



## Request for Qualifications Developer/Owner/Operator for a Community Center Serving Bridge Lake Point and Waunona Neighborhood

The Request for Qualifications seeking a developer/owner/operator for a community center serving Bridge Lake Point and Waunona Neighborhood requires the following elements be included in your RFQ response. Responses must be submitted electronically to the City of Madison Community Development Division by **noon (CST) on April 26, 2019**.  
Email to: [cddapplications@cityofmadison.com](mailto:cddapplications@cityofmadison.com)

### APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of Lead Applicant/ Owner/Operator:	Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc. (Bridge Lake Point Waunona Neighborhood Center)		
Mailing Address:	1917 Lake Point Drive		
Telephone:	608-441-6991	Fax:	608-441-6993
Project Contact:	Thomas Solyst	Email Address:	tsolyst@veracourt.org
Federal EIN:	39-1945609	DUNS #:	021603985

### AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

If selected, applicant hereby agrees to comply with the City of Madison Ordinance 39.02 and file either an exemption or an affirmative action plan with the Department of Civil Rights. A Model Affirmative Action Plan and instructions are available at <http://www.cityofmadison.com/dcr/aaFormsID.cfm>.

### LOBBYING REGULATED

Notice regarding lobbying ordinance: If you are seeking approval of a development that has over 40,000 gross square feet of non-residential space, or a residential development of over 10 dwelling units, or if you are seeking assistance from the City with a value of over \$10,000 (this includes grants, loans, TIF, or similar assistance), then you likely are subject to Madison’s lobbying ordinance, sec. 2.40, MGO. You are required to register and report your lobbying. Please consult the City Clerk for more information. Failure to comply with the lobbying ordinance may result in fines of \$1,000 to \$5,000.

### CITY OF MADISON CONTRACTS

If selected, applicant agrees to comply with all applicable local, state and federal provisions. A sample contract that includes standard provisions may be obtained by contacting the Community Development Division at (608) 266-6520.

The City of Madison reserves the right to negotiate the final terms of a contract with the selected agency.

### SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT

Enter Name: TS

By entering your initials in this box initials you are electronically signing your name as the submitter of the application and agree to the terms listed above.

Date: April 25, 2019



**A. IDENTIFICATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT TEAM**

1. Identify the key project team members and affiliates who would become directly responsible for the various aspects of the proposed development and any other key consultants, if known. Identify the lead project manager for your team.

Name	Company	Role in Development	Contact Person	Phone
James Gersich	Dimension IV Madison Design Group	Architect		608-829-4453
Victoria Holland	Dimension Development LLC	Real Estate Consultant		608-442-0006
Joseph Shumow	Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren s.c.	Attorney		608-229-2245
Timothy Radelet	Retired Attorney	Volunteer Legal Advisor		608-335-2255
Dana Chabot	Independent CPA with his own practice serving not-for-profit organizations	Certified Public Accountant		608-219-2037
Thomas Solyst	Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc.	Executive Director	Lead Project Manager	608-246-8372
Arturo Ambriz	Bridge Lake Point Waunona Neighborhood Center	BLW Center Program Director		608-441-6991
Rebecca Ressler	Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc.	Fundraising		608-246-8372

*DISCLOSURE: Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc. may, with the prior consent of the City, set up a new subsidiary to own/operate this project. The subsidiary would be wholly owned/controlled by Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc.*

2. Identify the key entities comprising your team, describing briefly their respective backgrounds and history and the availability of key assigned personnel to the team.

BLW’s team represents a broad range of skills in the development field. The key members listed above have been meeting to discuss the future BLW Center’s development since August 2018 and will continue to offer their expertise throughout the design and construction of the building. Summaries of the key entities are included below. Complete resumes for team members are available upon request. Descriptions of their roles in development are described in A3.

**James Gersich, Architect - Dimension IV Madison Design Group**

**Skills: real estate development, large-scale construction projects, designing multi-use centers**

Mr. Gersich has served as design architect, project architect, project manager, and construction administrator on a wide array of projects. He has been a licensed architect since 1975 and brings considerable experience in renovation and expansion-type projects. He has successfully developed the following projects, to name a few:

- Badger Rock Center in Madison, WI
- Verona Public Library with Community Room in Verona, WI
- Memorial Public Library and Community Center in Brodhead, WI
- Martin Street Homeless Day Resource Center in Madison, WI

**Victoria Holland, Principal - Dimension Development LLC****Skills: real estate development, large-scale construction projects**

Ms. Holland has held a number of positions in the tax credit affordable housing industry since 1991. In 2004, she became a partner in Dimension Development, LLC which offers affordable housing financing consulting services. Dimension Development, LLC partners with nonprofits, Community Development Authorities, Housing Authorities, and other housing professionals to secure financing to build new or rehabilitate existing affordable housing in their communities. She has also been an active member of BLW's Steering Committee since its origination and is a resident of the Waunona neighborhood.

**Joseph Shumow, Attorney - Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren s.c.****Skills: real estate development, legal**

Mr. Shumow is a shareholder in Reinhart's Real Estate Practice and a trusted advisor to a variety of tax credit, real estate, and corporate clients. His tax credit practice focuses on representing developers, credit allocators, lenders, and investors involved with low-income housing, new markets, and historic tax credit transactions. He also represents clients in acquisition, development, leasing, and entitlement of real estate transactions and provides business advice to nonprofits, governmental entities, and corporate clients.

Mr. Shumow appreciates that his career is not only personally fulfilling but also directly involved in the betterment of society as a whole. The bulk of his work is related to affordable housing finance and development, and he has significant experience in structuring deals between developers, owners, investors, and others involved in affordable housing development.

**Timothy Radelet, Attorney (retired)****Skills: real estate development, legal**

Mr. Radelet is a retired Madison lawyer who for 38 years focused his practice primarily on the financing and development of low-income housing, especially when a nonprofit or government entity was involved. He primarily represented housing owners, developers, and financiers on matters related to real estate, public charities, corporate governance, structuring of housing ownership and financing, property taxation, income tax credits, and debt and grant financing from various federal agencies, the state government, and counties and municipalities. Mr. Radelet was staff counsel and then general counsel with Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority from 1980 to 1984, and then again general counsel from 2010 to 2014.

From 1984 to 2010 he was an attorney with the law firm of Foley & Lardner LLP. He was a specialist in housing development and finance, especially for low-income, moderate-income, special needs, and elderly households, and including multifamily, single family, condominium, cooperative, co-housing, land trust, assisted living, and life estate. He has broad expertise in the development process, debt and equity finance, government finance, complex multi-layered finance, private and public securities offerings, tax (tax credits, tax exempt bonds, public charities, tax increment financing, property taxation), construction, zoning, and property management. He represented nonprofit and profit-motivated entities (developers, owners, property manager, and service provider), government entities, and lenders. Through this position, he provided hundreds of hours each year of *pro bono* and reduced-rate legal services to nonprofits and individuals.

From 2014 to 2017, he worked with Movin' Out, a community nonprofit that connects low-income people with permanent disabilities to homeownership and rental housing by providing housing counseling, favorable loans, and rental housing.

Mr. Radelet also has experience working with community centers. While at Foley & Lardner he was the partner in charge of providing legal services to Goodman Community Center in connection with its \$16,000,000 community center development and construction, which involved new markets and certified historic structure tax credits, Community Development Block Grant, and other financing.

**Dana Chabot, CPA*****Skills: financing and accounting***

Mr. Chabot is a certified public accountant with 25 years of experience. He has seven years of experience auditing nonprofit organizations and small businesses, most recently (from 2000 to 2004) with Wegner CPAs. During this time Mr. Chabot served as the auditor for the Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc. nonprofit, as well as several other Madison-area community centers. From 2005 to the present, he has worked as an independent CPA with his own practice serving nonprofit organizations. His duties include financial statement preparation, oversight of clients' bookkeeping, assistance with budgeting, preparing for annual audits, and preparation of annual information tax returns. He has a bachelor's degree in economics and political science from Macalester College, and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in political science from the University of Minnesota. He spent approximately 15 years teaching at Indiana University and University of Minnesota. Community board experience includes the Overture Center for the Arts from 2004-2010 (Treasurer from 2006-2010), and the Lussier Community Education Center from 2011-2014 (Treasurer for full term).

**Thomas Solyst, Executive Director - Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc.*****Skills: nonprofit management, fundraising***

Mr. Solyst has been dedicated to the success of the Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc. nonprofit since he began as its Executive Director in 2000 with no funding and no staff. Since then the organization has grown to more than 50 employees and an operating budget of more than \$1.4M under his management. One of his favorite memories is when the City of Madison invited him and his staff at Vera Court Neighborhood Center to take over operation of the Bridge Lake Point Waunona Neighborhood Center in 2004. His vision was for the center to operate its own high-quality, accessible youth programming, and for its staff to be reflective of the neighborhood. He is proud that Bridge Lake Point Waunona Neighborhood Center has accomplished this vision and continues to grow as a place for community members to strengthen both their own lives and the lives of others.

**Arturo Ambriz, Center Program Director - Bridge Lake Point Waunona Neighborhood Center*****Skills: community center management, community outreach, social services***

Arturo Ambriz is the Center Program Director at Bridge Lake Point Waunona Neighborhood Center. In the fall of 2007 he started as a parent involved in the Los Niños Primero program where his daughters were students. His role evolved from participant, to volunteer, to instructor, to lead instructor and coordinator. As is the case with any task Mr. Ambriz takes on, he began doing so much more. He added responsibilities as the Latino Family Resource Coordinator, Facility Manager, Senior Program Coordinator, all while instructing and coordinating the Los Niños Primero preschool program. In 2011 he was promoted to Center Program Director.

Mr. Ambriz credits his decision to become involved with BLW as one of the best things he's done as a parent. He is most thankful for the community engagement, and the staff's willingness to go above and beyond to create a center that exceeds all expectations. He believes the new center will be transformative for the community. He looks forward to continuing to work with the residents to keep BLW programming and activities fresh and in touch with the needs of the neighborhoods.

**Rebecca Ressler, Fundraiser - Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc.*****Skills: fundraising***

Ms. Ressler began her relationship with Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc. as a service provider in 2014 and then was hired as the Development Director in 2015. She has eight years of experience as a grant writer and fundraiser for nonprofits with a background in federal, state, and local government grants, foundation and individual donor relations, and project management. She has completed certificates from the University of Wisconsin - Madison Continuing Education in Grant Writing and Project Management, has been a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals since 2015, and was awarded Diversity Scholar by the International Association of Fundraising Professionals in 2017. Ms. Ressler led the successful Vera Vision 2020 campaign for Vera Court Neighborhood Center which was completed in 2018.



3. Describe the proposed organizational structure for the project team - their roles, reporting responsibilities and team interface with the community and the City.

The team is composed of individuals with strengths in the following fields: real estate development, large scale construction projects, designing multi-use centers, legal, financial and accounting, nonprofit management, community center management, fundraising, community outreach, and social services. Our team has experience successfully implementing City and federal contracts, and is well-versed in the contract implications of TIF funding.

The project team will be led by Thomas Solyst, the Executive Director of Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc. Team members will directly report to him with updates as the project progresses. He will also be the main contact with the City.

Team members will take on the following roles within the project team:

- Mr. Gersich will lead his architecture team in designing the building using the requirements from the City's RfQ, the community's input, and the needs of the BLW staff. His team has already designed several potential elevations for the new center that are available upon request.
- Ms. Holland will provide expertise in real estate development and act as a liaison with the BLW Steering Committee.
- Mr. Shumow will provide legal assistance.
- Mr. Radelet will provide legal assistance.
- Mr. Chabot will provide financial and accounting assistance, including guidance in obtaining a loan if necessary.
- Mr. Solyst will provide nonprofit and community center management which will be critical for the success of the community center in the long term after it is built.
- Mr. Ambriz will lead the community outreach and will ensure the new building design will provide the space for necessary social services.
- Ms. Ressler will lead the fundraising efforts for the campaign.

Although not a direct part of the project team, the Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc. Board of Directors will assist with the project. Many members have been active on the Board for 6+ years and have experience leading successful capital campaigns. Members represent the social services field, Madison College, University of Wisconsin - Madison, Madison Metropolitan School District, and Madison Police Department.

4. Describe the development teams, experience in planning, designing and constructing development projects involving mixed-use public space. Include information about the familiarity with the City's Land Use Approval process.

In 2018, the Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc. nonprofit completed their first capital campaign, Vera Vision 2020, at Vera Court Neighborhood Center on the Northside. This development project doubled the size of the previous center. Vera Court's Executive Director and the Vera Vision 2020 Steering Committee planned and designed this mixed-use public space with the architect (BWZ Architects), the construction company (NCI-Roberts Construction), and the owner (Meridian Group, Inc.). Similar to the vision for the new BLW Center, Vera Court needed a center that could serve as a youth programming space, transform into a space for adult programming, be utilized by community members and neighborhood groups, and provide office space.

Thomas Solyst, Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc.'s Executive Director and Rebecca Ressler, Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc.'s Development Director participated on the Vera Vision 2020 project and will bring their experience to this development team.



Our team members have a plethora of experiences with affordable housing development projects involving the City's Land Use Approval process. They have been part of the development team (e.g. owner, architect, contractor) working with the City to obtain approval from City staff, Plan Commission, Urban Design Committee, Community Development Division, Community Development Block Grant Committee, and Common Council. The following examples of projects that have gone through this process focus on mixed-use spaces:

- Mr. Gersich's portfolio includes Seybold Road's new commercial building, Whitney Point Apartments new multi-family units, Normandy Square's new elderly apartments, Windsor's Village Hall (a P3 Development), and Metropolitan Place mixed-use development on West Washington Avenue.
  - Mr. Shumow represents the City as outside counsel in connection with the planned Madison Public Market. He also represented the Wisconsin Historical Society in connection with the Hotel Indigo historical hotel renovation.
  - Mr. Radelet was the lead attorney advising Goodman Community Center on its Ironworks building, including structuring of ownership, acquisition of the site and historic building, rehabilitation of that building, new construction of the gymnasium building (construction and architect's contracts), dividing the site into lots, City dedication of Kupfer Court, lease from the City of some Kupfer Court land and land underlying historic building encroachments, property tax exemptions, historic and new markets tax credits and related private investments, various loans from the City, and securing the various needed City land use approvals.
  - Mr. Shumow and Mr. Radelet are both involved with Bayview Foundation in connection with the planned demolition and replacement of its community center and rental apartments. Mr. Shumow acts as an attorney and Mr. Radelet is on the Renovation Advisory Committee.
  - Mr. Shumow and Mr. Radelet each, at different times, represented the Madison YWCA in connection with each of its two major building rehabilitations. The building includes rental housing, YWCA corporate offices, and a homeless shelter. The work was similar to that described above for Goodman Community Center, although it used low-income housing credits instead of new markets.
5. Describe your team's experience with public/private partnerships.

Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc., including Bridge Lake Point Waunona Neighborhood Center, has had a 19-year partnership with the City in order to fund programming. The agency also has a strong history of building private partnerships as well. In fact, in 2018, 43% of revenue came from private sources (\$593,000 of \$1,391,000). In 2017, 69% of revenue came from private sources (\$1,518,000 of \$2,207,000). The larger percentage in 2017 is the result of the Vera Vision 2020 fundraising.

For the Vera Vision 2020 campaign, only 5% of funding was from public partnerships. One of the longest private partnerships is Vera Court's relationship with Meridian Group, Inc.. In exchange for high-quality community programming for the Vera Court neighborhood, Meridian provides free rent and utilities and covered the entire cost of the Vera Court Neighborhood Center expansion.

Other members of the team also demonstrate experience with public/private partnerships as follows:

- Mr. Gersich has led projects at Dimension IV which incorporate public and private partnerships, including the Village Municipal Center in Windsor, the Badger Rock Center in Madison, and the Outagamie County Housing Authority in Appleton.
- Ms. Holland has collaborated with public and private organizations to successfully build or rehab numerous affordable housing properties (e.g., Truax Park Apartments, Revival Ridge Apartments) through her job at Dimension Development. Ms. Holland's role was as a consultant to the Community Development Authority of the City of Madison ("CDA") and numerous other City or County Housing Authorities and CDAs throughout the State. The private partnerships included financial institutions, architects, construction managers, environmental consulting firms, surveyors, title companies, legal and accounting firms, engineers, management companies, tax credit equity investors, and solar and geothermal contractors. Public organizations included Housing and Urban





Development ("HUD"), USDA-Rural Development, National Park Service, Wisconsin Historical Society, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, and Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority.

- Mr. Radelet was Executive Director of Movin' Out, Inc. during most of the time when it worked with its partner to develop The Royal, an affordable housing development that is located right down the street from BLW Center at 2232 West Broadway. The building includes retail/commercial space. It is owned by a for-profit entity and financed using tax credits and related private investment dollars, as well as multiple layers of debt. The City was very involved in that development (i.e., selling the land and providing substantial financing and various needed approvals). Mr. Radelet was directly involved in most aspects of the development, including: negotiations with the City, obtaining City land use and other needed approvals, outreach to the surrounding neighbors, the Alder and BLW Center, and obtaining financing.
  - Mr. Shumow and Mr. Radelet have both worked with community centers and housing developments owned by a private entity (nonprofit or for-profit). Each was financed, in part, by loans, rent subsidy, or grants from government sources such as the City, Dane County, State of Wisconsin, or the Federal government. Quasi-public financing often was provided by Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) and the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago. WHEDA also allocated tax credits, and those facilitated the investment of private equity funds. Commercial loans were also a part of the financing for each development. Private individuals and businesses made or will make charitable contributions to help fund the community centers.
6. Describe the teams experience in securing financing from multiple sources and the ability to successfully undertake private fundraising efforts.

Numerous members of the development team have experience securing multiple layers of financing for commercial and affordable housing projects:

- Mr. Gersich and his team at Dimension IV participated in commercial projects that incorporated private fundraising, including Badger Rock Center in Madison, New Glarus Public Library, and Poynette Area Public Library's Jamieson Building Addition.
- Ms. Holland, in her capacity as a consultant to the Community Development Authority of the City of Madison ("CDA"), along with her business partners, were involved in the underwriting, applications for financing, due diligence, negotiation of construction manager and architect contracts, construction draw oversight, closing of construction and permanent debt, and various other tasks throughout the rehab or new construction of three CDA owned affordable housing properties. The three properties (Revival Ridge Apartments, Truax Park Apartments, and Truax Park Apartments Phase 2) had a multitude of financing sources. Financing included funds from sources such as Low Income Housing Tax Credit equity investors, Federal Home Loan Bank-Chicago, City of Madison Affordable Housing Trust fund, HUD HOME, HUD Public Housing capital funds, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act federal funds, Focus on Energy grants, and loans from local financial institutions. Similar financing sources were used in another local transaction with the Dane County Housing Authority. The rehab of these USDA - Rural Development properties, located in DeForest, Stoughton, and Verona also included the use of federal solar investment credit for solar system installations on each of the five buildings.
- Mr. Shumow has extensive experience with tax credit projects, including 8Twenty Park (JT Klein Company), Tree Lane Apartments (Heartland Housing), Rethke Washington Apartments (Heartland Housing), Oak Ridge Apartments (JT Klein Company), Meadow Ridge Apartments (JT Klein Company), Stage Coach Apartments (JT Klein Company), Union Corners Grandfamily (Gorman & Company), Carbon at Union Corners (Gorman & Company), Housing Initiatives Scattered Site (Housing Initiatives, Inc.), Hotel Indigo (historical hotel renovation; represented the Wisconsin Historical Society), Uptown Commons II (Horizon; represented the lender), Point Place Apartments (CommonBond; under development), Bayview Community (pre-development), and Madison Public Market (pre-development; represented City of Madison).
- Mr. Shumow and Mr. Radelet both provided legal services for affordable housing developments and community centers that involved financing from multiple sources of government and private sources (see A5). Many sources of financing required compliance with detailed and strict requirements established by the Internal Revenue Code



and other complex laws. The legal services included weaving requirements and restrictions that came with each source of financing into a fabric that worked together as the total financing for the project.

Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc. also demonstrates successful fundraising efforts. Overall, our agency started without any secure funding and has grown to a \$1.4M agency. Since 2014 alone, our annual budget has grown by 50%. Our agency has never experienced a budget deficit under current management and has always had successful City audits.

Government contracts include the following:

- City of Madison for Vera Court's Core, Children, Youth, Rise, Girl Neighborhood Power, Life as a Boy, Latino Family Resource Center, Alianza Latina, and Latino Academy, and Bridge Lake Point Waunona's Core, Los Niños Primero, Children, Teen, Girl Neighborhood Power, and Latino Family Resource Center
- Dane County for Latino Family Resource Center through Safe and Stable funding
- Dane County to provide five AmeriCorps positions with placement and supervision
- Dane County for public service workforce development programs through Dane County Community Development Block Grant for the last three years
- Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) contracts to provide workforce development services for two years and literacy services for three years
- Federal funding managed through the City of Madison to provide Safe and Thriving program services
- Federal Fast Forward funding administered through the State to provide workforce development services
- State funding through the Department of Public Instruction to provide food and snacks to children
- City of Fitchburg contracts to provide Pre-GED and GED courses and to provide culturally competent focus groups

Our priority is to continue expanding private fundraising efforts to leverage the support provided by the City and other government sources. In 2018, 43% of our agency's revenue came from non-government sources. BLW specifically started with the City of Madison as its only funding source. Even though BLW's programs and services have grown significantly, the City only contributes 55% of BLW's current annual budget.

BLW will use the \$2M from the City to leverage gifts from a diversity of sources in order to fund the additional building costs and all program-related costs. Our team has experience with successful fundraising specific to capital campaigns. Vera Court Neighborhood Center launched the Vera Vision 2020 campaign with a lead gift of \$500k and used this gift to inspire gifts from 200 others, raising more than 109% of our \$2.2M campaign goal.

We have already met with several of the Vera Vision 2020 major donors to discuss the BLW campaign. The following foundations have endorsed our RfQ application: Irwin A. and Robert D. Goodman Foundation, Sub-Zero Wolf Foundation, Theda & Tamblin Clark Smith Family Foundation, and the Oscar Rennebohm Foundation. Steven Skolaski of the Oscar Rennebohm Foundation stated, "I am very pleased with your work at Vera Court and am very supportive of the work you may do at Bridge Lake Point Waunona."

BLW is financially prepared for this development project. We are registered with the System for Award Management (SAM), have a year of savings, and have secured a gift of \$200k from our Board of Directors to cover upfront construction costs. Furthermore, 100% of our Board of Directors and lead staff have pledged toward the campaign.





## B. CENTER MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

1. Describe your organization's history and general administrative capacity to address the roles called for in this RFQ. Include any examples of effectively managing a multi-use facility serving neighborhood residents.

First and foremost, we are the current administrators of Bridge Lake Point Waunona Neighborhood Center (BLW Center) and have been for 15 years. When the previous BLW Board of Directors dissolved in late 2003, Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc. incorporated it into its existing nonprofit agency. In addition to preventing BLW from ceasing altogether, this nonprofit structure has also made services more effective and efficient. Staff from both Vera Court Neighborhood Center and BLW Center meet regularly and share lessons learned as they pilot new programs. The agency shares an Executive Director and Development Director as well as administrative resources (e.g., payroll and accounting) so the overhead is significantly less than what it would be if each organization were independent. This ensures that more energy and funding can go directly to the programs and services. Even though BLW is part of a larger nonprofit agency, it still remains true to its community with its own vision, values, staff, Steering Committee, and programming.

The mission of the agency as a whole is to offer growth and enrichment opportunities to neighborhood residents that reflect the changing needs, strengths, and diversity of our community. BLW Center's purpose is to transform lives by improving the health, wellbeing, and education of community members. Under its current management team, Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc. has been operating multi-use facilities and serving neighborhood residents since 2000 (first Vera Court Neighborhood Center and then BLW Center starting in 2004).

Examples of how BLW effectively serves community members through a multi-use facility include the following:

- **Programming and services that meet the needs of low- and moderate-income residents.** This includes: (a) a food pantry that serves more than 1000 families under the federal poverty line each year, (b) more than 10,000 healthy meals served annually through after-school programming, summer camp, and community meals, (c) bilingual early childhood education for children and monthly workshops for parents, (d) after-school and summer camp programs for elementary and middle students with homework help, nutritious meals, project-based learning, and various clubs (e.g. character development, civic engagement), (e) in-school tutoring for our middle school students led by BLW's AmeriCorps team, (f) an internship program for 8th grade non-promotional students to gain real-life job experiences and high school credits, (g) enrichment activities for seniors and adults including fitness, nutrition, and computer classes, (h) community-building events, including family picnics and cultural events, and, (i) translation/interpretation services, immigration and legal referrals, and assistance securing employment, health care, and housing through the Latino Family Resource Center. All programming is free in order to make our programs accessible to everyone (96% of participants are low-income).
- **Serve a diversity of residents.** Cultural competency is integral to BLW programming as described in B2. Additionally, BLW has experience with intergenerational programming, from a vibrant bilingual early childhood program to a robust senior program.
- **Involve community in growth.** In addition to the agency's Board of Directors, BLW has its own Steering Committee of 11 members to guide its growth, nearly all of whom live or work in the neighborhood. Sub-Committees engage an additional 17 neighborhood residents to support BLW programming in the areas of Gardening, Senior & Intergenerational Programming, Communications, and Children, Youth, and Family. In 2019, we are piloting a Community Based Leadership project. Through this project, ten residents will receive the training and resources necessary to implement a civic engagement project that addresses a community need.

Mr. Ambriz, the Center Program Director, notes that the growth is not just in the size of the Center or in the

number of programs or participants, but also the growth within the people who use the Center: "People come back to tell us that they got the job, their child has gained confidence, or we helped them through a time of need. BLW is a special place, built by the staff and neighbors to create a stronger future for themselves and the community."

- **Multi-use facility provides space for all the elements of a viable urban community.** BLW has years of experience offering diverse programming through creative use of a limited space. The center is currently split



between two buildings, both of which are converted apartment buildings. Every room is multi-use day-by-day and hour-by-hour. For instance, a classroom converts from a Steering Committee meeting space to an office for Joining Forces for Families social services to a room for Madison Metropolitan School District to hold parent teacher conferences to a bilingual Commercial Driver's License job training course all within a day. Furthermore, BLW has experience leading multiple programs simultaneously on a daily basis. Dimension IV architects have designed preliminary elevations using input from the BLW community on the many purposes they would like to use the new center for on a regular basis.

BLW served 3326 residents in 2017; our goal is to triple the number served through increased resident-driven programming in the new center.

2. Describe your organization's ability and experience in offering a broad scope of quality programs and services that are culturally competent.

Participant demographics are 42% Latino, 27% Black, 19% White, 8% Multicultural, and 4% Other. Therefore, cultural competency is intertwined within all programs. Program materials are offered in dual languages, translation and interpretation are available daily, the Center Program Director is bilingual, and adult education classes (i.e., ELL, GED) are offered in Spanish. A major focus in BLW's youth programming is to appreciate and celebrate every individual regardless of their racial or ethnic background. Over the years, the Center has hosted extensive cultural celebrations with events featuring ethnic meals from our residents' home countries, and honorary speakers who represent various cultures to share stories and history. Our staff receive training on topics of cultural competency such as an upcoming training on implicit bias.

A prime example of culturally competent programming at BLW is the Los Niños Primero Primero bilingual early childhood program. This program supports children from Spanish-speaking families in achieving the academic and behavioral benchmarks necessary for success in elementary school. This early childhood program is unique in that it is led 90% in Spanish and 10% in English (a best practice for children who speak predominantly Spanish) and incorporates cultural traditions in its learning activities. For instance, Los Niños Primero creates literacy, language, gross and fine motor skills, and math activities based on the customs of Dia de los Niños, Dia de los Muertos, and Day of the Three Wise Men.

Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc. makes it a priority to employ staff from diverse racial and ethnic populations as one method of promoting cultural competency within the programs. Currently 10 out of 14 full-time positions are filled by racially diverse staff including BLW's Program Director, Latino Family Resource Coordinator, and Children's Program Coordinator. Vera Court, Inc. also hires residents and past program participants.

Overall, staff at BLW Center represent the community members they serve: more than 60% of staff identify as persons of color and more than 50% are bilingual. Neighborhood demographics are 16% Latino versus 7% for the City as a whole, and 14% Black which is twice as high as the City overall (City of Madison Neighborhood Indicators Project).

3. Please describe the network of providers with whom you may collaborate to provide programming. Identify each organization by name and describe what each will bring to the collaboration.

BLW has existing partnerships with the following providers and intends to continue the collaboration in the new Center:

- Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) - Teachers and social workers from Glendale Elementary and Sennett Middle School partner with BLW staff to provide individualized academic support for all of its Children and Teen participants. MMSD provides our Los Niños Primero, Children, and Teen staff with professional development. For Los Niños Primero, MMSD is an active partner in the parent workshops. If there are students from Owl Creek, MMSD will provide the transportation to the Center.
- AmeriCorps Partners for After School Success (PASS) - This partnership provides AmeriCorps team members for BLW's Teen program. In addition to helping with after-school, evening, and summer programming, the AmeriCorps team members lead in-school math and literacy tutoring at Sennett Middle School during the lunch hour.
- Madison Public Library - Librarians visit weekly to provide hands-on literacy education to our youth.



- Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin - This nonprofit donates all of the food for our monthly food pantry which serves more than 1000 families under the federal poverty line each year.
- Ascendium Legal Team - Once a month lawyers provide free legal advice to our residents.
- SER Job for Progress National Inc. - This job placement agency for seniors provides BLW with a receptionist.
- NewBridge - This senior coalition provides culturally competent senior programming and case management at BLW.
- BLW Community Garden and Waunona Garden Club - These groups partner with BLW to address food insecurity on Madison's Southeast side by promoting access to community gardening for all residents.
- Goodman Community Center and Lussier Community Education Center - BLW has partnered with these two community centers and MMSD to provide internship experiences to non-promotional 8th grade students in exchange for high school credit.

The Latino Academy is BLW's main facility user and partner. Through Latino Academy's workforce pipeline model, more than 400 Latino adults receive case management, education (e.g. ESL, pre-GED, GED), job-site and hands-on workforce training (e.g. construction, Commercial Driver's License, customer service), job readiness skills, and job placement. Latino Academy places students in careers that pay a minimum of \$15/hour and provide opportunities for advancement. Main partners include Madison College for GED instruction, Steven's Construction for on-site job training and placement, Dane County Highway Department for internships, and United Way of Dane County and the HIRE Initiative for job placements.

BLW anticipates growing its programming and services to serve as many as three times as many participants with the new, expanded center. BLW intends to accomplish this through increased facility-use partnerships. This will ensure that programming not only provides social services to low- and moderate-income residents, but also offers educational, enrichment, and recreational activities for all community members regardless of socioeconomic status. Potential partnerships for increased facility use include University of Wisconsin - Extension, Monona East Side Business Association (MESBA), and the Madison Public Library.

4. Describe your organization's experience in budgeting and financial/performance outcomes reporting.

Please refer to the accompanying financial statements: a) balance sheets at December 31, 2018 and 2017; b) statement of revenue and expenses for the year ended December 31, 2018.

The accompanying "statement of revenue and expenses – actual compared to budget" for the year ended December 31, 2018 includes the operating activities of Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Bridge Lake Point Waunona Neighborhood Center, and Latino Academy for Workforce Development ("the Center"). The statement shows actual revenue and expenses for 2018 compared both to the 2018 budget (approved by the Board of Directors) and 2017 actual revenue and expenses.

Key indicators of financial performance are as follows:

- The Center generated operating surpluses (i.e., operating revenue exceeded expenses) of \$136,900 and \$6200 in 2018 and 2017, respectively.
- Total revenue exceeded the budget goal for 2018 by \$170,000, mainly due to the Center's success in raising private funds (included in "Center fundraising").
- Total expenses in 2018 of \$1,271,000 were comparable to the amount budgeted, indicating management's ability to control costs and keep spending in line with its budget.



- The Center raised nearly \$1M in 2017 and 2018 to fund future programming at Vera Court Neighborhood Center (see "Vera Vision 2020 and other contributions restricted for future programming"). This is in addition to Vera Vision 2020 funds raised in prior years.

The accompanying "balance sheets" for December 31, 2018 and 2017 describe the assets, liabilities, and net assets of the Center (including Vera Court, BLW Center, and Latino Academy) at each year-end. Key indicators of financial health are as follows:

- The Center has sufficient reserves available for future programming (\$2,317,400 at December 31, 2018), including \$1,637,000 restricted by donors for future programming (mostly at Vera Court Neighborhood Center), and \$250,000 designated by the Board of Directors in 2018 to provide scholarships for students.
- The Center has sufficient cash to cover operating expenses.
- The Center has invested funds not needed for current operations in order to generate long-term investment income and provide additional support for Center operations.

The Center contracts with Mr. Chabot, an independent CPA, to review monthly operating activity and prepare financial statements, which are presented periodically to the Board of Directors. The Board approves an annual budget. The Center also submits monthly and quarterly financial reports to the City of Madison. The Center obtains annual audits of its financial statements; the 2018 audit is not yet underway.

Vera Court, Inc. has experience tracking performance outcomes as demonstrated by our City of Madison quarterly reports we have been submitting for 19 years. It is through these reports that BLW will be able to measure an increased rate of use with the new center.

### **C. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

1. Describe your existing relationships with community residents and other neighborhood stakeholders.

BLW Center is truly the center of this community. Whether community residents are stopping in to vote, visiting our Latino Family Resource Coordinator for social services, or participating in one of our youth programs, residents have shared with us that they feel that the Center is an extension of their home and that the staff treat them like family. Many of our staff live in the community themselves and participate in its growth outside of work (e.g. community garden, starting a co-op). Despite the fact that the community in which BLW Center is located has a population of only 1968 (Madison Neighborhood Indicators Project), more than 3000 people attended BLW programming last year. The impact of BLW goes well beyond geographical boundaries and attracts community members from all over Madison largely because program participants find the space safe and staff welcoming.

BLW staff have a strong working relationship with Alder Sheri Carter and partner with her regularly on neighborhood projects, including community events and meetings.

The following neighborhood stakeholders have endorsed our RfQ:

- Waunona Neighborhood Association
- Lake Point Neighborhood Association
- Fred Risser both as State Senator of Wisconsin and as previous longtime resident of the neighborhood
- Sheila Stubbs as Dane County Board of Supervisors of District 23, State Assembly Representative of District 77, and longtime resident of the Lake Point neighborhood
- Dane County Board of Supervisors Tanya Buckingham of District 24 who is also on the agency's Board of Directors and the BLW Center's Steering Committee



- Members of the Steering Committee (nearly all of whom either live or work in the neighborhood): Tanya Buckingham (Assistant Director, University of Wisconsin - Madison Cartography Laboratory), Amanda Captain (Interim Director/Tutor of Wisconsin Emerging Scholars, University of Wisconsin - Madison Computer Sciences), Adam Clausen (Senior Leader, Life Center), Dan Grupe (Assistant Scientist, University of Wisconsin - Madison Center for Healthy Minds), Gabrielle Hinahara (Director, Middleton Youth Center), Vickie Holland (Principal, Dimension Development LLC), Michael Hughes (Retired Clinical Psychologist), Jim Kellerman (Retired Executive Director, Elder Care of Dane County), Sandy Kohn (Retired Director of Employee Assistance, City of Madison; Retired Clinical Associate Professor, University of Wisconsin - Madison School of Social Work), Shawn Willox (Youth Minister and Religious Education Coordinator, Good Shepherd), Jared Prado (Community Outreach Resource Education Police Officer, Madison Police Department; Attorney)
  - Members of BLW Sub-Committees (all of whom either live or work in the neighborhood): Linda Banks, Erika Booe, Karen Burg, Terry Campbell, Constance Clune, JoAnn Gosda, Pauline Jones, Vera Jones, Kim Leal, Josephine Malowne, Debbie Marlowe, Dolly Maurer, Mary Moore, Ashley Olson, Amy Stoddard, Portia Vaughn, Tim Wilson
  - Chris and Sara Fortune of the Fortune Family Foundation who live on Waunona Way and are loyal donors: "We believe BLW Center is an integral part of his community and that the services they provide make the neighborhood stronger and safer. We are in full support of the new community center."
  - Marcia Caton Campbell, Executive Director of Center for Resilient Cities, and Joe Sensenbrenner, Board President of Center for Resilient Cities and previous Mayor of Madison: "We can vouch that this is a strong team. Dimension IV provided us with community-driven architectural services and BLW Center has a history of providing high-quality programming for its neighborhood."
  - Earthlight of Wisconsin, a local business
2. Describe in detail any recent experiences your organization has had engaging a broad representation of the public in visioning, planning or implementing programming or other activities. Explain how you articulate to the community organizational goals and feedback.

In alignment with Vera Court Neighborhood Center, Inc.'s mission, BLW Center designs and implements new programs in response to interests identified by the community. These programs are then developed in collaboration with the residents, themselves. In fact, some activities (e.g. many of the senior program events) are led entirely by residents.

Other examples of how the public participates in BLW operations and growth include the following:

- BLW programming is guided by a Steering Committee and Sub-Committees composed primarily of residents. Representation includes Madison Police Department, University of Wisconsin - Madison, local businesses, youth services, and senior services.

While BLW staff participate in community gardening, the senior program, and center communications, much of the growth in these areas is due to the BLW Sub-Committees:

- a. The Gardening Sub-Committee promotes gardening for all individuals in the BLW community. This committee works closely with the BLW Community Garden in Waunona Park, where children from the summer camp and the Los Niños Primero program have garden plots. Committee members installed and maintain an "Edible Playscape" garden at the BLW Center youth building, hosted a fall harvest potluck with the Waunona Neighborhood Association, and are working to provide gardening opportunities for seniors and others with physical limitations.
- b. The Senior and Intergenerational Programming Sub-Committee underwent an extensive needs assessment over the past year with visits to five area senior centers, the findings of which will inform space and building design needs for the new center. This group has initiated a variety of new events at BLW to address loneliness and isolation in the community including weekly movie days and card games, a sewing club, and a "death cafe" exploring topics related to death and dying. The activities of this Sub-





Committee and interest in additional programming led to the creation of a new part-time Senior Program Coordinator at BLW.

- c. The Communications Sub-Committee is a direct response to neighborhood listening sessions in recent years that led to the realization that many residents were unaware of all the programming happening at the Center. In collaboration with BLW staff, the Communications Sub-Committee prepares and sends a monthly BLW email newsletter and provides regular social media updates on BLW events. This committee create staff bios to feature each month, and works with volunteers and staff to provide short, written updates on BLW projects and events.

Most recently, BLW created the Children, Youth, and Families Sub-Committee to support currenexistingt programs and help develop future programs and events that fit the needs of the community. One area of much discussion is creating additional programming for teens in the neighborhood, with new and exciting opportunities that will be afforded by a new BLW Center.

- BLW is currently leading a City-funded project through the Community Building & Engagement grant. The project will provide 10 BLW residents (primarily persons of colors and renters) with culturally competent and bilingual training and support in order to help them build the skills necessary to design and implement a civic engagement project that addresses a neighborhood need of interest. This project will give residents the resources to take ownership of their BLW community and put their ideas for change into action.

BLW has also helped historically underrepresented communities contribute toward City processes. In 2017 and 2018, BLW hosted seven panels for Spanish-speaking residents in southeast Madison. Residents contributed to the Public Engagement Plan for Imagine Madison and the MMSD Strategic Framework. Residents met City staff and Superintendent Cheatham. BLW provided an inclusive space, childcare, and translation services for 15 residents. Many of these residents later attended the Mayor's Roundtable. This year, the agency will be replicating these panels in the City of Fitchburg, where we intend to serve 60 individuals.

BLW values organizational transparency and community investment in its growth. Therefore, organizational goals are communicated through BLW's monthly newsletters and Board of Directors meetings (which are open to the pubic). Additionally, goals are articulated in the annual report and on our website. Feedback is always welcome via our website, in-person to our Program Director, or through participation in the Steering Committee or a Sub-Committee.

3. Explain in detail how you propose to engage neighborhood residents in planning for the design, development and operation of a new Bridge Lake Point Waunona community center. Describe what steps you will take to ensure that all voices in the community are heard.

BLW has already led and hosted two community meetings and three listening sessions regarding the new BLW Center. We intend to continue hosting meetings for community members to receive updates and contribute ideas throughout the design of the new center and development of new programming. Translation and childcare will be provided at the meetings in order to eliminate potential barriers to participation. Meetings and focus groups will be advertised through the BLW Center newsletter, website, and calendar, and neighborhood association meetings.

BLW believes it is critical that the new center is designed in collaboration with community members from all socio-economic statuses. BLW has experience leading focus groups with diverse populations as described in C2 and has already organized a focus group for residents to provide input on what they would like in the new center. Ideas included the following:

- Community programs/workshops (e.g. exercise classes, art classes, cultural nights)
- Large gathering space for rentals, neighborhood meetings, and community meals
- On-site food pantry
- Designated classrooms for early childhood, elementary, and teen programming
- Senior and intergenerational programming
- Commercial kitchen, mini library, and public computer lab
- GED classes and job placement services



These suggestions will be taken into consideration when Dimension IV drafts the initial floor plans and elevations.

Dimension IV is also providing their expertise in engaging the community in designing projects. Mr. Gersich previously led listening sessions and focus groups when planning Badger Rock Center and Middleton Public Library. Dimension IV brought drawings and color photographs of other similar buildings so that the community could provide input on what architectural elements, colors, materials, and spaces were most inviting to the public. Participants helped the design team fine-tune the priorities for the new space and provided input on how they anticipated using the space for programming. Dimension IV even included children by giving them materials to build models.