary causes of lead poisoning in Milwaukee. The highest rates of lead poisoning in Milwaukee are in parts of the city that were historically redlined and that have housing stock that has not been maintained.

**Explain why you care**

* How are you personally concerned about the lead crisis in the city?
* Why do you want to see change?

**The Ask:**

* Urge the Task Force to invest $5 million ARPA dollars to establish a Lead Free and Healthy Homes Fund for Milwaukee.
* Investment in a fund would spur additional private philanthropic dollars and help Milwaukee replicate the successes of other cities, like Cleveland, which have successfully formed innovative public-private partnerships. For example, the Cleveland City Council contributed about $17 million of ARPA funding to Cleveland’s “Lead Safe Home Fund.” Just last year, the Cleveland Fund announced it had received a total of $115 million, mostly from private sources.
* A Lead-Free and Healthy Homes Fund would be able to provide loans and grants to property owners for the removal of lead hazards, matching the level of support with the level of financial need. It would also ensure that community-based services and workforce development efforts are coordinated with the deployment of capital.
* The Fund would also have the flexibility to address other critical health and energy burden issues while abating lead in homes. The Fund will improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and help prevent other serious health problems like childhood asthma.

**Questions and Answers**

**Q: Didn’t the City already invest a significant amount in lead remediation and workforce programs in the first tranche of funding? Why would we invest more?**

**A:** COLE is grateful that the City invested ARPA funds in the Milwaukee Health Department. This funding is dedicated to remediating approximately 850 homes when children **are already poisoned** at blood lead levels at or above 10 micrograms per deciliter. The funding does not address prevention or removing lead hazards when a child’s blood lead level is below 10 micrograms per deciliter.

However, **a Lead Free and Healthy Homes Fund could focus on removing lead hazards to prevent lead poisoning** and, therefore, would address a critical gap.

Moreover, we know the city alone cannot provide the amount of funding that will be needed to truly address the lead crisis.

That is why COLE is prioritizing the establishment of a fund. Through this model, **a public investment of second tranche ARPA dollars could spur additional investments of private dollars, creating a multiplier effect.** The Fund would have the ability to structure assistance in the form of loans, meaning that ARPA dollars and private dollars can make a greater impact over a longer period of time.

Therefore, a Lead-Free and Healthy Homes Fund would build off of and complement existing efforts, focusing on preventive removal of lead hazards and supporting private landlords to address their properties.

**Q**: Will philanthropic leaders come forward to contribute?

**A:** COLE has had promising conversations with philanthropic leaders. We’re asking the City to lead. An initial commitment from the City would go a long way to getting buy-in from foundations, health care institutions and lenders.

Link to Prospectus: [Milwaukee Lead-Free and Healthy Homes Fund Prospectus](https://www.canva.com/design/DAFLHJ8aywQ/u-z7lBzNMEvOf5x03gclKQ/view?utm_content=DAFLHJ8aywQ&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=publishsharelink#6)