



What does CDBG stand for and who administers the program?

It stands for "Small Cities Community Development Block Grant" Program. Congress created the program in 1974. Funding comes from the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and it is administered by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO).

What is the amount our community can receive?

Most communities are eligible for between \$600,000 and \$750,000.

Does my community have to provide matching funds?

No, and that is one of the benefits to this program. However, matching funds will increase your score.

What communities can apply for funding and who does it benefit?

Cities and towns with populations under 50,000; counties with populations under 200,000 and at least 51% of the beneficiaries must be low to moderate income (LMI).

What type of work can a CDBG grant fund?

Some examples of qualified projects include: General types of infrastructure; Economic development activities; Water and sewer improvements; Street paving; Drainage improvements; Parks and recreation projects; Downtown revitalization; and Substandard housing rehabilitation.

Is the program competitive and what are my chances of getting funded?

The program is VERY competitive with many more applications than there is funding for. The maximum score possible is 1,000 and the typical funded project in recent years scored at least 500-600 points.

A community's chance of getting funded is based upon a number of factors, including:

- ◆ *The number of LMI beneficiaries*
- ◆ *The Community Wide Needs Score (CWNS)*
- ◆ *Having a strong project that meets the grant criteria*
- ◆ *Having an experienced grant engineering and administration team*
- ◆ *The inability of the local government to finance the project without assistance*
- ◆ *Having a project that is RTP (Ready to Proceed) or "shovel ready" adds 100 points to your application. RTP is another term for having plans, specifications and permits applied for by the application deadline.*

What is the Community Wide Needs Score (CWNS)?

This a score assigned by the program that represents the following:

- ◆ *Low and moderate income population*
- ◆ *Number of persons living below the poverty level*
- ◆ *Number of housing units with more than one person per room*

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What is involved in having plans, specifications and permits?

The community must contract with their engineer to provide these services. The major components are:

- ◆ *Planning and strategy meetings*
- ◆ *Surveying and investigating the project area*
- ◆ *Engineering design of the project*
- ◆ *Drafting and drawings development*
- ◆ *Development of specifications*
- ◆ *Applying for required permits*

How long does it take to produce plans and specs, and how much does it cost?

Typically the engineer needs 3 to 4 months to complete all the required work. The cost is determined using a fee calculation method called a fee curve provided by the Federal government. Typically, it is approximately 10% of the construction budget. Example, for a \$600,000 construction budget, plans, specs and permits would be \$60,000.

In addition to Plans and Specifications, are there other strategies for being competitive and what are they?

Yes, there are a number of strategies that both the grant administrator and engineer can apply. However, the strategies are often specific to each community and project and are the result of an experienced team collaborating to achieve the highest application score possible. Program rules do change and it is important to have a team that stays current with those changes and has a good working relationship with the DEO.

How many communities applied last cycle and how many were funded? If we don't get funded this cycle, can we re-apply? When does the next CDBG application cycle open?

There were 59 applications received and less than half were funded. Yes, you can re-apply in the following cycle and make any changes possible to increase your score. Plans and specifications can be used again in the next cycle and will earn the additional 100 points, and can also be used to seek other funding sources. Although the formal announcement has not been made, we believe that it will open August 15 and close October 1, 2012.

How do we select the best CDBG engineer for our community's needs?

There are VERY specific rules to follow but in summary:

A competitive process must be followed that includes publishing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The engineers are ranked based upon their CDBG experience, professional staff resources and other factors. An exception to issuing an RFQ is allowed if your engineer is under contract with your community to provide continuing engineering services. They can develop plans and specifications without an additional procurement process.

Procurement rules are very specific and applications will be disqualified if the rules are not followed. Call us today. We can help!