



June 30, 2022

Mr. Gabe Sevigny  
Planning Supervisor  
Land Use Review Division  
City of Colorado Springs

**Project:** Family Success Center  
1520 Verde Dr.  
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

**Subject:** Use Variance

Dear Mr. Sevigny:

Please accept this letter as a Project Statement for the referenced project. On behalf of Pikes Peak United Way (PPUW), we are seeking a use variance to allow a Personal Improvement Center and Proprietary School, with an accessory use of a Social Service Center. PPUW intends to provide community focused educational and personal improvement programs and services at this location.

Subject Property Background:

The Family Success Center is proposed to operate within the Pikes Peak Elementary School building, constructed in 1965 and continuously operated by Harrison School District No. 2 as a public school. The building consists of approximately 50,196 square feet and the site is approximately ten acres. The site currently provides adequate parking, internal vehicular circulation and connectivity to surrounding public streets including Verde, Kodiak and Shasta Drives. It is located within the R1-6000 zone district where an Educational Institution would be considered a Conditional Use by the Code.

Description of Proposed Uses:

United Way proposes to operate a public educational resource center comprised of several specific focal areas including:

- Job readiness and training classes
- GED/ESL adult education classes
- Financial empowerment workshops and one-on-one credit counseling
- Health and wellness education opportunities
- Resources to assist with personal and professional development.

By definition, these are all educational programs and align with the spirit and intent of an Educational Institution as provided in the City Code. Two additional functions are proposed which are considered accessory uses because they will serve the same population of users who benefit from the primary uses. These additional functions include a potential health clinic and services of behavioral health counselors; and food and basic need resources including a food pantry. These accessory functions will be limited in operation as compared to the primary uses. The clinic hours are proposed to be 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday through Friday and the food pantry will likely operate 1-3 days a week from 9:00am to 1:00 pm.

By way of reference, both of these accessory functions are frequently provided by other public schools in the form of health system partnerships and District nutritional services. Some common examples found in many public schools include: before and after school health appointments, health screening services for students, staff and immediate family members, free and reduced cost meal programs including breakfast and lunch meals, summer meal programs, etc.

At the subject location, Harrison School District currently provides before and after school meals, summer food service, and health screenings for its constituents, so these functions are already being provided at some level on site currently.

Again, because the accessory uses (both currently provided and proposed) serve the same population as the primary educational uses, they are considered accessory functions under the provisions of the City Code. However, to be absolutely certain there are no issues with providing the programs and services at this location, PPUW requests a use variance be granted.

Use Variance Review Criteria:

The Code provides three criteria that must be met in order to grant a variance:

1. *That there are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applicable to the property involved or to the intended use of the property that do not apply generally to the property or class of uses in the same zone so that a denial of the petition would result in undue property loss; and*

**JUSTIFICATION: As presently zoned, the educational use at this location is not a use by right, but would qualify as a conditional use per the Code. Since the school's operation preceded the zoning requirements in the Code and since the School District is a Political Subdivision of the State of Colorado, the current use is considered existing, non-conforming. Per Article 3 of the Code under 7.3.103, Educational Institutions are allowed as Conditional Uses in the R1-6000 Zone District. The educational based functions offered by PPUW fall under this category of use. Although the non-educational functions could be considered accessory to the educational programs, the use variance would remove any doubt about the**

legitimacy of the proposed services. By its very nature, this is an exceptional situation and would create ambiguity without the variance. Given the current base zoning, denial of the variance would likely result in PPUW locating their programs elsewhere, leaving this building in a blighted state and subject to criminal activity, vandalism, and disrepair. This would have significant negative consequences to the surrounding community.

2. *That such variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a property right of the petitioner; and also,*

**JUSTIFICATION:** Granting the variance will allow direly needed community services to be located in a convenient and appropriate location. Denial would result in restricting the ability for the Property Owner and its community partners to provide these services.

3. *That such variance will not be detrimental to the public welfare or convenience nor injurious to the property or improvements of other owners of property.*

**JUSTIFICATION:** Since the location has been continuously operated since 1965 as a public school serving the surrounding community, the proposed uses will not create any additional impact to the surrounding properties or residents and will not create any additional burden to the City. All existing utilities are adequate to serve the proposed uses and no upgrades or modifications are proposed. The existing internal circulation and parking are adequate because the proposed uses will be less intensive than the existing school. There will not be peak traffic times typical with schools and instead, there will be a smaller flow of vehicles spread out throughout the day.

Outstanding issues:

No outstanding issues have been identified by Staff, the surrounding community, the applicant or the School District at this point. We believe the use variance can be processed quickly and without opposition.

Should you require additional information or wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Respectfully submitted,

**CRP Architects, P.C.**



Brian Risley  
Principal Architect