

State Of Maryland

2023 Bond Initiative Fact Sheet

1. Name Of Project		
Washington Bridge Unit		
2. Senate Sponsor	3. House Sponsor	
Augustine	Fennell	
4. Jurisdiction (County or Baltimore City)	5. Requested Amount	
Prince George's County	\$50,000	
6. Purpose of Bond Initiative		
the acquisition, planning, design, construction, repair, renovation, reconstruction, site improvement, and capital equipping of the Quonset Hut that serves as a bridge home for the Washington Bridge Unit		
7. Matching Fund		
Requirements: Grant	Type:	
8. Special Provisions		
<input type="checkbox"/> Historical Easement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Sectarian	
9. Contact Name and Title	Contact Ph#	Email Address
Senator Malcolm Augustine		malcolm.augustine@senate.state.md.us
Wilma F. Bonner, President		202-726-7267
10. Description and Purpose of Organization (Limit length to visible area)		
The purpose of the Washington Bridge Unit (WBU) is to stimulate interest and promote playing of the worldwide game of bridge; it is a non-profit organization. It was founded in 1939 in response to Blacks' non-admittance into White bridge groups. It is a member of the American Bridge Association (ABA); both organizations are open to all ethnicities. Although comprised mainly of senior citizens, WBU is open to players of all ages. From its founding to 1998, the WBU held games in civic centers, recreation centers and homes throughout Maryland, DC, and Virginia.		

11. Description and Purpose of Project (Limit length to visible area)

In 1998, the WBU purchased an iconic Quonset Hut which has provided a safe, familiar setting for bridge players. The structure is a remnant from the post-World II era and was built for its durability. However, facets of the interior and exterior are in need of major upgrade to restore its appearance and functionality. The HVAC, critical to players' health; two surrounding parking lots; the exterior awning, lights and outdoor signage; and the kitchen are the targets of the proposed replacements and repairs. Research has shown that playing bridge adds significantly to the social and mental health of the senior population; The Hut enhances the quality of life of the community.

Round all amounts to the nearest \$1,000. The totals in Items 12 (Estimated Capital Costs) and 13 (Proposed Funding Sources) must match. The proposed funding sources must not include the value of real property unless an equivalent value is shown under Estimated Capital Costs.

12. Estimated Capital Costs

Acquisition	
Design	
Construction	\$26,000
Equipment	\$24,000
Total	\$50,000

13. Proposed Funding Sources - (List all funding sources and amounts.)

14. Project Schedule (Enter a date or one of the following in each box. N/A, TBD or Complete)			
Begin Design	Complete Design	Begin Construction	Complete Construction
		TBD	
15. Total Private Funds and Pledges Raised		16. Current Number of People Served Annually at Project Site	17. Number of People to be Served Annually After the Project is Complete
		Pre-pandemic 100	100 +
18. Other State Capital Grants to Recipients in the Past 15 Years			
Legislative Session	Amount	Purpose	
19. Legal Name and Address of Grantee		Project Address (If Different)	
The Washington Bridge Unit 3801 Eastern Avenue Mt. Rainier, Maryland 20712			
20. Legislative District in Which Project is Located		47A - Prince George's County	
21. Legal Status of Grantee (Please Check One)			
Local Govt.	For Profit	Non Profit	Federal
[]	[]	[X]	[]
22. Grantee Legal Representative		23. If Match Includes Real Property:	
Name:	Wilma F. Bonner	Has An Appraisal Been Done?	Yes/No
Phone:	12027267267		
Address:		If Yes, List Appraisal Dates and Value	
8144 Eastern Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20012			

24. Impact of Project on Staffing and Operating Cost at Project Site			
Current # of Employees	Projected # of Employees	Current Operating Budget	Projected Operating Budget
5 Officers - non- ~	5 Officers, 14 ~	39000.00	39000.00
25. Ownership of Property (Info Requested by Treasurer's Office for bond purposes)			
A. Will the grantee own or lease (pick one) the property to be improved?			Own
B. If owned, does the grantee plan to sell within 15 years?			No
C. Does the grantee intend to lease any portion of the property to others?			No
D. If property is owned by grantee any space is to be leased, provide the following:			
Lessee	Terms of Lease	Cost Covered by Lease	Square Footage Leased
NA			
E. If property is leased by grantee - Provide the following:			
Name of Leaser	Length of Lease	Options to Renew	
NA			
26. Building Square Footage:			
Current Space GSF	Interior - 2200 sq. ft.		
Space to be Renovated GSF	Two Parking Lots - total 4600 sq. ft.		
New GSF			

27. Year of Construction of Any Structures Proposed for Renovation, Restoration or Conversion	2023
28. Comments	
<p>The Hut, as we affably call our bridge home, is an iconic fixture in the Mt. Rainier community. When it was originally constructed in 1947 it was the clubhouse for the American Legion. In 1951 it was leased as a temporary home to the Beth Torah Congregation. Since 1998, hundreds of bridge enthusiasts as well as casual players have met the intellectual challenge of the worldwide game within its walls. Our goal is to continue to be an asset to the residents of Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia and visitors at The Hut in a safe, comfortable, and healthy environment.</p> <p>As a result of the pandemic closures, our organization suffered devastating financial challenges. Our main revenues come from the nominal charge for each game. Though we cancelled games, our bills continued. They averaged \$20,000 for each of those two years. When we resumed face-to-face playing, our heating/cooling system began to fail, and we made piecemeal fixtures. We know that we will have to purchase a new HVAC system very soon. We also lost members as we were not able to recruit and support new players. Indeed, we were at an inflection point. After much deliberation, we made a collective commitment not only to rebound, but to soar. We have begun to write proposals and have undertaken a robust effort to recruit and teach new players. We obtained a hot water heater tank from a grant from Community Forklift, a neighboring organization which recycles building materials and appliances. We will also apply to them for appliances and other materials to reduce costs for our proposed upgrades.</p> <p>When we bought The Hut, it was merely a shell. We've added wall paneling, flooring, and carpeting to the three main rooms. The envisioned outdoor lighting will add to the safety of players entering and leaving the evening games and also provide security for the building. Our two parking lots have not been resurfaced in decades. Their surfaces are crumbling and create both a safety hazard and eyesore. Upgrades will remedy this and also increase parking capacity. Prior to the pandemic, we served meals at our games. As we gear up to resume this practice, we know that our 1980s kitchen needs a more efficient layout and accompanying appliances.</p> <p>In keeping with our goal to increase membership, we invited the City Council of Mt. Rainier to The Hut. This was the first time in our history this had been done. WBU officers met with the mayor, two councilmembers, the Director for Economic Development, and the Communications and Events Coordinator to explore ways we could include more residents in our activities and ways we could play a more prominent role in the city. We held an official Open House, "Meet and Greet," in June to introduce our local neighbors and friends to The Hut and the game of bridge. We had 40 guests. We also began five new classes for aspiring players and have instituted special playing sessions, twice each month, for them. We believe we are on the right path to soar; we thank the state of Maryland for considering our request for funding.</p>	