

AARP: Projects in Green Bay, Sheboygan, Ladysmith win AARP WI grants

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MADISON, WI – Quick-action community improvement proposals submitted by organizations in three Wisconsin cities – Green Bay, Ladysmith and Sheboygan – have been selected to receive the final AARP Wisconsin “Small Dollar, Big Impact” grants of 2022.

AARP Wisconsin has awarded \$1,000 grants each month throughout the year to projects across the state that were designed to improve communities and make them better places for everyone to live, work and play as they age. Judges selected these three projects after reviewing dozens of proposals submitted from all over Wisconsin.

“These grants are exactly what the name describes – short-term, low-cost solutions that could have a remarkable impact on the shaping of local communities,” said Amber Miller, Associate State Director of Community Outreach for AARP Wisconsin. “All three of these projects hit the nail right on the head.”

Here are the details of each of the three projects:

Green Bay – The Salvation Army of Greater Green Bay will use its \$1,000 grant to make technology upgrades for Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) workshops that they will be hosting at their two Green Bay locations – the Salvation Army Ray & Joan Kroc Community Center, 1315 Lime Kiln Rd., and the Corps Community Center, 626 Union Ct.

The grant will enable the organization to purchase mobile devices and utilize the

materials and curriculum offered through the OATS program to help area residents learn how to use their own technology more effectively and efficiently.

They hope to begin offering the trainings within a couple months, said Tim Perlewitz, director of marketing and communications for the Kroc Center. Anyone interested in getting on a waiting list for these training programs can send an email to gbkroc.info@usc.salvationarmy.org or call 920-884-5007 and ask for Tim.

Ladysmith – The Indianhead Community Action Agency (ICAA), which operates food pantries in a six-county service area in rural northern Wisconsin, will use its \$1,000 grant to modify pantry services offered to low-income seniors by partnering with local Meals on Wheels delivery programs to deliver small portion food items to ensure all seniors nutritional needs are being met.

“Meals on Wheels programs provide only one third of a senior’s daily nutritional needs and this project would ensure seniors are receiving supplemental food items to their door to prevent them from going hungry,” said Jennifer Shearer, CEO of the ICAA.

The ICAA will partner with the Meals on Wheels in Ladysmith to provide 20 low-income seniors with two supplemental food packages over the course of two months. This pilot would allow the ICAA to see if this modification to pantry services and partnership opportunity would be viable and if there is a possibility to replicate it in their other counties utilizing the existing 25 Meals on Wheels delivery services that are currently available.

Sheboygan – The city is creating sort of a city hall on wheels, which will offer mobile accessible services such as the possibility of issuing building permits and pet licenses, assisting with housing rehab applications, facilitating voter registration, and much more – all as part of the city’s Driving Change Initiative. The \$1,000 grant will be used to install dry-erase wrapping on the vehicle as part of this innovative method for collecting feedback and input from residents.

“As a dynamic communication tool, this roving community chalkboard will get feedback directly from residents,” said Chad Pelishek, Director of Planning and Development for the City of Sheboygan.

The City Hall on Wheels will attend planned events and host unannounced neighborhood pop-ups “where a cook-out with police, a pickleball match with the

mayor, ice cream sundaes with alders, or an impromptu card game with our firemen are all possible,” Pelishek said.

The project will enlist interested residents as citizen ambassadors who will assist residents and serve as liaisons and advocates. “After wrapping the project vehicle in dry erase vinyl, the roaming Driving Change vehicle will serve as an accessible and inclusive hub, a venue for input, a connection creator and an opportunity for ongoing engagement,” Pelishek said.

AARP Wisconsin’s launched its “Small Dollar, Big Impact” grant program in 2020 and is now in its third year of helping proposed projects move forward in rural and urban parts of the state. The grant program is open to some nonprofits and government entities. For more information on the program, visit www.aarp.org/WIsdbi