



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF TRENTON

**Application Instructions for American Rescue Plan Funding  
For The City's Subrecipient Coronavirus Local  
Fiscal Recovery Program**

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) – APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS CORONAVIRUS LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY (CLFR) PROGRAM**

Pursuant to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP), the U.S. Department of Treasury (DOT) established the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund (CSFRF) and the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (CLFRF) to support State, local and Tribal governments in responding to the impact of COVID-19 and their efforts to contain COVID-19 on their communities, businesses, and residents.

The City of Trenton was granted approximately \$73 million in ARP funding. The first half was received in May 2021. The second tranche was deposited into the City's account in June 2022. As a recipient of CLFRF resources, the City of Trenton has broad discretion to use its funds within the following major categories:

- a) Respond to the public health emergency
- b) Address COVID-19 related negative economic impacts
- c) Address disproportionate public health and economic impacts of the crisis on the hardest-hit communities, populations, and households
- d) Respond to workers performing essential work during the COVID-19 public health emergency by providing premium pay to eligible workers
- e) Continue provision of government services to the extent that there has been a reduction in revenue due to the COVID-19 public health emergency relative to revenues collected in the most recent full fiscal year prior to the emergency; and
- f) Make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.

In its initial phase, the City utilized ARPA funds for City agencies such as the purchase of a new emergency radio system, premium pay for City workers and repairs of the City's water delivery system. **During this next phase, Mayor Reed Gusciora is pleased to extend the opportunity for ARPA funding to external organizations (subrecipients), including not-for-profit groups as well as for-profit businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19, particularly among the City's low-income communities and people of color.**

The Mayor's Office is seeking proposals to use some of the City's ARP resources. Successful proposals will address the needs presented and meet the guidelines articulated in these application instructions.

The City of Trenton's CLFR Subrecipient Program is designed not only to provide economic stabilization for residents (household and businesses), but also to address the systemic public health and economic challenges that have contributed to the pandemic's more severe and disproportionate impacts among the City's low-income

households and population. **To best achieve these goals, the Mayor has established two funds: (i) one fund totaling \$2,000,000 will be available to not-for-profit entities; and (ii) a second fund totaling \$2,000,000 will be available for small (defined below), for-profit businesses that operate in Trenton.**

Funding will be available to support **projects with a minimum request of \$25,000 up to a maximum amount of \$100,000.** The Program covers costs **incurred no earlier than March 3, 2021, and no later than December 31, 2024.**

Initially, the City will utilize a paper application process for these programs but will shortly move to an online application process. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis subject to the aforementioned date limitations and until the relevant fund has been exhausted.

**Only those proposals submitted for eligible activities in accordance with the required format (see attached forms and instructions) will be considered for funding.** A discussion of eligible activities is included in these instructions and a summarized list of eligible categories is attached to the application form. If you are considering applying for funding and are not sure if the project or program is eligible, you may contact [jbeach@trentonnj.org](mailto:jbeach@trentonnj.org) for assistance.

Thank you for your interest in the City of Trenton Subrecipient Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Program.

## ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The US Department of Treasury has issued guidelines that enumerate several different expenditure categories that are permitted uses of ARP funding. However, in an effort to focus the benefits of the CLFRF on our City residents and businesses, this subrecipient program will be limited to the expenditure categories discussed below.

Before preparing a request for funding, first determine whether the proposed activity or project is an eligible activity per federal law and regulations. **In general, a proposed activity or project must address the effects of the COVID-19 public health emergency.** The City is accepting proposals for the categories listed below and, while not exclusive, the uses described.

### 1. *Public Health*

Public health services generally refer to projects that address emergent health needs, including measures to counter the spread of COVID-19, the provision of care for those impacted by the virus, and programs or services that address disparities in public health that have been exacerbated by the pandemic:

- a. COVID-19 Mitigation and Prevention. Vaccination programs; medical care; testing, contact tracing; support for isolation or quarantine; supports for vulnerable populations to access medical or public health services; public health surveillance (e.g., monitoring case trends, genomic sequencing for variants); enforcement of public health orders; public communication efforts; enhancement to health care capacity, including through alternative care facilities; purchases of personal protective equipment; support for prevention, mitigation, or other services in congregate living facilities (e.g., nursing homes, incarceration settings, homeless shelters, group living facilities) and other key settings like schools; ventilation improvements in congregate settings, health care settings, or other key locations; enhancement of public health data systems; capital investments in public facilities to meet pandemic operational needs, such as physical plant improvements to public hospitals and health clinics or adaptations to public buildings to implement COVID-19 mitigation tactics
- b. Medical Expenses. Provision of care and services to address near- and longer-term needs caused by COVID-19, such as shortness of breath that continues for weeks or months, for multiorgan impacts from COVID-19, or for post-intensive care syndrome
- c. Behavior Health Care. Behavioral health needs exacerbated by the pandemic and responses to other public health impacts. These services include mental health treatment, substance misuse treatment, other

behavioral health services, hotlines or warmlines, crisis intervention, overdose prevention, infectious disease prevention, and services or outreach to promote access to physical or behavioral health primary care and preventative medicine

- d. Improving the Design and Execution of Health and Public Health Programs. Planning and analysis to improve programs addressing the COVID–19 pandemic, including through use of targeted consumer outreach, improvements to data or technology infrastructure, impact evaluations, and data analysis
- e. Disparities in Public Health Outcomes. Funding community health workers to help community members access health services and services to address the social determinants of health; funding public benefits navigators to assist community members with navigating and applying for available Federal, State, and local public benefits or services; housing services to support healthy living environments and neighborhoods conducive to mental and physical wellness; remediation of lead paint or other lead hazards to reduce risk of elevated blood lead levels among children; and evidence-based community violence intervention programs to prevent violence and mitigate the increase in violence during the pandemic

## *2. Negative Economic Impacts*

Eligible uses that respond to the negative economic impacts of the public health emergency must be designed to address an economic harm resulting from or exacerbated by the public health emergency. In assessing a proposal, the City will first consider whether an economic harm exists and whether this harm was caused or made worse by the COVID–19 public health emergency. An eligible use must also be related and reasonably proportional to the extent and type of harm experienced; uses that bear no relation or are grossly disproportionate to the type or extent of harm experienced would not be eligible uses.

- a. Assistance to Unemployed Workers. Job training, subsidized employment programs or incentives, deposits into the state Unemployment Insurance trust fund
- b. Assistance to Households. Food assistance; rent, mortgage, or utility assistance; counseling and legal aid to prevent eviction or homelessness; cash assistance; emergency assistance for burials, home repairs, weatherization, or other needs; internet access or digital literacy assistance

- c. Assistance to Small Businesses and Non-profits. Loans or grants to mitigate financial hardship such as declines in revenues or impacts of periods of business closure; loans, grants, or in-kind assistance to implement COVID–19 prevention or mitigation tactics, such as physical plant changes to enable social distancing, enhanced cleaning efforts, barriers or partitions, or COVID–19 vaccination, testing, or contact tracing programs; and technical assistance, counseling, or other services to assist with business planning needs
- d. Aid to Impacted Industries. Aid may include assistance to implement COVID–19 mitigation and infection prevention measures to enable safe resumption of tourism, travel, and hospitality services, for example, improvements to ventilation, physical barriers or partitions, signage to facilitate social distancing, provision of masks or personal protective equipment, or consultation with infection prevention professionals to develop safe reopening plans

### *3. Disproportionately Impacted Communities*

Uses in this category are intended to alleviate the immediate economic impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic on housing insecurity, while addressing conditions that contributed to poor public health and economic outcomes during the pandemic, namely concentrated areas with limited economic opportunity and inadequate or poor-quality housing

- a. Housing Support
  - i. Services to address homelessness such as supportive housing, and to improve access to stable, affordable housing among unhoused individuals
  - ii. Affordable housing development to increase supply of affordable and high-quality living units
  - iii. Housing vouchers, residential counseling, or housing navigation assistance to facilitate household moves to neighborhoods with high levels of economic opportunity and mobility for low-income residents, to help residents increase their economic opportunity and reduce concentrated areas of low economic opportunity

**b. Education Support**

- i. Evidence-based educational services and practices to address the academic needs of students, including tutoring, summer, afterschool, and other extended learning and enrichment programs
- ii. Evidence-based practices to address the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students

**c. Healthy Childhood Environments**

- i. New or expanded high-quality childcare to provide safe and supportive care for children
- ii. Home visiting programs to provide structured visits from health, parent educators, and social service professionals to pregnant women or families with young children to offer education and assistance navigating resources for economic support, health needs, or child development
- iii. Enhanced services for child welfare-involved families and foster youth to provide support and training on child development, positive parenting, coping skills, or recovery for mental health and substance use challenges

**ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

All applicants must be open and operating, and be in good standing with federal, state and local government, i.e., current with payment of taxes and municipal utilities.

**1. Small businesses**

A small business is defined as a privately owned corporation, partnership, or sole proprietorship that is located within the City of Trenton and has no more than **25** employees or annual revenue of less than **\$250,000**.

**2. Non-profit organizations**

Non-profit organizations who deliver services to low-to-moderate income City of Trenton residents may apply for funding. Each participating agency must be recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt 501(c)3 or (c)4 entity. You must submit a copy of your Letter of Determination from the IRS with your proposal. Your organization's main office need not be located within the City of Trenton. However, the beneficiaries or participants of your program must be Trenton residents.

## PROJECT LIFECYCLE

Consistent with the federal CLFRF statute and regulations, Trenton will use a project-based approach for awarding ARPA funding to subrecipients or awardees. Projects will consist of five (5) phases:

1. Proposal
2. Application
3. Funding
4. Administration
5. Closing

Within each phase, there may be separate steps or requirements that must be completed prior to advancing to the next phase. This section will provide a brief overview of the requirements for each phase.

### Project Proposal Phase

The proposal phase contains two consecutive steps: pre-proposal, proposal.

#### *Pre-proposal*

##### Eligibility

There is an eligibility threshold for projects to meet to be considered. Projects that will be considered eligible for funding must identify the following information:

1. Identify a negative impact of the COVID–19 public health emergency, and
2. Identify how the project accurately documents and responds to the scale of the impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Projects must have a minimum funding request of \$25,000 and cannot exceed \$100,000. The funding can be used over the course of multiple years but must be obligated (committed by a contractual obligation) by December 31, 2024. Ineligible projects will be declined.

Projects must remedy the COVID-19 public health emergency or its negative economic impacts directly or indirectly. Direct projects respond to effects that can be solely attributed to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Examples of direct projects include mobilizing a large-scale vaccination effort or building improvements for social distancing. The COVID-19 public health emergency is the only cause for direct projects.

Indirect projects can also address the effects of the COVID-19 public health emergency or its negative economic impacts. Indirect projects are linked to the COVID-19 pandemic via direct effects or have more than one cause, of which the COVID-19



pandemic is one. For example, an organization proposing a tutoring program would be an indirect project—a direct effect of the pandemic was the transition to virtual school, of which many students suffered learning loss in the transition.

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**Note: An eligible project idea is not a commitment to fund.**

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### *Proposal*

This is the second step in the application phase. A proposal is a concise overview of the project. It identifies the person(s) from the applicant organization who will be responsible for overseeing the project, provides a description of the project, identifies potential performance measures, and offers a high-level overview of the budget and potential cost impacts. The information provided in the proposal will be reviewed for eligibility by the ARP Coordinator. Incomplete proposals and proposals that do not meet eligibility criteria will not be accepted.

*Completing the Proposal*

**The proposal form has multiple points where character count is limited to ensure brevity. Applicants will have the opportunity to expand upon their proposals in application phase pending eligibility review and evaluation.**

*Title.* Project titles should be a brief description of what is being proposed. Do not include your organization's name in the project title. Project titles may be edited at the discretion of the City.

*Priority Outcome.* Applicants must select one of the six Priority Outcomes (referenced on page 2) to categorize their project. If an applicant believes that their project could be categorized as two or more of the outcomes, chose the one in which a majority of the funds will be spent.

*Risk.* Applicants must demonstrate that they have the capacity, skill, and internal control to administer funds appropriately and in compliance with all laws, regulations, agreements, and guidance—the uncertainty in performing this task is considered risk. Applicants are not expected to eliminate risk. However, applicants are encouraged to describe at least 3 risks and a plan for mitigation to receive the maximum number of points.

*Evaluation.* Proposals should include thoughtful consideration of measurement and evaluation that have valid, accessible, well-sourced data. Performance measures are a quantifiable expression of the amount, cost, or result of activities that indicate how much, how well, and at what level products or services are provided during a given time-period. Most importantly, proposed performance measures should link to outcomes, measures of benefit received associated with a program or service.

*Financial Information.* Proposed budgets should be well planned but are not expected to be exhaustive or granular at this phase. Proposals should describe all necessary resources to complete a project. Furthermore, organizations should give additional thought as to whether the project they are proposing will have an impact on future operating budgets, revenue and expenditures.

Eligible proposals will be scored by Proposal Review Team consisting of the Chief of Staff, the Business Administrator, the Director(s) of the relevant City Departments, and the ARP Coordinator.

Proposals will be scored against 100-point criteria. The criteria are contained in **Appendix A**. Below are the evaluation decisions:

- Proposals receiving a score of 50 points or less by any member of the panel or an average of score of 50 points may be declined

- Proposals receiving an average score greater than 50 and up to 67 points may be asked to resubmit with revisions up to 2 times.
- Proposals receiving an average score of 67 points and above will move on to the next step in the process.

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**Note: A proposal deemed eligible and successfully evaluated is not a commitment to fund.**

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Applicants will be notified via email through each step of the review process.

### **Endorsements**

Only proposals that are scored 67 points or higher are eligible to be endorsed by elected officials. An endorsement is a letter of support for your application and is a testimonial in favor of the project proposal that demonstrates its capability to further the goals of City leadership.

Endorsements can come from a City Director, City Council President, or a City Council member. Project proposals are not required to have an endorsement to proceed to the next step. If an endorsement is sought, only one is necessary for the application to receive the benefit. Multiple endorsements are not necessary.

### **Application**

The application phase is focused on providing additional information for project implementation.

#### *Application*

A successful proposal will proceed to the application phase. It is in this phase that applicants will create detailed implementation plans based on their proposal. City representatives will be assigned to provide technical assistance through this process.

The process includes developing:

- a detailed budget
- performance measures
- a performance management plan
- a language access plan
- a project risk analysis
- an equity impact analysis
- an overall project timeline

The ARP Coordinator will work with applicants to ensure that applications are completed in an acceptable manner. There is no defined time to complete an

application. Timing of the process will vary with how fast the applicant can complete the required components of the application and respond to requests for information.

Prospective subrecipients may be required to provide detailed employment and tax data, insurance information, governmental licenses, and organizing documents to conduct due diligence and risk assessments to ensure satisfaction of federal guidelines and regulations.

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**Note: A completed application is not a commitment to fund.**

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Each application is evaluated on its own merits through the process. In evaluating whether a project should be submitted for final funding approval from City Council (see below), the following will be considered: urgency of the project, timeline for the project's completion, other available sources of funding, if the project is a new or existing program, overall complexity of the project, project risk, if the project competes with existing priorities, and the possibility of existing similar projects or programs. A Project Readiness Self-Assessment Template is attached as **Exhibit B**.

Applications may be placed on active waiting lists to ensure funds are awarded in accordance with this policy and to facilitate prudent financial management and equitable distribution of funds. All completed proposals will be accepted and evaluated, and funds will be available until the final application deadline. The Mayor, Business Administrator, or their designees will provide the final review and approval for applications to proceed to the funding stage. Applicants will be notified via email on the status of their application.

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**Note: Executive approval does not equal a commitment to fund but moves the application to the funding phase.**

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## **Funding**

Once a request for funding has received executive approval, it is eligible to be submitted to City Council for consideration of appropriating ARP funds to the project. The funding phase has two consecutive requirements: agreement and disbursement. Disbursement will be remitted on a performance basis, i.e., after the subrecipient has received the goods or services and incurred a legal obligation to pay the provider as evidenced by appropriate documentation.

### *Agreement*

**Each project must have an agreement that will be in the form of a grant agreement.** The agreement will describe the terms and conditions of funding, including, but not limited to purpose, term, eligible uses, scope, reporting requirements, potential recoupment, and any other requirements. *As a subrecipient, you must comply with the SLFRF statute, SLFRF Award Terms and Conditions, Treasury’s final rule, and any other applicable federal statutes, regulations, and reporting requirements.*

### **Administration**

The administration phase contains four concurrent steps: reporting, compliance, evaluation, and technical assistance. Reporting, compliance, and evaluation requirements will be defined in the funding agreement. The administration phase includes the implementation of those requirements. The subrecipient is responsible for the implementation of the project as defined by the application and funding agreement. Technical assistance and project management support will be available throughout the process through the ARP Coordinator.

*The City considers compliance with federal guidelines to be of the utmost importance. Failure to execute a project as planned or comply with the funding agreement may result in corrective action, disqualification from submitting future applications, recovery of funds, termination of the agreement, and/or other civil or criminal proceedings as necessary.*

## **Project Closing**

Projects will be closed once the terms of the agreements have been fulfilled or the term of the agreement has concluded. All funds will have been reconciled, all outstanding issues have been resolved, and unused funding returned. Final reports must be submitted to the City and the subrecipient is required to retain those reports for at least ten (10) years for future audits.

## **Responsibilities**

The instructions contained in this document have highlighted multiple responsibilities for applicants and the City. In addition, there are several additional expectations of the City that may impact the decision or ability to apply for project funding. Applicants are expected to:

- Self-assess project eligibility before submitting a proposal
- Seek prior approval of all relevant parties before making a submission
- Provide accurate, honest, and timely information
- Comply with all laws, contractual requirements, guidelines, and agreements
- Actively seek an understanding of the project lifecycle
- Make the project a priority
- Complete projects in accordance with the approved scope of work and agreed upon timeline
- Read and continually refer to the application instructions and other future guidance from the program administrators
- Be in good standing with the State of New Jersey and the City of Trenton, including being current on all taxes, water bills and other applicable prerequisites, e.g., 501(c)(3) status

The City is expected to:

- Ensure applicants are aware of eligibility requirements
- Notify applicants and awardees of status changes
- Respond to questions from applicants in a timely manner
- Provide technical assistance to help awardees meet compliance requirements
- Complete agreements and make payments in a timely manner

## **Contact Information**

For additional information, please email [jbeach@trentonnj.org](mailto:jbeach@trentonnj.org)

## **FUNDING PERIOD**

ARP funds can be used to fund costs that are incurred (i.e., the recipient has incurred an obligation) during the period of March 3, 2021 and ending December 31, 2024. Any funds not obligated (i.e., contracted or otherwise compelled by a legal obligation) by December 24, 2024, must be returned.

All funds obligated by December 31, 2024, must be expended by December 31, 2026. Funds not expended by December 31, 2026, must be returned.

## EXHIBIT A Scoring Criteria

| Criteria  | Not Demonstrated  | Below Expectations   | Meets Expectations   | Exceeds Expectations   |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Describes project intentions clearly and resulting benefits | No clear intention for use of funds   | Intent unclear or uses excessive jargon  | Intent clear and presents project benefits                                       | Intent clear, presents benefits, and advances Mayoral agenda   |
|   | 0 points  | 5 points   | 10 points  | 15 points  |
| Presents business case for the public good                  | No business case and would result in large-scale revenue loss or recurring costs without a solution | Presents business case for the public good and may result in increased recurring costs | Presents business case and is expected to generate cost savings or revenue       | Presents business case and intends to supply both cost savings and revenue                               |
|   | 0 points  | 5 points   | 10 points  | 15 points  |
| Identifies and analyzes project risks                       | No presentation of risks or adverse results   | One risk or adverse result is given  | Two or more risks given and at least one mitigating factor                       | Three or more risks given and a plan for mitigation  |
|   | 0 points  | 5 points   | 10 points  | 15 points  |
| Describes success and provides valid performance measures   | Success not adequately described or goal-based  | Success described, performance measures not supported or do not tie to an outcome      | Success is goal-based, performance measures are valid                            | Success is outcome-oriented, performance measures identified, sourced, accessible, and linked to outcome |
|   | 0 points  | 5 points   | 10 points  | 15 points  |
| Explains how project impacts equity                         | No evidence of (or adverse) impact in the project   | Equity influences the proposal   | Equity is operationalized in the proposal  | Equity is a central tenet of the project   |
|   | 0 points  | 7 points   | 12 points  | 20 points  |
| Outlines financial resources to achieve project goals       | No evidence of financial plan or itemized costs   | Itemized costs are non-specific; evidence of financial planning                        | Itemized costs are specific; financial plan is clearly outlined                  | Itemized costs and financial plan are supported with descriptions  |
|   | 0 points  | 5 points   | 10 points  | 15 points  |
| Leverages City resources with partnerships                  | No evidence of partnerships   | Partnership identified within the City or an external partner                          | Partnership and external funding (or enhancement of existing funding) identified | Multiple collaborators and external funding (or enhancement of existing funding) identified              |
|   | 0 points  | 1 point  | 3 points   | 5 points   |



**City of Trenton  
American Rescue Plan  
Project Readiness Self-Assessment**

**APPENDIX B**

| <b>PROJECT SUCCESS</b>  |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| <b>Prompt</b>   | <b>Response</b> |
| How does the project meet the criteria stipulated by the American Rescue Plan funding guidelines? (scale 1 to 10, 1=least, 10=most) |                 |
| What does “done” looks like?  |                 |
| What are the project objectives?  |                 |
| Who are your advocates/cheerleaders for the project?  |                 |
| What criteria will be used to measure the success of the project  |                 |
| Are the success criteria measurable?  |                 |
| Are other funding sources available to fund this project? Is the organization providing some funding for this project?              |                 |
| Who are the stakeholders of the project?  |                 |
| What percentage of time will the leadership of the organization commit to the project?  |                 |
| Are there “influential people” opposing this project?   |                 |
| Are there other organizations involved with the project?  |                 |
| What other successful projects has the organization implemented within the last three years?  |                 |
| How would you define a successful partnership?  |                 |
| What is the organization’s mission statement?   |                 |
| Does the project align with the organization’s strategic plan?  |                 |
| Does the organization have existing governance processes in place that result in effective decision making?                         |                 |
| <b>SCOPE/EQUITY</b>   |                 |
| How does the project align with the City’s overall goal of mitigating the impact of COVID-19?                                       |                 |
| Who are the people impacted by the project?   |                 |
| Could the impact of the project be quantified?  |                 |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| What are the complex elements of the project?   |  |
| How will the organization deal with the most complex elements of the project?                                       |  |
| <b>ORGANIZATION ENVIRONMENT AND STAFFING</b>  |  |
| What is the workload of your existing team?   |  |
| Where does this project rank in the order of priority with other projects the organization is currently working on? |  |
| Are there any potential changes to the organization leadership that could impact the project?                       |  |
| How will the organization continue to implement the project if there is a change in the organization leadership?    |  |
| How much experience does key staff members have implementing projects of similar scope and size?                    |  |
| Has the team worked together in previous projects?  |  |
| Are the expectations of team members aligned with the project goals and objectives?                                 |  |
| Will key staff be assigned to more than one project?  |  |

**SUCCESS PROBABILITY**

| Success Probability | Recommendation    |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 100%                | Do it!            |
| 80% - 99%           | Do it!            |
| 75% - 79%           | What to improve?  |
| 60% - 74%           | What to improve?  |
| < 60%               | May be next time! |