

# BNBN NEWSLETTER

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## BROOKLINE ARPA COMMITTEE MISAPPROPRIATES FUNDS

The first day of ARPA Round 1, Miriam Aschkenasy (Select Board and ARPA Committee Member) stated that entities applying for ARPA funding should email the ARPA Submission Review Committee Inbox so that all Committee Members can see the contents of the emails. She emphasized that ARPA Committee Members should not be discussing these proposals individually with entities applying, and that those entities applying should not try to lobby Committee Members.

In shocking news, it was discovered that several Committee Members have had private individual conversations, outside of public record, with entities applying for funding. In these conversations they negotiated back door deals, promised funding, and even discussed the details of other entities' proposals such as BNBC's.

The ARPA Committee Members refused to meet with or schedule meetings with BNBC, and instead engaged in a concerted effort to harass and bully staff and representatives in public meetings. Despite the strength of the many industry experts in BNBC's proposals, Mike Sandman and Miriam stated that the goals of said proposals were "too complicated". Numerous attempts were made to ask the Committee to elaborate on what was "too complicated" and to meet with them. They refused and did not fund the majority of BNBC proposals.

This is especially shocking as the Committee publicly stated they were going to award 1.3M to the BNBC Affordable Housing Proposal several times, and even suggested BNBC use the letter of commitment from the Town of Brookline to seek further funds. Then, the day before the final decision, Miriam and Mike informed BNBC they would not be funding the proposal at and that their decision was final.

ARPA Funds are designated by the federal government for those communities most impacted by the effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic (low income black and brown people). Not only did the Committee not fund several proposals by BNBC to impact issues these communities face (job loss, unaffordable housing, unaffordable childcare), they awarded the majority of funds back to Town Entities for completely unrelated projects. The same entities that have been proven ineffective and have left behind low income black and brown residents to this day. To allocate these ARPA funds thusly is blatant misappropriation of funds. See page 2 for more details.

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## Newsletter Highlights

**BLACK AND BROWN  
COMMISSION WARRANT  
ARTICLE (19) FILED**

**HISTORIC STATEHOUSE  
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**BNBC ARPA PROPOSALS  
SUBMITTED**

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING  
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**AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE  
COMMITTEE**



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APRIL 2023

EDITION #7

## BROOKLINE ARPA COMMITTEE MISAPPROPRIATION OF FUNDS: BREAKDOWN

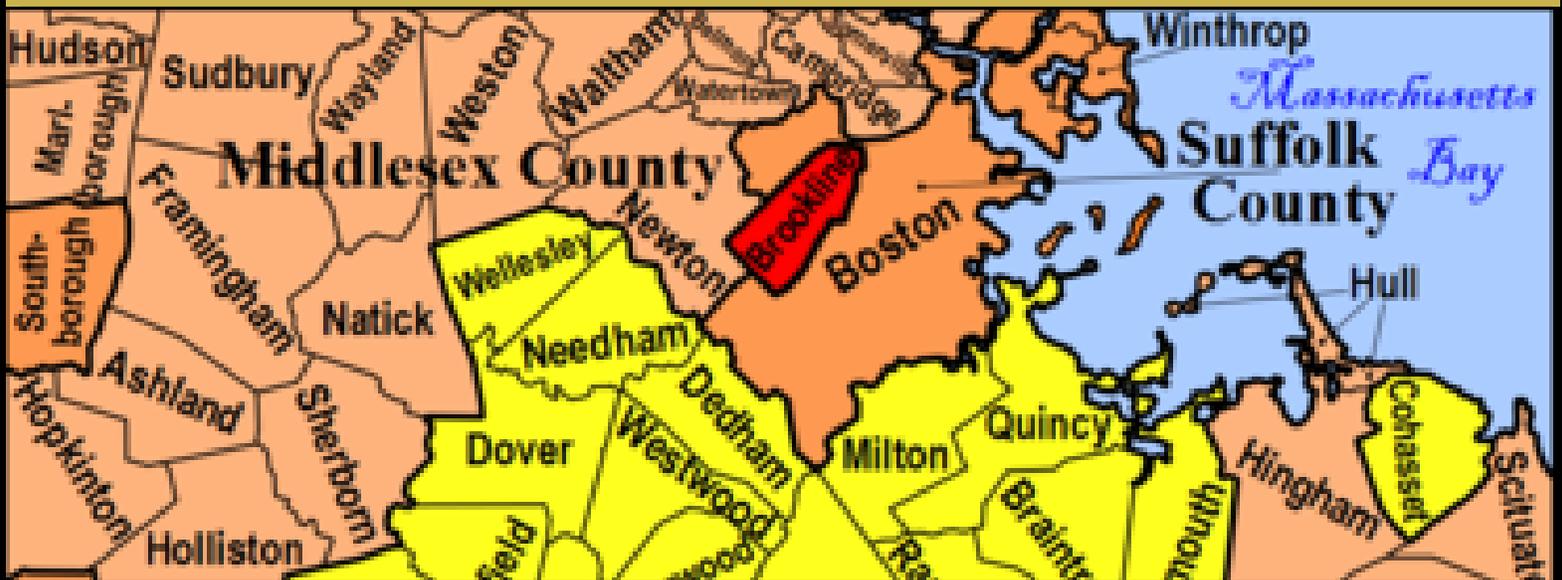
22-4	Steps to Success	Expand Steps to Success academic and enrichment program to kindergarten students and bolster support for high school students	Vulnerable Populations	\$1,400,000.00	\$750,000.00
21-53	Brookline Housing Authority	Support maintenance and capital needs at Egmont Street Veterans and Trustman Apartments	Vulnerable Populations	\$16,000,000.00	\$6,000,000.00
22-35	Brookline Improvement Coalition	Maintain and expand BIC operations and programs	Vulnerable Populations	\$6,839,873.00	\$750,000.00

Above are 3 lines from the "ARPA — First Round Awards.xlsx" document from Brooklinema.gov. These are just 3 of the many blatant examples of how the ARPA Committee has misappropriated funds. Brookline Housing Authority (BHA) was awarded 6M to "support maintenance and capital needs at Egmont Street". Not only have the residents of Egmont not felt the impact of a single penny, conditions are worsening. Boilers have been working during the winter and the years old mold issues from prior to the pandemic persist due to the humidity from non centralized heating in the developments.

On top of it all, none of this falls under the scope of what ARPA funds were intended for. These structural issues have existed for years before the pandemic. Residents have been suffering for years and are still dealing with squalid conditions to this day. BIC's proposal is another example of funds being allocated that do not match the scope of ARPA. Why were funds granted to **expand** a program? Which program? Who did that program assist prior, during, and after the pandemic? Is BIC suggesting that their programs were so robust and actively helping the community that they suffered during the pandemic? I can tell you for certain that the majority of low income Black and Brown residents have not felt one iota of this money BIC was allocated or the impact of any "programs" that have existed. This begs the question: What percent of the low income black and brown community does BIC serve?

Furthermore, Steps to Success received 750K to again, **"expand"**, their "academic and enrichment program to kindergarten students and bolder support for high school students". Every legitimate study will prove that low income black and brown people were the most Negatively impacted by the pandemic. We suffered the greatest job loss, death & lack of access to healthcare, evictions, etc. Kindergarteners and high school students are not a vulnerable population. What would have made sense would have been increasing efforts for underserved low income black and brown K-12 students. However, Steps to Success hasn't made racial equity a priority prior to the pandemic. It makes sense that they continue to actively avoid marginalized students and put their issues on the back burner.

The most insidious element of this entity is that they claim to be the opposite. Steps to Success staff have repeatedly touted how diverse and accessible their program is, specifically mentioning black and brown youth. On their website as of 4/11/23 they claim that 87% of their students are students of color. How many of those are low income black and brown? 79% are low income. How many of those are black and brown? Of the less than 50 youths they assist, how many low income black and brown kids do they assist on a regular basis? **We the community** know how our voices are discredited yet these manipulated statistics are valued. "No more. We are pushing back." - Anonymous, low income, Black and Brown Resident.

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## BLACK AND BROWN COMMISSION: WARRANT ARTICLE FILED

Black and Brown residents filed the warrant article to create the Black and Brown Commission for the Town of Brookline, MA. This is a historic moment as these disenfranchised and underrepresented residents filed the paperwork to be able to have a body to advocate for them as current town representatives do not. The commission will act as a centralizing force in the Town of Brookline and the community. It will deal with all Black and Brown issues providing information, referral, guidance, and coordination to educate and to offer and provide technical assistance to other public agencies and private persons, organizations and institutions engaged in activities and programs intended to eliminate systemic, racism prejudice and discrimination against a person because of the color of their skin and racial status as Black and Brown. Some of the priorities of the BNB Commission will be: 1) To ensure equity in the status of Black and Brown people in Brookline. 2) To design and implement programs that promote equity for all Black and Brown people in the Town of Brookline. 3) To develop recommendations and recommend policy to all departments, divisions and agencies of the Town, including the Select Board. 4) To act as liaison with all departments and divisions of Town government on issues affecting Black and Brown people. To read the warrant article visit:

["https://blacknbrownclub.com/news"](https://blacknbrownclub.com/news).



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## Historic Statehouse Visit with Tommy Vitolo

BNBC Directors visited the Statehouse on January 26th 2023 in a historic meeting with State Representative Tommy Vitolo. This meeting marked the most black and brown Brookline community leaders that have met with Tommy at the statehouse. We discussed priorities (housing, affordable childcare, economic development and job skills training) to address economic equity for low income, BIPOC Brookline residents. BNBC is the only low income, minority owned, with 100% BIPOC staff, organization in Brookline to have completed a comprehensive study of the specific needs of low income residents. The study included BNBC personnel meeting with more than 120 low income households from Egmont, High Street, Veterans, and Chestnut Hill during outreach. BNBC is looking forward to working with elected officials to address economic equity in Brookline. "We believe community based solutions and we (low income residents) need to be a part of the conversations and decisions being made."  
- Brookline Resident



## BNBC ARPA Proposals Submitted

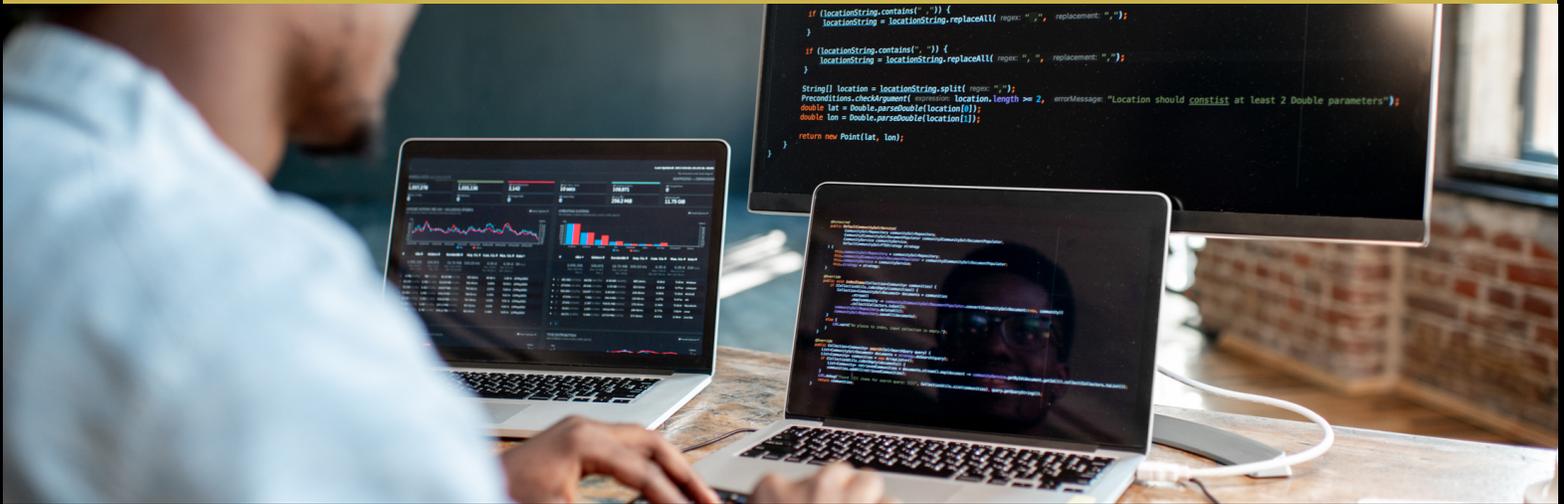
BNBC has submitted two proposals (Affordable Childcare, Aviation/Job Skills Training) for ARPA Round 2. Low income residents were appalled to find out that 41 (68.33%) of the 60 proposals submitted in round two were from Brookline Town Entities. Brookline town entities have already been awarded 11M (via Norfolk County) from ARPA round 2 allocated as non-competitive funds which includes: town entities, premium pay, and Covid response.

While low income, vulnerable, black and brown residents are still anticipating the impact of round 1, they have not felt the impact of those allocated funds. The major issues outlined in the BCF disparity report are still present.

More of the ARPA funds from round 2 should be used to address job loss, unaffordable housing, the complete lack of affordable childcare, and rising inflation. Organizations that received funding in round 1 and haven't demonstrated their impacts shouldn't be receiving funds in round 2. We cannot afford to miss the mark again.

The Select Board alone is asking for just under 5 million dollars to "increase public sector capacity...". When asked about this during the Select Board Meeting during public comment, no answer was given. BNBC spokespeople repeatedly advocated during the Feb 17th ARPA committee hearing for funding to go to organizations that are serving the target population these funds are designated for, and also are members of this same community.

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## Affordable Housing Proposal

BNBC in partnership with the Black and Brown Contractors Association and Bossman Construction have submitted a proposal that would allow them to create affordable housing for low income black and brown residents in Brookline and an accessible path to home ownership. Said proposal would also utilize local black and brown contractors that have been excluded from contract opportunities in Brookline. Tommy noted the staggering barriers to home ownership in Brookline with the average salary for low income black and brown folks at roughly 30K per year and the price per unit for a home being 500K. Increasing access to affordable housing is just one part of BNBC's plan to increase economic equity for low income, marginalized black and brown Brookline residents.

## Google Training Program

BNBC in partnership with Brookline Adult & Community Education (BACE) are bringing not only 300 scholarships for low income black and brown residents for Google Training Certificate Classes, but also a team of TA's to ensure that students have a support team to be successful in class and hopefully join the IT career field with an average starting salary (51K) double that of the median income of a low income Brookline residents.

### LOCAL LEADER HIGHLIGHT:



### SHATAYSLIA BARNES LOCAL BROOKLINE MOTHER

My name is Shataysia Barnes. I am a resident at High Street, Veterans in Brookline MA. I am a loving and caring mother to a 2 year old little boy named is Sai. Being a part of BNBC and the ACC are very beneficial for me in many ways. First, Advocating for myself, my son, and others in similar circumstances to myself is extremely rewarding. I'm currently taking the necessary steps to get certified with EEC, so I can work as a child care provider at the BNCB Affordable Childcare Facility. BNBC has also helped with funds for transportation to childcare out of the town when I have struggled. For low income families like myself that support is very important because transportation is expensive and there is no affordable daycare locally. And it shows that this is not just an organization, but a family network that looks out for each other. Lastly, being able to network, help my neighbors, friends, and family get the assistance and resources we need is such an empowering way for me to engage in bettering Brookline.

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## **AVIATION TRAINING PROGRAM**

BNBC is establishing a first of its kind training pipeline for low-income, BIPOC residents of Brookline to enter the general commercial aviation and drone aviation fields. This project will increase the number of BIPOC, which are underrepresented, in these high-demand industries while promoting economic mobility for low-income residents through advanced training and skills development. BNBC is committed to increasing economic equity for low income, vulnerable, BIPOC residents of Brookline. For this target population, rapid training and entry into a high-earning job is the fastest way to increase economic stability and upward mobility.

Should our proposal be granted, we could give a minimum of 10 Brookline residents the opportunity to become FAA commercial pilots, and 300 Brookline residents the opportunity to become FAA 107 pilots. BNBC with town admin support will endeavor to create the region’s largest workforce for drone delivery jobs and develop industry partnerships to secure aviation jobs for residents.

## **AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE COMMITTEE**

BNBC has created a committee of BIPOC women to establish the first affordable childcare program in Brookline that accepts state subsidized vouchers. This program will be a major economic boost for low-income, BIPOC parents who lack access to local, affordable options for childcare, allowing them to enter or re-enter the workforce following the numerous challenges faced by working parents during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as provide employment and training via experts in the field for marginalized Brookline residents. Massachusetts provides low-income parents with vouchers that cover the costs of child care.



***Two recent examples of successful outreach includes two Brookline residents: 17 year old Taryn and Antwon (adult) who just took their first flight as pilot in command and completed BNB ATP drone certification class.***

However, there is no requirement for providers to accept these vouchers, and currently no providers in the Brookline area accept vouchers. Parents who rely on vouchers to afford care, then, are subjected to long travel times to other neighborhoods to access services. For parents who are reliant on public transport or may have multiple children attending various schools, this adds additional stress and increases the likelihood of arriving late to work, reducing income and jeopardizing employment.