

Perry School Community Services Center: Case Statement

Executive Summary

Overview/History

Perry School Community Services Center (Perry School) operates out of a building with historical significance near the crossroads of New York Avenue and North Capitol Street NW in Washington, DC.



In 1891, after 20 years of community pressure, Congress appropriated \$112,000 to build a permanent school, and the M Street High School officially opened. The building was one of the first, publicly-funded high schools for Black students in the country.

The history of the building has shaped and influenced the mission and commitment of the Perry School since its reopening as a community center in 1999.

The space that Perry School provides to nonprofit organizations has direct impact in the immediate surrounding area and District-wide. By providing affordable space, Perry School plays a crucial role to help keep the DC nonprofit sector strong and sustainable.

Currently, Perry School leases nearly 24,000 square feet of space to six nonprofit organizations. During the past 12 months, Perry School tenants have provided programs and services to nearly 4,500 adults, youth, and children.

After 24 years as Executive Director, Paul McElligott, is retiring in the fall of 2021. The plan is to hire an Interim Executive Director to build on current momentum and to prepare the way for the hiring of a successor Executive Director in early 2022.

Given the realities of the changing area around Perry School, the Board of Directors has taken steps to shore up the organization's finances and to more fully embrace its role as a landlord in this historic space. In July 2021, the Board voted to halt all direct programming provided by Perry School and focus on its role as a landlord to nonprofit organizations for the foreseeable future.

The Board is focused on raising funds to upgrade the building, optimize building space to increase rental revenues, strengthen cash flow, and attract nonprofits to the space that address community needs without duplicating current services offered by tenants.

Renovate, Rent, Rebuild

The renovation of the Perry School facility will bring a historic building into modern times. As we continue to attract new tenants and community members, well-maintained and up-to-date premises are vital. An upgraded facility will strengthen the Perry School's relationship with existing tenants and improve our ability to attract new tenants.

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Immediate repairs are estimated to cost at least \$200k. The Board has prioritized renovations to bring more space online for leasing and to allow time to secure resources to complete all necessary renovations.

It is anticipated that 11 suites will be available for lease by November 2021. Outreach to the nonprofit community has commenced to recruit new tenants into this historic building.

Once a majority of renovations are completed and additional space rented, the Board, staff, and stakeholders will partner together to reimagine how the building and space can best meet the needs of the community in the 21st Century.

Some of the exciting possibilities include:

- Updated and Upgraded Computer Lab for use by the community and partners
- Flexible Shared Workspace
- Meeting space available to nonprofits, businesses, and the community
- Provide support and training to Perry School tenants and other nonprofit organizations

Help Make a Difference

To help restore this landmark building into a transformational community hub of nonprofit organizations and community engagement, we need your support. Your support will help ensure that Perry School will be a place where DC residents in need can receive programs and services that will help them improve their quality of life and be a space that supports nonprofit organizations to thrive and optimize their mission impact.

Thank you for your consideration!

For more information about Perry School and the building's history, visit perryschool.org

To take a tour of our space or inquire about how to support, please contact:
infoperryschool@gmail.com