



MILL CITY GROWS CALLS ON THE CITY OF LOWELL TO DEFEND ITS PEOPLE

To Whom It May Concern:

On Monday, January 12th, over 30 individuals reported to the Mayor's Reception Room, or Zoom, for a mandatory meeting where the City of Lowell's Community Development Department explained the process for local nonprofits to obtain Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding in 2026.

The City anticipates just over \$2,000,000 in federal funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The majority of these funds go toward developing housing and improving public facilities. Just 15%, or about \$300,000, is set aside for competitive funding of public services through nonprofits.

In Massachusetts, each municipality that receives HUD funds owns the process for how CDBG will be distributed to provide basic resources to the community. The majority of last year's funds went to nonprofits that were supporting the basic needs of Lowell's most vulnerable.

In the City's presentation, as well as at the City Council's Nonprofit Subcommittee meeting in December, officials explained that as of this year if nonprofits apply for new CDBG funds, they must comply with the federal administration's "new" regulations for eligibility.

The City stated that all organizations must be in compliance by removing language or allusions to the following:

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Gender inclusivity, explicitly striking the use of identifying pronouns
- Climate change or climate resiliency
- A pregnant person's access to abortion care

Additionally, if an organization provides housing or housing support services, they are required to verify no benefits will go to "ineligible aliens."

These regulations are a threat to the already-limited social and human services available in our community. The nonprofits of Lowell who choose to retain their language and commitment to inclusion and community will bear the loss of these funds and will have to explain to participants why they can't fund certain programs or services.

Thus, Mill City Grows is asking the City of Lowell to take on some of this burden.

Mill City Grows rejects these requirements as harmful to the beautiful and diverse populations of Lowell. We invite the city to stand in solidarity with us and its diverse citizenry.

- **City of Lowell, please publicly denounce these regulations and continue to fund the nonprofits that stand with Lowell.**
- Furthermore, Lowell City Manager's office and elected officials, consider your participation in a system that, at best, is out-of-touch with community needs, and at worst, is inflicting harm (directly and indirectly) on vulnerable individuals.
- City decision-makers, consider what the red line will be as the federal government continues to further disenfranchise our community and harm our neighbors.

Mill City Grows has grown because of the City of Lowell's support and dedication to caring for all its citizens. We love Lowell and its people and are therefore compelled to speak when they are harmed.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ali' followed by a stylized flourish that looks like 'SSA'.

Ali and Courtney
Co-Executive Directors
Mill City Grows