

network stories

Bridgeport Prospers - Bridgeport, Conn.



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actions

Bridgeport Prospers advocated for their community and received the only community-based COVID-19 4-CT grant — historically a statewide grantor. These funds were directly invested into PT Barnum, the largest low-income public housing community in Bridgeport. PT Partners, a group of 12 leaders from the PT Barnum community, led residents in deciding the best use of those funds, researching solutions and using the funds at their discretion.

results

Through the COVID-19 4-CT funds, Bridgeport Prospers and the PT Barnum community collaborated to bring internet connectivity to the housing complex for the first time in its history. Residents researched solutions and Bridgeport Prospers assisted in bringing in mobile hotspots — retrofitting Wi-Fi units in school buses — which enabled virtual learning and living during the pandemic. Residents were also able to access STEM tutoring, fresh food deliveries and electronic gift cards to assist with basic living necessities.



takeaways

Bridgeport Prospers has disrupted the status quo around funding opportunities by advocating for and funneling resources directly into their community and putting financial power in the hands of those with lived experience. These actions allowed PT Barnum residents to not only pay for their basic living costs, but also provide resources for distance learning at a time when being connected to the internet is essential for education. This opportunity has also allowed for this type of resident-led community organizing to spread into the other two housing communities through the city, led by PT Barnum residents. These communities will advocate and lead conversations with state representatives to address permanent solutions to connectivity, creating the pathway for community-designed systems change.