



June 2022

A Resolution Submitted by the City of Zion



Implement a Technical Assistance Program for U.S. Federal Infrastructure Grant Applications

WHEREAS the United States Congress passed a Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act or IIJA) to build a better America.

AND WHEREAS the IIJA is a once-in-a-generation investment in the U.S.'s infrastructure and competitiveness, and will rebuild roads, bridges and rails, expand access to clean drinking water, ensure every American has access to high-speed internet, tackle the climate crisis, advance environmental justice, and invest in communities that have too often been left behind. The legislation will help ease inflationary pressures and strengthen supply chains by making long overdue improvements for ports, airports, rail, and roads. It will drive the creation of jobs and grow the economy sustainably and equitably so that everyone gets ahead for decades to come.

AND WHEREAS that funding includes numerous public-interest safeguards, it provides limited capacity to develop and track performance indicators and procurement criteria, competitively apply for funding, track spending, and report on project success. These functions, particularly for smaller communities, may be disproportionately time-consuming for existing government staff.

AND WHEREAS the US EPA Assistant Administrator, Radhika Fox, issued a memo to EPA Regional Water Division Directors and State Revolving Fund (SRF) Program Managers dated March 8, 2022 that recommends states use the full Drinking Water SRF (DWSRF) 2% "small system technical assistance set-aside" to enhance or build programs that proactively identify, reach out to, and provide assistance to rural, small, and tribal publicly owned drinking water systems, particularly in disadvantaged communities. The programs should be designed to help disadvantaged communities identify needs, develop projects, apply for funding, design and implement projects, build capacity, and create training and career pathways.

AND WHEREAS the Biden Administration has identified over \$700 million in dedicated federal funding sources across more than 65 existing technical assistance programs. This is in addition to philanthropic, labor, and nonprofit organizations that may contribute to a pipeline of infrastructure resources available to communities.

AND WHEREAS some communities that are eligible for funding may simply not have the necessary human capital, time, and other resources to pursue this much-needed dedicated funding.

AND WHEREAS some non-governmental organizations may possess the necessary experience, skillsets, and other resources to assist communities in applying for this funding.

AND WHEREAS the Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Cities Initiative has received one-time funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to help communities identify coastal resilience projects and nature-based solutions, develop a framework for high priority projects, and create a funding-raising strategy.

AND WHEREAS the Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Cities Initiative in February 2021 convened a binational Mayors Advisory Council on Coastal Resilience to better understand the most pressing coastal resilience needs facing the basin's shoreline communities and develop an informed and cohesive long-term response to coastal challenges. And key among that Advisory Group was to expand capacity for municipalities to apply for federal funds and boost the competitiveness of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence municipalities in selection processes.

AND WHEREAS entities like the Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Cities Initiative are uniquely poised from past study and experience to quickly and efficiently assist communities with grant applications through project identification, prioritization, and funding as well as by making use of existing programs and tools identified by the Biden administration.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT additional and adequate federal infrastructure funding should be made available to support and underpin communities in need of human capital, time, and other reasonable support with the goal of identifying, applying for, tracking the successful and robust completion of projects funded with U.S. infrastructure grants under the IIJA.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the U.S. federal government should ensure fair and equitable access to IJJA funds throughout the Great Lakes and St Lawrence regions, and that programs developed in the region be expanded throughout the US as appropriate.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative should explore the creation of a similar program in Canada.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT copies of this resolution will be distributed to President Joe Biden, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Transportation, Governors of the eight Great Lakes States.