

Active Facts:

Community Development Block Grants

These Grants Can Be Used In Creative Ways To Provide Facilities

THE PROGRAM

The Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) helps communities improve the lives of those in need. In general, it funds projects for low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, populations, and individuals. It also provides funds to eliminate barriers for those with disabilities. If you're working to put facilities such as sidewalks into an area where lower-income persons would be served, this might be a good place to look for funding. The CDBG program is overseen by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through its Office of Community Planning and Development.

CDBG PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The CDBG program has three national objectives:

- To benefit low- and moderate-income persons.
- To aid in the prevention or elimination of slums and blight.
- To meet other community development needs having a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious or immediate threat to health.

AGENCIES THAT OVERSEE CDBG PROGRAMS

In larger communities — those with 50,000 or more residents — the program is administered by local agencies in conjunction with HUD. For example, in Missoula, Montana, a western community with about 70,000 residents, the program is run by the local city/county Office of Planning & Grants.

Smaller communities and rural areas participate through a state agency. For example, Utah's Department of Housing and Community Development oversees CDBG grants given to small towns.

THE MAIN CATEGORIES OF PROJECTS FUNDED UNDER CDBG

CDBG projects typically fall into these categories:

- Public facilities (e.g., sidewalks, paths, and streets)
- Community facilities (e.g., community centers, health care facilities and child care facilities)
- Housing projects (e.g., repairing or winterizing homes or buying land for low-income housing)
- Economic development programs (e.g., revolving loan "incubator" funds in low-income areas)
- Barrier removal for handicap accessibility (e.g., sidewalks, curb ramps)

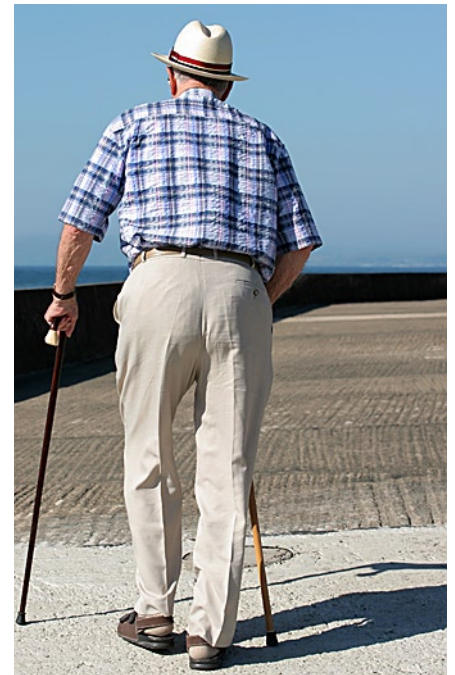


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In addition to lower income housing areas, community development block grants can be used to supply facilities such as sidewalks for the elderly and disabled.



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Projects such as trails or sidewalks would be eligible for funding as “public facilities” if they serve low- or moderate-income areas. They could be also used to help start a bicycle shop in such neighborhoods. However, CDBG funds may also be used in other parts of a community, primarily to provide services for disabled residents.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Because the CDBG program is primarily intended to serve low- and moderate-income people, bicycle and pedestrian projects should be aimed at areas where incomes are low and needs are great. In addition, it’s best to work with long-established programs in such neighborhoods to see how bike/ped elements can fit in with their work. Don’t look at CDBG funds as a source for projects that should be funded with federal transportation or recreation money.

RESOURCES

“Basically CDBG” Workshops:
http://www.tdainc.org/workshops/basically_cdbg.htm

“CDBG Program Management,” Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development. Note: Check your own state’s website for CDBG-related information.
http://www.state.tn.us/ecd/progman_cdbg.htm

“Community Development Block Grant Program,” U.S. Housing & Urban Development Department.”
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/>

CDBG In Action

§ In 2004-2005, Chapel Hill (NC) used \$30,000 in CDBG funds to build sidewalk projects.

§ The City of Avondale (AZ) used CDBG funding to install bicycle lanes and sidewalks.

§ The City of Madison (WI) used CDBG funds to build sidewalks, trails, bike lanes, and to improve street crossings.

§ The City of Salinas (CA) used CDBG funds to install lighted crosswalks.

§ The City of San Marcos (TX) used CDBG funds to build sidewalk projects.



www.activelivingresources.org
National Center for Bicycling & Walking
8120 Woodmont Ave., Suite 520
Bethesda, MD 20814
Phone: 301.656.4220