

Warner Community Center (Old Graded School)

49 West Main St.
Warner, New Hampshire



Building Evaluation Report
April 7, 2023

Sheerr McCrystal Palson Architecture Inc.
30 South Main Street, Building Two
Concord, New Hampshire 03301



Warner Community Center

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Introduction



The Warner Graded School opening reception was held in February 1910. At the time it was said that it was a “marvel of construction” and a “modern school”¹. Designed by architect Chase Roy Whitcher established his firm in Manchester NH. Architect C.R. Whitcher, a New Hampshire native, was active from ca. 1900 until his death in 1940. He was one of the leading and most successful architects of New Hampshire, purportedly responsible for the design of over 300 buildings, predominantly in the state². Whitcher’s obituary described him as “one of the most successful architects in northern New England.”³ The majority of his identified commissions to date include a range of institutional structures, including schools, hospitals, Masonic halls, and office buildings, fire stations, churches, country clubs, and town halls.⁴ His style of Colonial Revival is reflected in the Graded School with the symmetrical façade, a center entrance, and limited embellishments.

¹ Town of Warner Annual Report 2010, Rebecca Courser

² Hobart Pillsbury, *New Hampshire; Resources, Attractions, and Its People—A History; Biographical* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1927), 5:68.

³ “Chase Whitcher, Architect, Dies,” *The Manchester Union*, 26 August 1940.

⁴ Chase Roy Whitcher, *A Monograph*, Preservation Company, Laura B. Driemeyer 208 (*New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources*)

1. Project Summary

Sheerr McCrystal Palson (SMP) Architecture conducted several site visits of the Warner Community Center building starting in 2021 and continuing through January 12th, 2023. Assistance was provided by the Selectboard, Town Staff, and the current occupants. During the building review, SMP was guided through each area, to photograph, measure all the spaces, and interview the occupants.

Simultaneously the Town of Warner engaged Resilient Buildings Group to perform a Level II Energy Audit. See the final document dated December 16, 2022, for information on the existing conditions:

- Building Envelope (Shell)
- Mechanical, Plumbing, Ventilation, and Air conditioning
- Notable issues

The scope of SMP's effort was limited as outlined in the proposal dated 2-14-2022.

Several meetings with the Selectboard and the Warner Economic Development Advisory Committee made it clear that the anticipated scope was not all that the town required. What was subsequently added is:

- Determine who the establishments are and where within the building.
 - Provide the actual amount of square footage for each.
 - Ascertain the amount of space required for each, the number of staff, hours of operation, and estimate of people they serve.
- Provide recommendations on the best use of space.

This report is not intended to be a building condition assessment report, but more of a document that shows the existing floor plans, outlines the physical condition, and provides professional recommendations regarding future uses. Through our effort, we will note issues that affect the safety and security of the public or clear building code concerns.

2. Existing Conditions

Originally built as the Old Graded School 113 years ago the building has since served many uses. The structure itself is in sound condition but would benefit from a building-wide renovation. Over the years various upgrades have been performed; attic insulation was blown in, a new hot water boiler system installed, and minor electrical changes performed as needed. See the Resilient Buildings Group report for conditions and recommendations for upgrades.

2.1 Occupancy:

Currently, there is a mix of occupants offering a variety of community services. Areas within are filled but not in an organized fashion and without an on-site administrator. Cooperation between members seems to be good but it's also clear that spaces have been outgrown and are encroaching into the egress hallways, adjacent areas, and other occupied rooms. In the area behind the building a couple of the organizations have added temporary exterior storage sheds and a carport in which fire wood storage is stacked. The fields below are used as overflow parking.

Occupants within:

1. Warner Connects NH
 - Food Pantry
 - Family Closet
 - Community Resource Center
2. Boys & Girls Club of America-Daycare Program
3. Warner Community Action Program
4. Gear-Up Homeschoolers

Organization	Sq ft	Staff	Hours of Operation	People served
Warner Connects NH - Food Pantry - Family Closet	1,200 sf	4-6 ppl	Mon.- Thurs. 9 am – 4 pm	Est. 400 ppl per month
The Family Closet Thrift Store	860 sf	2 ppl	Wed. & Fri. 10 am – 4 pm	Unknown
Boys & Girls Club of America, Home School	1,331 sf	6 ppl	5 days a week 7 am-5 pm Weekends 8 am – 7 pm	T.B.D.
Warner Community Action Program	762 sf	2 ppl	2 days a week @ 3 hrs.	unknown
Gear-Up Homeschoolers	1,914 sf	6 Board members, Volunteers all parents of the kids	Mon.– Fri. @ 10-20 hrs.	30-35 ppl

2.2 Warner Community Center Size:

The total gross square feet of the Warner Community Center building is 10,253 of which 4,183 serves as common areas for restrooms, mechanical space, and egress stairs/corridors. Leaving a total leasable amount of 6,067 sf.

2.3 Accessibility:

Per the Americans with Disabilities, Act of 1990 municipal buildings must comply with the ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

Entry to the 1st-floor level is by stairs or at the rear of the building over a short ramp. There are no ADA-compliant restrooms and several items do not meet the standards on this level.

Access to the 2nd floor is through one of three staircases or by way of a wooden ramp that is non-compliant. There are no accessible restrooms and several items do not meet the ADA standards on this level.

The 3rd floor is accessed by stairs only and is not an accessible level.

Currently, the building does not meet the ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

3. Recommendations

We recommend that the Selectboard enters into formal agreements with all entities within the facility, listing tenant areas of use, terms, and outlining municipal requirements.

To best manage the building, we recommend the Select Board consider relocating the Warner Welfare Department office into the Community Center. This move would allow town staff to be on-site to oversee operations and be available to respond to tenant requests as needed. The services provided by this Department align with and would support many of the current occupants. An office can be added to the second floor across from the main entrance and adjacent to the Warner Community Action Program.

Through various town surveys and community conversations, the Economic Development Advisor Committee offers the possible uses for the underutilized spaces:

Adult Education	Business Incubator
UNH -NHTI -Cooperative Extension	Co-working space
Conference room	Remote Working space
Remote Learning	Offices/Wellness
Art Gallery	Youth Activities
Maker Space	Bike Shop

For the town to maximize the building use and gain access to various grant opportunities our recommendation is to renovate the building as required to meet the ADA by:

1. Adding an elevator allowing all floors to be accessible.
2. Provide compliant restrooms.
3. Upgrade all the door hardware with closures, handles, and locksets.

The first floor houses Warner Connects NH and the Boys & Girls Club of America-Home School. Both benefit from entries at grade level allowing for easy access to load and unload goods and services. Warner Connects noted having issues with overloaded electrical circuits. A deep review of the electrical system should be performed by a master electrician or engineer is recommended.

Boys & Girls Club is a new tenant and has fit-up the spaces as needed to meet the State of NH requirements for childcare centers. The existing prep kitchen has a commercial gas cook stove/oven. A vent hood is located above the stove however the hood does not appear to meet current fire suppression requirements. The room does not meet current health and food safety requirements. If the intended use of this room is for food preparation, we recommend the room be upgraded to the currently applicable codes.

The second floor holds the Warner Community Action Program and the Family Closet. The three existing restrooms are small and do not allow for ADA compliance. The staff of the Community Action Program stated that they're pleased to be in the building and remain flexible with the space they're provided. The presence of electrical cords alludes to inadequate electrical circuits. The existing wooden ramp that is said to provide wheelchair access does not have the required handrails or guardrails and has gaps greater than 4". The slope and run do not meet building Codes requirements. Without a roof above the wooded surface becomes very slippery when wet. When on-site the automatic door entry system at the top of the ramp failed to operate. Our recommendation is that the ramp be removed and replaced with a new fully compliant structure, or that an elevator be installed. The automatic door operator needs to be repaired or replaced.

The third floor is currently being utilized by Gear-Up Homeschoolers. Although Gear-up states that they utilize the whole level the total hours of use remain low. Our recommendation would be for one of the two old classrooms to be leased to a new tenant. Currently, there are no restrooms on this level and access is by one of the two staircases. Leaving the use for this floor limited.

There are several items of deferred maintenance that need to be addressed.

- The brick stairs at the front entry have deteriorated and failed.
 - Brick needs to be reset into a new bed of concrete or an alternate stair system constructed.
- 3rd-floor water damage on the ceiling.
 - Location of the water leak on the roof needs to be found and repaired.
 - Water damage at the third-floor ceiling is to be removed and repaired.
- Coordinate a building-wide door hardware upgrade.
- Provide an entry door lock system that coordinates with existing municipal standards.
- Wooden ramp to be removed and replaced with a code-compliant ramp or an elevator.
- Electrical system needs to be reviewed by an electrical engineer and updated.

Exterior improvements

- Add site lighting at the ramp.
- Update building signage listing building occupants.
- Provide wayfinding signage inside and outside.

4. Existing Building Plans

KEY

← EMERGENCY EGRESS PATH



GROSS
SF 4645

TOTAL GROSS
SF 10,253

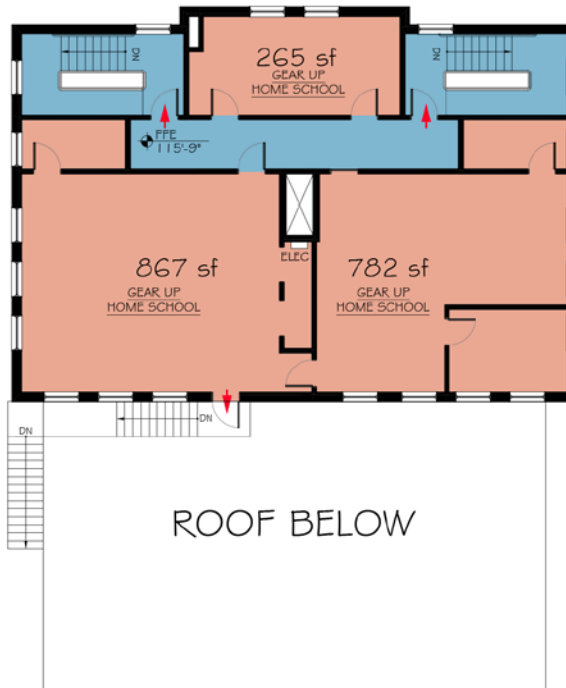


GROSS
SF 2804



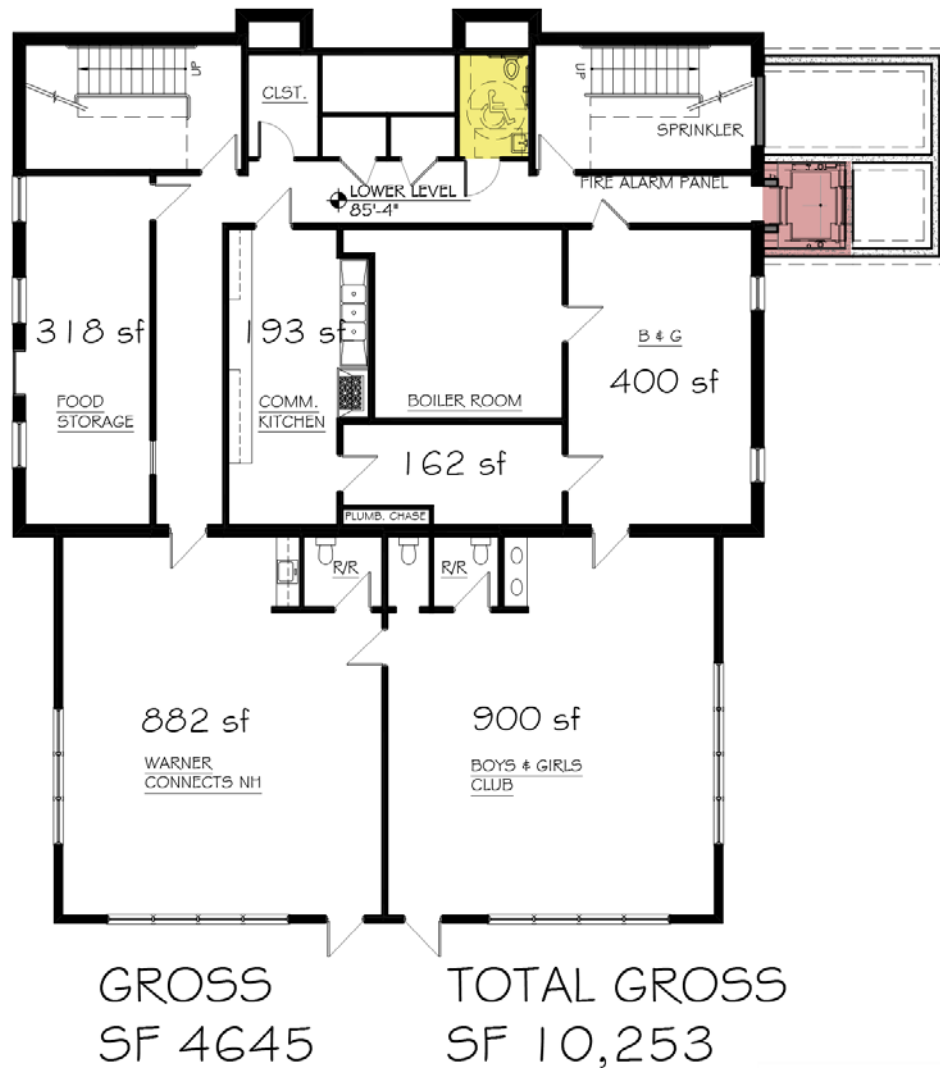
2nd Floor - Existing

GROSS
SF 2804



3rd Floor - Existing

5. Proposed Building Plans

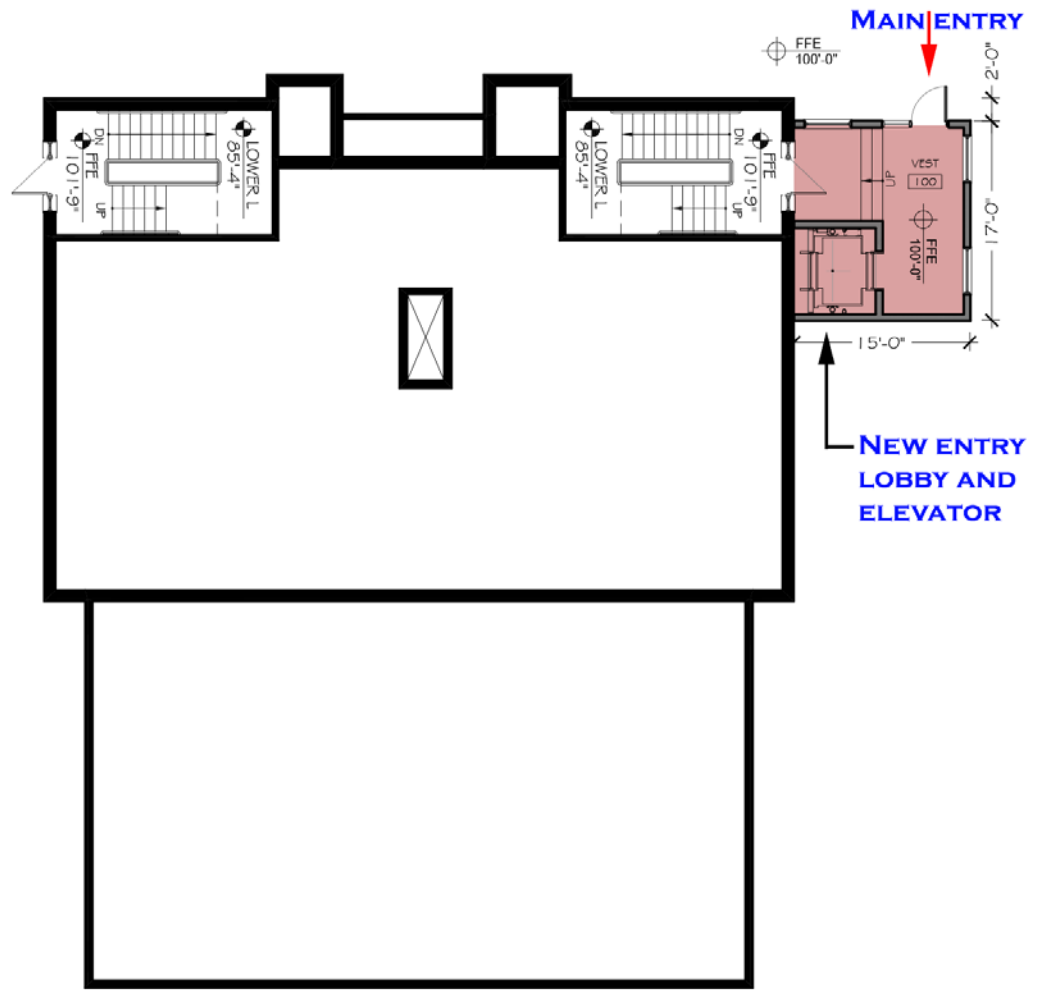


1st Floor - PROPOSED

$\frac{3}{32}'' = 1'-0''$

WARNER COMMUNITY CENTER
3.31.2023



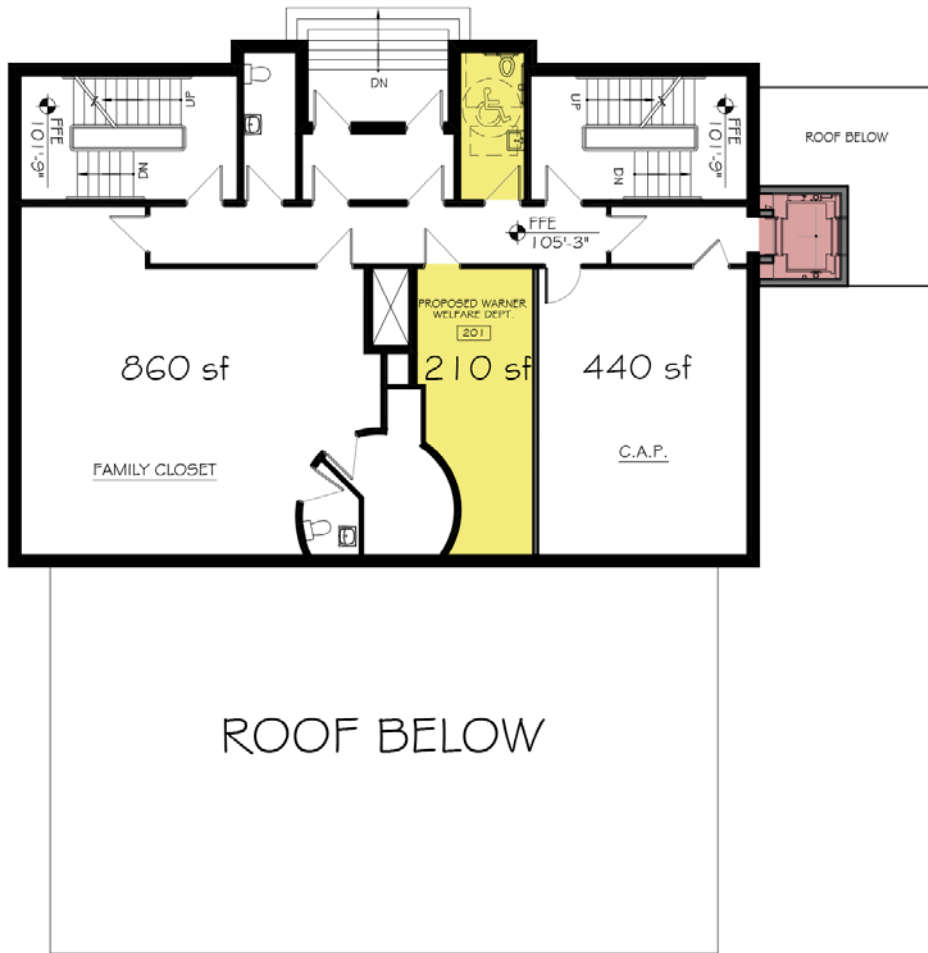


Main Entry Floor - PROPOSED

$$\frac{3}{32}'' = 1'-0''$$

WARNER COMMUNITY CENTER
3.31.2023





GROSS
SF 2804

2nd Floor - PROPOSED

$\frac{3}{32}'' = 1'-0''$

WARNER COMMUNITY CENTER
3.31.2023





GROSS
SF 2804

3rd Floor - PROPOSED

$\frac{3}{32}'' = 1'-0''$

WARNER COMMUNITY CENTER
3.31.2023



6. Existing Photographs



North side, Front Entry Stairs



West side, Uninsulated side hatch



East side, Wooden ramp



East side, entry door- failing concrete stairs



South side, storage units



Third floor, ceiling damage



First floor, Gas cook stove & hood



First floor, Egress hallway



First floor, Warner Connects NH



Non-compliant Door Hardware



First floor, Boys & Girls Club



Second floor, Family Closet



Second floor, Community Action Program



Second floor, Restroom



Third floor, Gear-up front room



Third floor, Gear-up



Warner Community Center

Photo: Doug Kerr
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/doughtone/6079002187/in/photostream/>

Tenant Information

Full Name: Boys and Girls club of Warner Type of Organization: Non-Profit
Name of Organization

Legal Address: 55 Bradley St
Street Address *Apartment/Unit #*

Concord NH 03302
City *State* *ZIP Code*

Contact Person: Amanda Perry

Phone: 603-225-0858 Email: A.perry@Nhyouth.org

Affiliations

Please list other organizations the organizations is affiliated with.

Contact: _____ Relationship: _____
Company: _____ Phone: _____
Email _____
Address: _____

Contact: _____ Relationship: _____
Company: _____ Phone: _____
Email _____
Address: _____

Contact: _____ Relationship: _____
Company: _____ Phone: _____
Email _____
Address: _____

Survey Questions

Number of Employees: 6

Number of Employees that work on Premise: 6

Number of volunteers: _____

Provide a brief narrative of what your organization does? (Who do you serve, # of clients, impact, mission etc.):

We are a early child care Center serving infants and Toddlers ages 6 weeks to 3 years

What is the current sq. ft space that your organization uses? 1068

Future Space Needs if different than current usage? _____

Do you use the outdoor grounds associated with the Community Center? _____

For what do you use this space? _____

What access does your organization require? (i.e., handicapped/public/etc.) _____

How many people currently have access to the building? _____

Days and Hours of Use: M-F 10 hours 7-5

Hours open to public? 2 hours to public during weeks 5-7 weekends 8-7pm 12 hour weekend

What other information would you like to provide? Issues with the building, needs current or future, expected duration of occupancy?

Signature: Danielle Fifeild (Thorston)

Date: 1/12/23

Thank you for your time.

Please email to ChristineFrost@Warner.nh.us Or deliver to the Town Administrator @ the Town Hall in Warner, NH by January 18, 2022. Thank you.



Warner Community Center

Photo: Doug Kerr
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dougtone/6079002187/in/photostream/>

Tenant Information

Full Name: Community Action Program Belknap Merrimack Counties Type of Organization: Non-Profit
Name of Organization

Legal Address: 2 Industrial Park Drive Bldg 1
Street Address Apartment/Unit #

Concord NH 03302
City State ZIP Code

Contact Person: Leah Richards

Phone: 603 225 3295 ext 1169 Email: lrichards@capbm.org

Affiliations

Please list other organizations the organizations is affiliated with.

Contact: n/a Relationship: _____
Company: _____ Phone: _____
Email: _____
Address: _____

Contact: _____ Relationship: _____
Company: _____ Phone: _____
Email: _____
Address: _____

Contact: _____ Relationship: _____
Company: _____ Phone: _____
Email: _____
Address: _____

Survey Questions

Number of Employees: 300+ Number of Employees that work on Premise: 1-2 in Warner Center

Number of volunteers: 0 in Warner

Provide a brief narrative of what your organization does? (Who do you serve, # of clients, impact, mission etc.):

we offer 70+ programs to serve low-income families, elderly residents, and people with disabilities to reduce the impact of poverty.

What is the current sq. ft space that your organization uses? ? Future Space Needs if different than current usage? same

Do you use the outdoor grounds associated with the Community Center? no For what do you use this space? Area Resource Center

What access does your organization require? (i.e., handicapped/public/etc.) public access bathroom office
handicap ramp

How many people currently have access to the building? 2

Days and Hours of Use: M-F 8:30A-4:30P Hours open to public? Normal Hours: Mon Tue Thur 8:30A-4:30P

What other information would you like to provide? Issues with the building, needs current or future, expected duration of occupancy?

Signature: Leah Richards Date: 1/12/23

Thank you for your time. Please email to ChristineFrost@Warner.nh.us Or deliver to the Town Administrator @ the Town Hall in Warner, NH by January 18, 2022. Thank you.



Warner Community Center

Photo: Doug Kerr
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dougtone/6079002187/in/photostream/>

Tenant Information

Full Name: Gear Up Homeschoolers Type of Organization: Non-Profit
Name of Organization

Legal Address: 49 West Main St.
Street Address *Apartment/Unit #*

Concord Warner NH 03302 03278
City *State* *ZIP Code*

Contact Person: Erika Carr

Phone: _____ Email: ejcmassage@gmail.com

Affiliations

Please Other Organizations the Organizations is affiliated with.

Contact: _____ Relationship: _____
Company: _____ Phone: _____
Email _____
Address: _____

Contact: _____ Relationship: _____
Company: _____ Phone: _____
Email _____
Address: _____

Contact: _____ Relationship: _____
Company: _____ Phone: _____
Email _____
Address: _____

Survey Questions

Number of Employees: _____ Number of Employees that work on Premise: _____

Number of volunteers: 10 board members

Provide a brief narrative of what your organization does? (Who do you serve, # of clients, impact, mission etc.):

Homeschool co-op, provide educational & social opportunities for homeschool families

What is the current sq. ft space that your organization uses? _____ Future Space Needs if different than current usage? _____

Do you use the outdoor grounds associated with the Community Center? Yes

For what do you use this space? educational purpose

What access does your organization require? (i.e., handicapped/public/etc.) handicap

How many people currently have access to the building? Board members

Days and Hours of Use: 10-20 hours a wk Hours open to public? 10-20

What other information would you like to provide? Issues with the building, needs current or future, expected duration of occupancy?

Signature: [Handwritten Signature] Date: 1-12-23

Thank you for your time. Please email to ChristineFrost@Warner.nh.us Or deliver to the Town Administrator @ the Town Hall in Warner, NH by January 18, 2022. Thank you.



Warner Community Center

Photo: Doug Kerr
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dougkerr/6079002187/in/photostream/>

Tenant Information

Full Name: Warner Connects NH Name of Organization Type of Organization: 501-C3 (Pending) **Non-Profit**

Legal Address: 49 West Main Street Street Address **Am** Thru the NH CHARITABLE FOUNDATION. Apartment/Unit #

Concord warner **NH** 03302 03278
City State ZIP Code

Contact Person: Lori Garrett

Phone: 603-456-2053 Email: warnerconnectsinfo@gmail.com

Affiliations

Please list other organizations the organization is affiliated with.

Contact: _____ Relationship: _____
Company: _____ Phone: _____
Email _____
Address: _____

Contact: _____ Relationship: _____
Company: _____ Phone: _____
Email _____
Address: _____

Contact: _____ Relationship: _____
Company: _____ Phone: _____
Email _____
Address: _____

Survey Questions

Number of Employees: 0 ^{All ARE VOLUNTEERS} Number of ^{VOLUNTEERS} Employees that work on Premise: Am

Number of volunteers: 4-5 a day m-th 2 on Fridays

Provide a brief narrative of what your organization does? (Who do you serve, # of clients, impact, mission etc.):

WCNH runs a food pantry, a thrift store and resource center

WARNER CONNECTS = Food Pantry
FAMILY CLOSET THRIFT STORE
COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER

Am
EMP ARCH. FILLED OUT
AFTER MEETING

What is the current sq. ft space that your organization uses? 2,110

Future Space Needs if different than current usage? _____

Do you use the outdoor grounds associated with the Community Center? yes

For what do you use this space? community garden
wood bark

What access does your organization require? (i.e., handicapped/public/etc.) handicap, public

How many people currently have access to the building? 3 Live Keys

Days and Hours of Use: m-F 9-4

Hours open to public? m-th 11-1 or
by appointment

What other information would you like to provide? Issues with the building, needs current or future, expected duration of occupancy?

Signature: [Signature]

Date: 1/12/22

Thank you for your time.

Please email to ChristineFrost@Warner.nh.us Or deliver to the Town Administrator @ the Town Hall in Warner, NH by January 18, 2022. Thank you.