

COUNTY OF UNION
Community Development Block Grant
PROGRAM MANUAL



COUNTY OF UNION
WE'RE CONNECTED TO *You!*



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
10 ELIZABETHTOWN PLAZA
ELIZABETH, NJ 07207
908 - 527- 4086 (PHONE)
908 - 352- 3980 (FAX)
COMMDEVINFO@UCNJ.ORG

2023-2024

Greetings!

I'm pleased to present the Program Manual for the Community Development Block Grant Program! Each year, the members of the Union County Community Development Revenue Sharing (CDRS) Committee dedicate countless hours and exercise years of expertise and experience into devising plans for a wide range of projects and programs. Their hard work can be seen in all facets of our communities, from Senior Citizen Centers to the sidewalks outside of our homes. The Community Development program has proven to be an essential part of bringing positive changes to the physical, economic, and social conditions of our County.

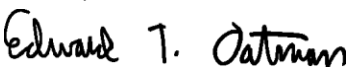
Utilizing over \$5 million in funds in the past calendar year, the physical revitalization plans envisioned by those in our communities have become a reality. Many projects have been undertaken with the annual funds received, including Housing Rehabilitation Programs, Community Center Rehabilitation Projects, Senior Health Care Programs, and Road Resurfacing Projects. The CDBG program has partnered with local non-profit and community based organizations resulting in quality improvements to our communities.

The goals of the Community Development Program are crucial to building a stronger County: creating decent affordable housing, building a suitable living environment, and expanding economic opportunities. As a County, we have faced challenges, but through these struggles, we have grown and continue to grow into a County to be modeled after. We owe thanks to the CDBG program which has touched all of our lives in a significant way.

In closing, I invite you to read through this program manual. Within the contents you can learn about every aspect that goes into the CDBG program, from the history of the program, the application process, to the quarterly/monthly reports of projects. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact our Community Development staff at 908-527-4086 (phone), 908-352-3980 (fax) or commdevinfo@ucnj.org. They will be happy to help you with any questions or concerns you may have.

I am proud to serve Union County, and I am confident that the Community Development program will continue to build a better County for all.

Sincerely,



Edward T. Oatman
County Manager

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GENERAL INFORMATION

What is the Community Development Block Grant Program?

The Community Development Block Grant program is a federal program that began operating in 1974, making it one of the longest running programs by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It is the principal federal program providing States and Local Governments with grants to devise innovative and constructive approaches that improve the physical, economic, and social conditions within communities. These improvements primarily benefit persons of low and moderate income.

National Objectives

The primary National Objective of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program is the “development of viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, particularly for persons of low and moderate incomes.” Section 102(a)(20) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 defines the term ‘low-and moderate income persons’ as families and individuals whose incomes are no more than 80 percent of the median income of the area involved (refer to last page of this manual for current HUD income limits).

All project proposals submitted for funding through the CDBG Program must document the achievement of at least one of the following National Objectives:

- Primarily benefit low and moderate income persons
- Aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight

What is the Union County Community Development Revenue Sharing Committee (CDRS)?

Nineteen municipalities participate in the Union County Community Development Consortium: Berkeley Heights, Clark, Cranford, Fanwood, Garwood, Hillside, Kenilworth, Linden, Mountainside, New Providence,

Plainfield, Rahway, Roselle, Roselle Park, Scotch Plains, Springfield, Summit, Westfield, and Winfield. Each participating community, as well as, the County of Union appoints two representatives to serve on the Union County Community Development Revenue Sharing Committee. Guided by the County's Community Development staff, the Committee recommends which projects to fund and the funding level of the projects.

The Revenue Sharing Committee is bound by the written policy and procedure manual which is available in the Community Development office.

The Chief Elected Officer of each municipality or his/her designated representative provides the Committee with the names and addresses of each municipality's representatives in January of each year following the municipality's organizational meeting. Each participating municipality has two representatives and each representative may have an alternate appointed as designated by the appointing official.

The Committee is headed by a chairperson. Additionally, there are the offices of vice-chairperson and secretary. The Committee is sub-divided into five standing sub-committees; each sub-committee is headed by a chairperson. The committees are *Administrative, Housing, Social Services, Public Improvements* and *Facilities*. Each sub-committee is charged with reviewing applications for projects that fit within their responsibility.

Full committee meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of every month via zoom at 4:00 PM. All meetings are open to the public. Meetings are subject to change and/or cancellation. For specific meeting dates and times contact the Community Development office. Sub-committee meetings are open to the public, as well, and are conducted when necessary.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Project Eligibility

There are a wide range of projects that may be eligible for funding through the use of CDBG funds, as long as the program meets the National Objectives as previously outlined. **CDBG funds may NOT be used for activities which do not meet these broad national objectives.**

Projects that can be undertaken with CDBG funds include but are not limited to:

- Relocation and demolition
- Rehabilitation of residential structures
- Rehabilitation of public facilities and improvements, such as water and sewer facilities, streets, neighborhood centers, and the conversion of school buildings for eligible purposes
- Public services (within certain limits)
- Activities relating to energy conservation and renewable energy resources
- Provision of assistance to profit-motivated businesses to carry out economic development and job creation/retention activities

Generally, the following types of activities are ineligible:

- Acquisition, construction, or reconstruction of buildings for the general conduct of government
- Political activities
- Certain income payments
- Construction of new housing by units of general local government
- Removal of architectural barriers in school buildings
- Environmental and health hazard clean-up associated with a project site except for lead based paint
- Payment of rent, utilities, or maintenance in a municipality owned facilities

Sub-Recipient Eligibility

Any of the nineteen municipalities in the Union County Revenue Sharing Consortium are able to apply for CDBG grant funding.

Non-profit agencies serving individuals residing in those nineteen municipalities are also eligible to apply for funding. Non-profit agencies must possess 501(c)(3) designation from the IRS at the time of the application.

A non-profit organization that does not serve a majority of its clients residing within the consortium municipalities are not eligible, regardless of physical location. For-Profit businesses are not eligible to receive funding. Funding is also not available directly to private individuals or families.

How much funding is available?

The amount of funding that is awarded through the Department of HUD to the Union County Consortium is dependent on the federal allocation process which varies each year.

The Union County CDRS Committee does not place a limit on the amount of funding awarded to any sub-grantee. Awards have ranged from \$5,000 to more than \$500,000. *The amount of funding awarded is dependent on the type of project, the ability to meet the national objective, the sub-recipient's history with the program, and the ability to complete the project in a timely, effective manner.*

How to apply?

Potential applicants can receive a copy of the application by contacting the Bureau of Community Development, or by visiting the Community Development Webpage www.ucnj.org/community-development

Necessary Documents

The following documents are necessary for applications. Incomplete applications **will not** be considered. *Note that an Application Checklist is included in the application.*

1. The application is updated each year, so it is imperative that all applications are submitted on the proper application document. If there is an area that is not applicable to the organization, "N/A" must be entered in the designated area.
2. All cost estimates should be derived from professional sources and submitted with the application as an attachment. Cost estimates may be derived from architects, engineers, vendors, construction companies, or appropriate personnel with the experience to make such estimates. The cost estimates do not mean that the professional source will conduct the work. Applicants must follow state local contract laws.
3. Budget line description should detail the purpose for which Community Development funds will be expended.
4. All applications on behalf of a municipality must include a resolution passed by the current governing body requesting that particular assistance. Applicants that are not government entities require documentation of approval from their Board of Directors or equivalent; this may be in the form of a letter from the President of the Board or from another certification document.
5. Non-profit applications must include their certification of 501(C)(3) status, a copy of their annual audit, and a listing of the members of their Board of Directors or equivalent.

Leverage

There is no matching requirement that is mandated with this grant. However, municipalities and organizations that show a vested financial interest (either actual or in kind) will be favored in the evaluation process, depending on the extent of the leveraged funds. There are many sources

that can serve matching funding. Applicants are encouraged to reach out to as many potential funding sources as possible and coordinate with other local, county, state, and federal prospects.

Application Review

Once the applications are received in the Bureau of Community Development, staff reviews the applications for eligibility.

The applications are then distributed to the appropriate members of the CDRS sub-committee. In February of each year, the chairperson of each sub-committee will reach out to applicants to schedule a time for them to make a presentation to the sub-committee, to further explain the proposal. Presentations should include a detailed explanation of the project.

Following the initial hearing, the sub-committees meet again to make funding recommendations to the entire CDRS Committee. The CDRS Committee will vote on preliminary allocations based upon recommendations of each sub-committee. A public hearing is conducted to review the preliminary funding allocations proposed by the CDRS Committee. After the public hearing, the full CDRS Committee votes on the final recommendations which are then forwarded to the Commissioner Board for their approval. Upon Commissioner approval the proposed program is submitted to the HUD field office for final approval. With Commissioner Board approval, funding is allocated in September.

EXPECTATIONS OF SUB-RECIPIENTS

What is expected if funding is approved?

Grant recipients are expected to comply with the rules and regulations as outlined in the contract agreement. Recipients must document that funds are primarily being used to benefit persons of low and moderate income. This information must be submitted to the Bureau of Community Development office.

Each contract will have an outlined scope of service. Expenditures must be aligned within that specific scope. If the project changes or the cost of specific parts of the project need to be adjusted, sub-recipients must make a request in writing to the Community Development office PRIOR to conducting any work outside of the purview of the scope.

If the contract involves construction, a **Pre-Construction meeting** must be held with one of the Community Development Specialists to ensure compliance with HUD regulations.

Award Period

Contracts are awarded for a twelve (12) month period beginning in September and ending in August. All proposed projects **must** be completed in that period. If projects are not completed within the contract period, the funding allocation may be cancelled and added to the County-wide reprogramming account. In certain circumstances, and at the behest of the CDRS Committee, contract extensions may be granted.

Quarterly/Monthly Reports

All projects require quarterly or monthly reports as outlined in the contract. These report forms are distributed when the contracts are finalized. These **reports are imperative** to ensuring each project is on schedule and is being run according to the contract agreement. No payment requests will be awarded if the proper reports have not been submitted. Reports should be submitted on time even if there is no project activity. **A final report must be submitted upon project completion.**

Financial Requests

This program is a reimbursement program. Requests for payment must be submitted with back-up material such as invoices or receipts supporting the funds that are requested and proof of payment to vendor or contractor. Once the payment request is received, it is reviewed by the Community Development staff to ensure that the request fits within the parameters of the contract and that the work has been completed. Payment requests should be made in a timely manner.

HUD CDBG INCOME LIMITS

Newark, N.J. Area (Union County) FY 2023
HUD CDBG Income Limits
Effective: June 15, 2023

Family Size

	30 %	50%	60%	80%
1	\$25,600	\$42,650	\$51,180	\$66,300
2	\$29,250	\$48,750	\$58,500	\$75,750
3	\$32,900	\$54,850	\$65,820	\$85,200
4	\$36,550	\$60,900	\$73,080	\$94,650
5	\$39,500	\$65,800	\$78,960	\$102,250
6	\$42,400	\$70,650	\$84,780	\$109,800
7	\$45,350	\$75,550	\$90,660	\$117,400
8	\$48,250	\$80,400	\$96,480	\$124,950

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Funding Cycle

Activity	Timing
<i>Application Available</i>	September
<i>Grant Submission Deadline</i>	December
<i>Presentations</i>	February
<i>Determinations Made</i>	April/May
<i>Funding Available</i>	September through August

Contact Information

Bureau of Community Development
10 Elizabethtown Plaza, Elizabeth, NJ 07207
Phone: 908-527-4086
Email: commdevinfo@ucnj.org

Visit Us Online at <http://www.ucnj.org/community-development>

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