

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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MIKE BOST
12TH DISTRICT, ILLINOIS

VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN

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May 9, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I am requesting \$1,500,000 for the Morrison-Talbott Library Community Annex in Waterloo, IL in fiscal year 2025.

The entity to receive funding for this project is the Morrison-Talbott Library, located at 215 Park Street, Waterloo, IL 62298.

The proposed project seeks to expand our public library's ability to serve the citizens and civic/charitable organizations of our community via the addition of multi-purpose community meeting spaces and the development of a community center. The library currently supports 100+ organizations annually by offering the only free public meeting space in Waterloo. In addition to offering the free meeting space for civic/charitable organizations, our current meeting spaces also host services for Monroe County citizens (such as AARP tax prep, veterans assistance, senior services, early childhood development screenings, truancy meetings, etc...) as well as the library's diverse programming for all ages. The current spaces cannot support the level of use demanded of us by the public.

The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars and is anticipated to have the following benefits. The library currently supports many community organizations throughout the year by providing meeting spaces. In 2023, the library averaged 60+ meetings per month, by 35+ organizations with 350+ attendees. These community meeting rooms are also used by the library to conduct programs and events, and by individuals wishing to conduct meetings and classes, to study or to meet up. In fact, their two meeting rooms and one study room are booked solidly 6 days per week, and organizations often must compete for these spaces. Varied organizations include those providing senior, veterans and human services, arts and advocacy organizations and many more. Using these rooms, the library is able to provide much needed services to community members, such as free Medicare assistance for seniors from the non-profit AgeSmart and free tax preparation from AARP for senior and low income citizens. Children receive free, private trauma therapy from the Violence Prevention Center, and they offer a Diabetes Support Group with their partner, the University of Illinois-Extension. They have developed valuable relationships with many of these community organizations and are constantly innovating to find new ways to support people via services, programs and collaborations. As there are no other suitable meeting spaces and no community center in Waterloo, the library is adapting to meet those needs. Most importantly, the library is providing services to people of all ages and abilities. In any given day, they may offer a free yoga class for teens and adults, STEM programming for children, music and movement classes for babies and caregivers, grief support for those having experienced loss, meeting space for the ROE to conduct parental meetings, a homebound tutor conducting tutoring sessions and a

myriad of other programs and meetings. The library believes that providing these spaces for folks to meet and share experiences helps build a stronger community. In fact, they made "building community" central to their mission, and they achieve this by connecting people not only to resources but to each other. With additional space, the library will be able to expand their ability to accomplish this mission and meet a clearly demonstrated need in the community.

This project has a Federal nexus because it is for the purposes authorized in 42 U.S.C.5305(a)(1).

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Bost". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mike Bost
Member of Congress