

Community Development Block Grant Program



2024 Round 2 Instructions

Wastewater & Drinking Water Program
Stormwater Improvements Program
Main Street Revitalization Program
Blight Clearance Program
Public Facilities Program

Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs
CDBG Program
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Indiana Community Development Block Grant Program

The Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) seeks applications from local units of government for programs funded through the State Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Eligible local units of government are counties, cities, or incorporated towns not located within an entitlement community. Unincorporated areas must apply through the county in which they are located.

General CDBG Information

The goal of the OCRA CDBG program is to encourage communities with eligible populations to focus on long-term community development. Competitive projects must demonstrate the following:

- They meet a national objective of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended.
- The project addresses the long-term planning and development efforts of the community;
- The funds granted will have a significant impact on the overall project;
- The community has demonstrated a strong commitment to the project and its sustainability; and
- The project is ready to proceed upon grant award and will be completed within 18 months.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for CDBG assistance projects must meet the following requirements:

- The lead applicant must be a non-entitlement city, county, or incorporated town that possesses the legal capacity to carry out the proposed project.
- The lead applicant may contract with a not-for-profit organization to carry out the activities of an eligible project, provided that the organization can document its nonprofit status with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, the Indiana Department of Revenue, and the Indiana Secretary of State.
- The proposed project must meet a [national objective](#) and be an [eligible activity](#) under Section 105 (a) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.
- If the applicant has previously received any CDBG funds through OCRA or the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA), the applicant must not have:
 - any unresolved monitoring/audit findings;
 - any overdue grant reports or closeout documents;
 - for cities and towns: three open CDBG Grants at the time of application;
 - for counties: four open CDBG Grants at the time of application; or
 - an open CDBG Grant that has not received Release of Funds;
 - If a community has an open CDBG Construction Grant, the community must have an executed construction contract and be under construction before the community may apply for an additional CDBG Grant. Grant Services must have received the Notice of Start of Construction to be considered “under construction” by the date the application is due.
- Any CDBG Program Income collected from a previous grant must be obligated for a use that has been approved by OCRA before another application can be submitted. Program Income may be used as part of the local match for an application. Please contact the CDBG program staff for additional information regarding Program Income.
- Local match must be provided by the applicant or a third-party. Other local, state, or non-HUD federal grants can count toward the local match requirement. The local match is a percentage of the total project cost, not the grant amount being requested. Minimum local match percentage requirements for each program are:
 - 20% Wastewater Drinking Water (WDW)
 - 20% Main Street Revitalization Program (MSRP)
 - 10% Stormwater Improvement Program (SIP)
 - 10% Public Facilities Program (PFP)
 - 10% Blight Clearance Program (BCP)
- All requests to use in-kind match must be submitted by the **pre-approval deadline of December 6, 2024, via email** to CDBG@OCRA.in.gov. Eligible sources of the in-kind match include but are not limited to:

- The appraised fair market value of donated land. Land donations by applicants, developers, organizations or individuals with financial or ownership interest in the project are ineligible as an in-kind match;
- Volunteer labor is calculated at \$15.00 per hour regardless of the type of work; and
- Donated goods or services are valued at cost.

Requests to use in-kind match must include:

- A summary of the request that shows a breakdown of how the amount was calculated;
 - A letter from the chief elected official requesting the use of In-Kind match and identifying the amount requested;
 - Supporting documentation, including a commitment letter from the donor regarding what is being donated and the value; and
 - In the case of land donation, a copy of the fee appraisal (a review appraisal is not required) and all supporting URA documentation.
- For applicants who have open Planning Grants pertaining to the project, the community must have a final plan approved by OCRA before submission of a CDBG application for the project. Any issues with the plan must be resolved before submission of the application.
 - The cost per beneficiary ratio for the proposed project may not exceed \$5,000 per beneficiary (grant funds only).
 - Grant Administrators used for CDBG projects must have a current Grant Administrator Certification issued by OCRA. A complete list of Grant Administrators is available [here](#).

Eligible Activities

The following five CDBG programs are eligible for funding this round:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 1. Wastewater & Drinking Water (WDW) | 4. Blight Clearance Program (BCP) |
| 2. Stormwater Improvements Program (SIP) | 5. Main Street Revitalization Program (MSRP) |
| 3. Public Facilities Program (PFP) | |

For all programs, the following general activities are eligible for CDBG funding. This list is not meant to include or to exclude any particular project. Please consult your Community Liaison for questions regarding specific activities.

Property Acquisition

- Surveying and appraisal costs
- Legal costs related to acquisition
- Actual purchase costs of land or easement provided URA is followed and the property is not purchased before release of funds

Administration

- Reasonable and eligible costs associated with the administration of the proposed project (Maximum of 8% of the grant, if paid with CDBG.)

Environmental Review

- Costs related to obtaining the necessary review of the proposed project

WDW Activities:

- Wastewater Improvements (collection lines, treatment plant, etc.)
- Drinking Water System Improvements (water tower, distribution, treatment, etc.)

SIP Activities:

- Stormwater improvements (retention, lines, etc.)

PFP Activities:

- Removal of Architectural Barriers for ADA Accessibility
- Community Centers
- Daycare Centers
- Facilities for Special Needs Groups
- Fire/EMS Stations
- Historic Preservation
- Healthcare Centers
- Learning Centers
- Libraries
- Senior Centers
- Youth Centers

BCP Activities:

- Demolition and/or clearance of slum and blight areas
- Environmental clean-up of sites
- Acquisition

MSRP Activities:

- Updating streetscapes
- Downtown infrastructure rehabilitation

For guidance on the eligibility of specific activities/expenses under CDBG, please contact CDBG@OCRA.in.gov.

Ineligible Activities

This list is not exhaustive. Please consult your Community Liaison for questions regarding specific projects. The following is a list of some activities that are not eligible for CDBG funding:

- The acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of buildings for the general conduct of government
- Real property acquisition for ineligible activities
- General equipment purchase
- Purchase of items that are living (plants, trees, sod, animals, etc.)
- Operation and maintenance expenses associated with public facilities or services
- General government expenses
- Political activities of any nature
- The direct construction of new housing

Projects Combining Eligible and Ineligible Activities

Depending on a community's needs, it may be appropriate for a project to combine CDBG eligible and ineligible activities. This type of project may still be eligible for CDBG funds, provided that:

- the budget clearly delineates the costs of the eligible and ineligible activities;
- CDBG funds will not pay for any ineligible activities; and
- local funds comprise at least the minimum percentage required local match portion of the project.

Please consult your Community Liaison or CDBG Program Director for further guidance.

Meeting a National Objective of the Federal Act

Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, identifies the national objectives of the CDBG program.

- WDW projects must meet the national objective of Benefit to Low-and-Moderate Income on an Area Wide Basis.
- SIP projects must meet the national objective of Benefit to Low-and-Moderate Income on an Area Wide Basis.
- PFP projects must meet the national objective of Benefit to Low-and-Moderate Income Persons on an Area Basis, Limited Clientele Basis, or Spot Slum and Blight.
- BCP projects must meet the national objective of Areawide Slum and Blight or Spot Slum and Blight.
- MSRP projects must meet the national objective of Areawide Slum and Blight.

The community will need to demonstrate that it meets the specified objective by providing all the required documentation and answering all relevant questions:

Benefit to Low- and Moderate-Income Persons – Area Basis

To show that a project benefits an area of low- and moderate-income people, the following questions must be answered in the application on the National Objective Identification page:6

1. What are the boundaries of the service area?
2. How do the boundaries correspond to the project's intended beneficiaries?
3. Using HUD Census data or a certified income survey, what percentage of persons in the service area are of low-to-moderate income?
4. How were the income characteristics of the target population determined?
5. Is the proposed facility available to all service area residents?

The following documentation **must** be provided in the application **if using an income survey that was approved under OCRA's previous income survey policy:**

1. Detailed map(s) showing the location and boundaries of the service area, including street names.
2. HUD LMI Data Maps and Worksheet
3. The methodology of the income survey, the low-to-moderate income worksheet, and the sample survey instrument must be included.
4. Preapproval email to conduct an income survey from OCRA CDBG program staff.

Special Note: The Office of Community and Rural Affairs will allow local units of government to continue using previously approved income surveys under OCRA's Income Survey Policy- Validity Time (effective June 5, 2022) to qualify activities under the National Objective area benefit under the 51% LMI criterion so long as:

1. The boundary of the service area is the same as the boundary defined as the service area when the income survey was conducted.
2. The approved income survey may be used up until 5 years from the date the final income survey report was approved by the Office of Community and Rural Affairs, or until HUD issues LMISD base-data changes with the update to the American Community Survey 5-year estimate or any other data source, whichever occurs first.

If using an income survey that was initiated under OCRA's current proposed policy (issued September 16, 2024; effective October 16, 2024):

1. All completed income survey documentation for this round should be submitted for final approval in eGMS by **December 6, 2024**, to ensure OCRA has the full 10 business days to complete its review. See [Policy Notice 2024-005: Income Survey Policy](#).
2. All income surveys for this round must be approved by OCRA in eGMS ahead of the application due date of **December 20, 2024**.

Benefit to Low- and Moderate-Income Persons- Limited Clientele Basis

There are eight groups of people that are presumed by federal regulations to be of be made up of at least 51% low- and moderate-income persons. Those groups are as follows:

- Senior citizens (people who are 62 years of age or older);
- Migrant farmworkers;
- Abused children;
- Battered spouses;
- Severely handicapped adults;
- Homeless persons;
- Illiterate adults;
- Persons with AIDS.

For Limited Clientele projects serving other persons, the benefit to low- and moderate-income persons must be documented by an income verification process and should include at least three (3) months of data.

For a limited clientele project, the following questions will need to be answered in the application on the National Objective Identification page:

1. Who will use the proposed facility? Are the beneficiaries in a group presumed to be low- and moderate-income, or will beneficiaries be qualified based on income?
2. Will any other groups or the general public also use the facility? If so, to what extent?
3. If the facility is to be used on an income-eligible basis, how will income and family size information of users be documented? How was the percentage of low- to moderate-income users determined or estimated?

Prevention or Elimination of Slums or Blight – Area Basis

The following questions must be answered in the application on the National Objective Identification page:

1. What are the boundaries of the area?
2. What are the conditions that cause the area to be considered blighted?
3. What percentage of buildings in the area are deteriorated? How are they deteriorated?
4. What are the public facilities in the area that are deteriorated? Describe this deterioration.
5. How will the proposed project remedy one or more of the blighted conditions described above?

The following documentation must be attached to a slum and blight, area basis application:

1. Municipal resolution passed, by the application due date, by governing body that describes boundaries of the specific blighted conditions within the area, and officially designates an area as blighted or an area in need of redevelopment per IN 36-7-1-3 and IN 36-7-14. **Resolution cannot be older than ten (10) years.**
2. Photographic documentation of the slum or blighted conditions that prompted the municipal resolution.
3. Map of area showing the location of project activities. The map must provide street-level detail.

Prevention or Elimination of Slums or Blight – Spot Basis

The following issues must be addressed on the National Objective Identification page:

1. Show the specific blighted or deteriorating structure that will be affected by the proposed project.
2. Provide a detailed description of conditions to be remedied by the proposed project, accompanied by a detailed statement of activities to address those conditions.

The following documentation must be attached to a slum and blight, spot basis application:

1. Municipal resolution passed, by the application due date by governing body that describes the blighted or deteriorating structure, including a legal description, and officially designates the structure as blighted under a spot basis.
2. Photographic documentation of the slum or blighted conditions that prompted the municipal resolution.

Spot basis slum/blight projects are limited to five project activities: acquisition, relocation, clearance, historic preservation, and limited rehabilitation to correct specific conditions detrimental to public health and safety. **Please note a spot basis blight project must not be located within a designated blight area.**

Build America Buy America Act

The Build America, Buy America Act requires any infrastructure project funded by any Federal Financial Assistance, such as CDBG, to apply a domestic procurement preference. This means that all iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in infrastructure projects must be produced in the United States, unless the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has issued a waiver of the domestic procurement requirement also referred to as the “Buy America Preference” (BAP).

On March 15, 2023, the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued a public interest waiver referred to as [Phased Implementation Waiver](#). The waiver established a phased implementation schedule to allow for orderly implementation of the Buy America Preference to infrastructure materials used across HUD programs, including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, through fiscal year 2025.

In accordance with the [Phased Implementation Waiver](#), the Office of Community and Rural Affairs has determined that **all Iron & Steel products and [Specifically Listed Construction Materials](#) used in infrastructure projects funded in the 2024 Round 2 must comply with the Buy America Preference.**

As required by HUD, record keeping should be maintained in accordance with applicable program requirements. To ensure record keeping compliance is fully maintained, the applicant must complete the [BABA determination analysis form](#). A completed form must be submitted as part of FEPS.

Grant administrators are required to ensure that the Buy America Build America provision is incorporated in bid advertisement and prime/subcontractors' contracts. For sample material please refer to [OCRA BABA Resources](#).

A completed [self-certification form](#) must be provided by awarded communities to receive Release of Funds and the [manufacturer's letter](#) will be collected at closeout.

Environmental Review Radon Requirements

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued CPD notice 23-103, effective April 11, 2024, outlining the addition radon as a radioactive material which must be considered in the site contamination analysis required under 24 CFR 58.5(i).

Radon testing and mitigation (when necessary) is required for CDBG-funded projects that require an environmental review at the level of Categorical Excluded Subject to 50.4 or 58.5 (CEST), Environmental Assessment, or Environmental Impact Statement and involve structures that are occupied or are intended to be occupied for at least four hours a day.

The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) has established the [policy](#) to implement these requirements. Radon testing is required to assess whether a project must undergo radon mitigation. Applicants must consider radon during the project design phase to ensure the cost of testing and potential mitigation are incorporated. Radon testing and mitigation, if necessary, are eligible expenses through CDBG funding. To determine if a project must undergo radon testing, grantees must complete the [CDBG Radon Analysis Compliance form \(CRAC\)](#) form part of the environmental review process.

Federal Flood Risk Management Standard Requirements (FFRMS Requirements)

Federal floodplain management risk standards apply to proposed projects that are classified as Categorical Excluded from NEPA, but Subject to related laws at 58.5 or 50.4 (CEST), Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Statement. FFRMS applies to all federally funded projects, including construction, renovation, and repairs that occur in flood-prone areas.

Grantees must determine whether floodplain management is applicable to the project and complete floodplain management determination form 24 CFR Part 55 Applicability. This worksheet will help determine whether a project is exempt, if it will follow the 8-Step process, or complete the 5-Step process form. Whether you use the 8-Step or 5-Step process will depend on activity type. OCRA advises that applicants coordinate with the Environmental Review Specialist early to ensure that the proper procedure is completed.

If the project is not eligible for an exemption, a project within a FFRMS floodplain would be required to complete the 8-Step decision-making process to consider how their actions affect floodplains and/or wetlands. Other projects may be required to follow a modified 5-Step process and complete the 5-Step process form.

Early public notice and public notice of final decisions is required if a project is located within a FFRMS floodplain that is required to follow the 8-Step decision making process. Local governments must start planning early to allow enough time for all necessary processes to be completed.

Duplication of Benefits

Many communities have received or will receive federal stimulus funds from the CARES Acts, American Rescue Plan (ARP), or other federal allocations that can be used for the same eligible activities as CDBG, as such OCRA must consider any duplication of benefit. Per the Stafford Act “Duplication occurs when an agency has provided assistance which was the primary responsibility of another agency, and the agency with primary responsibility later provide assistance.”

To determine if any duplication has or will occur, applicants who intend to use ARPA funds *or* other federal allocations as their local match must complete the Duplication of Benefits form and upload it with their application. On the form, applicants will provide details on any federal stimulus funds received and their status. Any of those funds that are not yet obligated could be considered duplicative of CDBG funds and could decrease an award from this round.

Maximum Grant Amounts

Wastewater & Drinking Water (WDW) Program:

The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) has established a maximum grant award according to the following matrix.

Grant amounts for communities with existing systems will be based on the current combined rates at the time of application, and grant amounts for communities constructing new systems will be based on a verified rate study included in a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER).

The amount of CDBG funds granted will be based on a \$5,000 cost per project beneficiary.

Maximum grant amounts are based upon user rate information, as follows:

Wastewater and Drinking Water:

Maximum Grant Amounts	Rates for 4,000 gallons		
	User Rates (Over \$50)	User Rates (\$30 to \$50)	User Rates (Under \$30)
Projects over \$1 million in total project cost	\$750,000	\$700,000	\$650,000
Projects under \$1 million in total project cost	\$700,000	\$650,000	\$600,000

Stormwater Improvements Program:

The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) has established a **maximum grant award of up to \$750,000** for the Stormwater Improvements Program (SIP). If OCRA determines that a lesser amount is appropriate, it may be necessary to revise the project before it is submitted in final form.

The amount of CDBG funds granted will be based on a \$5,000 cost per project beneficiary.

Public Facilities Program:

The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) has established a **maximum grant award of \$750,000** for all Public Facility projects. The maximum award is not intended to serve as a target figure for requests for grant assistance. OCRA will review the level of grant assistance requested and will consider the appropriateness of the project’s scope, the level of demonstrated need, and the financial resources of the applicant. If OCRA determines that a lesser amount is appropriate, it may be necessary to revise the project before it is submitted in final form.

The amount of CDBG funds granted will be based on a \$5,000 cost per project beneficiary.

Blight Clearance Program:

The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) has established a **maximum grant award of up to \$500,000** for the Blight Clearance Program (BCP). If OCRA determines that a lesser amount is appropriate, it may be necessary to revise the project before it is submitted in final form.

The amount of CDBG funds granted will be based on a \$5,000 cost per project beneficiary.

Main Street Revitalization Program:

The maximum grant amount for the Main Street Revitalization Program (MSRP) is determined based on the proposed project cost:

Projects over \$2 million in total project cost	\$600,000
Projects under \$2 million in total project cost	\$500,000

The amount of CDBG funds granted will be limited to a \$5,000 cost per project beneficiary.

Grant Administration

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program requires the Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) procurement method for architectural and engineering services. All other professional services must be procured using the Request for Proposals (RFP) method if being paid with CDBG funds.

All grant administrators involved in CDBG projects must be fully Accredited CDBG Grant Administrators. This certification must be current at the time of application. A list of such Grant Administrators and other information on certification can be found at <http://www.in.gov/ocra/2536.htm>.

NOTE: Private firms or non-governmental entities that perform project development and administration activities for CDBG-assisted projects (project development, environmental review, grant application preparation, procurement assistance, grant administration) will NOT be allowed to perform architectural, engineering, planning, or other related services/activities for grantees or their non-profit sub-recipients on those projects.

If paid from CDBG funds, Grant Administrators may charge the following:

- Environmental Review \$5,000 maximum
- Labor Standards \$5,000 maximum
- Administration 8% of the CDBG grant amount

Public Hearings and Citizen Participation

Two public hearings must be held at different stages of project development. One public hearing must be held before submission of the proposal, and the second must be held before the submission of the full application. **Note: New public hearings must be held for each grant round, regardless of prior application(s).**

Public hearing notice must be posted at least 10 days prior to the hearing date. **Therefore, the public hearing cannot occur until the 11th day or after.** Applicants should be aware of local newspaper deadlines for submitting advertisements. Some smaller newspapers are published weekly and will require that the advertisement is placed well in advance of the public hearing. Other methods of advertising the public hearing are also encouraged. All public hearings must be accessible to disabled persons. Public hearings should also be made convenient to the low- and moderate-income residents who will benefit from the project.

The public hearing notice and the publisher’s affidavit documenting publication dates, the dated sign-in sheet and signed minutes must be attached to the application for **both public hearings**. The affidavits are the only application document accepted after the application due date. **The affidavits must be received within 14 days of the application**

due date. OCRA is not responsible for reminding applicants to submit the documents. Public hearing documentation should be packaged independently, as Hearing 1 and Hearing 2.

Minutes must be signed and dated by the party that recorded them. *If a third party, such as a grant administrator, takes the minutes of the meeting, the applicant **must** include a document stating that the third party is acting as the applicant's representative.* It is recommended that an audiotape of the public hearing be recorded and kept until the grant is closed out. OCRA may request transcripts of the public hearings.

- Place all documents from each public hearing together in the application. Do not separate by type of documentation.
- All public hearing ads submitted with the application must be of sufficient size to be readable upon review.
- Minutes should be a transcript that documents the topics of discussion and comments made. Not merely state, "there was a discussion."
- Minutes are a great source of quotes showing residential impact.

All questions regarding Limited English Proficiency must be answered on the Citizen Participation page. Please attach the 4 Factor Analysis and Language Access Plan as required.

For more information, please refer to the [CDBG Handbook](#).

Proposal and Application Process

There are two stages to the application process: the Proposal stage and the Application stage. The Proposal stage consists of a community submitting a proposal, which is a draft of the application, and allows OCRA to review project information and determine if it is likely to meet a national objective, and an eligible activity before submitting a full application. **Proposals that do not include all the required elements, have incomplete or vague information, or contain statements such as "Will complete by application," will not be invited to move to full application.**

OCRA will also conduct a site visit between the Proposal and Application with the community to go over details of the project, explain the rules of the grant program, provide technical assistance, and address any questions.

The second stage is the full application. Applicants should be aware that preparation of a full application is a complex process that requires a substantial investment of time and resources. OCRA receives more applications in each grant cycle than can be funded. Applicants are strongly urged to take advantage of the assistance of their Community Liaison so the most competitive application can be submitted. A map of community liaison districts is located at www.in.gov/ocra/2330.htm.

Submission of both a proposal and application requires detailed supporting materials and documentation. Therefore, such materials and documents must be referenced in narratives using the file name and page number. For example, (Filename-00). Do not include attachments that are not discussed and referenced in the narratives unless required by federal or state policy.

Proposal Submission & Deadlines

The proposal must be submitted via the Indiana Electronic Grants Management System (INeGMS) by a certified Grant Administrator. The system is accessed via the main CDBG webpage at www.in.gov/ocra/cdbg.htm. Community members can also access the system but are not able to submit.

The proposal MUST be submitted by 11:59 PM ET on Friday, October 18, 2024. Failure to comply with submission requirements could render a project ineligible to submit a full application to the current round.

Application Submission & Deadlines

The application must be submitted via the Indiana Electronic Grants Management System (INeGMS) by a certified Grant Administrator. The system is accessed via the main CDBG webpage at www.in.gov/ocra/cdbg.htm. Community members can also access the system but are not able to submit.

The application MUST be submitted by 11:59 PM ET on Friday, December 20, 2024. Failure to comply with submission requirements could render an application ineligible.

Pre-approval Submission & Deadlines

All completed income survey documentation for this round should be submitted for final approval in eGMS by **December 6, 2024**, to ensure OCRA has the full 10 business days to complete its review. See [Policy Notice 2024-005: Income Survey Policy](#).

- All other items needing pre-approval including regional bonus points and overdue documents for this round must be submitted via cdbg@ocra.in.gov by **December 6, 2024**.
- For WDW & SIP projects with green infrastructure elements that wish to be considered for up to 15 maximum program-specific points must provide required documentation including [Green Infrastructure Justification Form](#) and [Green Infrastructure Certification](#) via email cdbg@ocra.in.gov by **December 6, 2024**.
- All requests to use in-kind match must be submitted by the pre-approval deadline of **December 6, 2024**, via email to cdbg@ocra.in.gov.

Reminders:

- Review each section and make sure all information is accurate.
- Use line breaks to separate paragraphs in the narratives.
- Pictures should be in a single PDF file at the highest resolution possible with clear captions and dates.
- Be sure to reference the file name and page number of each piece of supporting documentation that has been uploaded, and do not include uploads that are not discussed or referenced in the narrative, or related to the project unless federal or state policy requires.
- There should be no handwritten notes, dates, etc. within any upload — handwriting is not considered in scoring.

If you have any questions about proposal or application content, please reach out to your Community Liaison. A map of community liaison districts is located at www.in.gov/ocra/2330.htm.

If you have any questions about the Indiana Electronic Grants Management System (INeGMS) contact the CDBG program staff or a member of our Grant Services team. Contact information can be found at www.in.gov/ocra/2284.htm or you may refer to the [GMS FAQ page](#) on OCRA's website.

Proposal Threshold

OCRA will review each proposal and determine if it is likely to meet a national objective and is an eligible activity. Information from the site visit will be considered in making that determination. Proposals must be approved to move forward to the application stage.

Application Evaluation and Scoring

Each application will be evaluated and scored by a scoring committee based on the program-specific criteria that follow.

Grant Evaluation Criteria

There are a total of 700 points possible. Applications must achieve a minimum score of 450 points to be eligible for an award.

NATIONAL OBJECTIVE SCORE (100 POINTS):

Depending on the National Objective to be met by the project, one of the following two mechanisms will be used to calculate the score for this category.

1. National Objective = Benefit to Low- and Moderate-Income Persons: 100 points maximum awarded according to the percentage of low- and moderate-income individuals to be served by the project. The total points given are computed as follows:

$$\text{National Objective Score} = \% \text{ Low/Mod Beneficiaries} \times 1$$

2. National Objective = Prevention or Elimination of Slums or Blight: 100 points maximum awarded based on the characteristics listed below. The total points given are computed as follows:

National Objective Score = (Total of the points received in each category below)

- Applicant has a Slum/Blight Resolution for project area (50 pts.)
- The project site is a brownfield* (25 pts.)
- The building or district is listed on the Indiana or National Register of Historic Places** (10 pts.)
- The building or district is eligible for listing on the Indiana or National Register of Historic Places** (10 pts.)
- The building is on the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana's "10 Most Endangered List" (15 pts.)

* The State of Indiana defines a brownfield as an industrial or commercial property that is abandoned, inactive, or underutilized, on which expansion or redevelopment is complicated due to actual or perceived environmental contamination. Points are awarded for sites listed on the IFA Brownfield registry which indicates prior involvement of the Indiana Brownfield Program or a letter is provided from the IFA Brownfield program that states the site is a brownfield. *Documentation must be provided as part of the application.*

**Project may either be listed on or eligible for listing on the Indiana or National Register of Historic Places. Both cannot be checked.

COMMUNITY DISTRESS FACTORS (175 POINTS):

Various factors are used to determine the distress of a community. OCRA has partnered with Stats Indiana, an Indiana University entity, to analyze and calculate the distress of Indiana's small cities, towns, counties, and townships. Factors used to calculate the Community Distress points used for CDBG scoring include:

Poverty Rate	Non-seasonal Housing Vacancy Rate
Median Household Income	Housing Cost Burden
Unemployment Rate	Population Change (10-year % Change)

Local government scores, which are updated and published annually, can be found at [Stats Indiana](#).

LOCAL MATCH CONTRIBUTION (75 POINTS):

A maximum of 75 points based on the percentage of local funds devoted to the project, not grant request. This total is determined as follows:

$$\text{Total Match Points} = \% \text{ Eligible Local Match} \times 1$$

The points total is capped at 75 points or 75% match, i.e., a project with a 75% match or greater will receive 75 points. Below 75% match, the formula calculation will apply.

The eligible local match can be local cash, debt, or in-kind sources. Federal, state, and local government grants are considered eligible match. In-kind sources may provide eligible local match for the project, but the amount that can be counted as the local match is limited to 5% of the total project budget or a maximum of \$25,000. Use of in-kind donations as eligible match requires approval from the CDBG Program Director approximately two weeks before application submission (date of the deadline will be announced each round).

PROJECT DESIGN FACTORS (300 POINTS):

A maximum of 300 points awarded according to the evaluation in three areas:

Project Description – Is the project clearly defined as to determine eligibility? – 50 points

Project Need - Is the community need for this project documented and compelling? – 125 points

Financial Impact - Why is grant assistance necessary to complete this project? – 125 points

The points in these categories are awarded by the OCRA Scoring Committee when evaluating the projects. **Applicants should refer to the application packet and scoring guide and address all questions present.** Applicants should work with their OCRA Community Liaison to identify ways to increase their project’s competitiveness in these areas.

PROGRAM SPECIFIC POINTS (50 POINTS):

Public Facilities Program (PFP)

- **Philanthropic Contributions** - Points are assigned based on philanthropic contribution to the project (match) as a percentage of total project costs.
 - Less than 1% - 0 points
 - 1-2% - 10 points
 - 2-3% - 15 points
 - 3-4% - 20 points
 - 4%+ - 25 points
- **Project Sustainability** - A maximum of 25 points for the establishment of a (or documentation of existing) permanent Community Facility Fund at a Community Foundation, to be used for ongoing operation and maintenance activities of the project.
 - 0 points - Under \$3,000
 - 10 points - \$3,000-\$5,000
 - 25 points - More than \$5,000

Stormwater Improvements Program (SIP)

- **Financial Gap** – A maximum of 10 points per each \$1 in financial gap. The result of the OCRA Gap Calculation Worksheet should give you the amount that your community would have to increase the monthly rate charged to each customer without grant assistance, given the above assumptions. This amount is the “gap,” which is the amount by which grant funds will reduce or “buy down” your utility rates. This amount added to the actual rates anticipated with OCRA grant funds will give you the rates needed “without OCRA grant funds.” (Maximum 10 points)
- **Green Infrastructure**– A maximum of 15 points for the inclusion of green infrastructure elements in the project. (Maximum of 15 points)
**Documentation required to evaluated green infrastructure elements can be found in [CDBG Resources Website](#).*
- **Project Sustainability** - A maximum of 25 points for the establishment of, or documentation of existing stormwater utility rate for the ongoing operation and maintenance activities of the storm system.
 - 0 points – under \$3 monthly Stormwater utility user rate
 - 10 points – \$3-\$5 monthly stormwater utility user rate
 - 25 points – \$5 or higher monthly stormwater utility user rate

Wastewater Drinking Water (WDW)

- **Financial Gap** – A maximum of 10 points per each \$1 in the financial gap. The result of the OCRA Gap Calculation Worksheet should give you the amount that your community would have to increase the monthly rate charged to each customer without grant assistance, given the above assumptions. This amount is the “gap,” which is the amount by which grant funds will reduce or “buy down” your utility rates. This amount added to the actual rates anticipated with OCRA grant funds will give you the rates needed “without OCRA grant funds.” (Maximum 10 points)
- **Green Infrastructure** – A maximum of 15 points for the inclusion of green infrastructure elements in the project. (Maximum of 15 points)
**Documentation required to evaluated green infrastructure elements can be found in [CDBG Resources Website](#).*
- **Project Sustainability** - A maximum of 25 points for the establishment of, or documentation of existing combined utility rate for the ongoing operation and maintenance activities of the wastewater and drinking water systems.
 - 0 points – Less than \$50 combined user rates
 - 10 points – \$50-\$90 combined user rates
 - 25 points – \$90 or higher monthly combined user rate

Blight Clearance Program (BCP)

- **IFA Registry**—A maximum of 25 points awarded for sites registered with the IFA Brownfield program which indicates prior involvement of the Indiana Brownfield Program or a letter is provided from the IFA Brownfield program that states the site is a brownfield.
**Documentation must be provided in the application.*
- **Site Redevelopment Plan**—A maximum of 25 points will be awarded for projects that have a site redevelopment plan for the future use of the Brownfield site

Main Street Revitalization Program (MSRP)

- Community is designated as a Nationally Accredited Main Street Organization (10 points)
- Documentation of active and continued involvement in the application and project by the Main Street organization (10 points)
- The Main Street Organization has a sustainability/fundraising plan in place (Maximum of 10 points)
- The Main Street Organization has provided proof of philanthropic match for the project (Maximum of 10 points)
- For streetscape projects:
 - The project has unique design elements or is part of a community branding effort (Maximum of 10 points)

BONUS POINTS POLICY:

It is OCRA’s policy to encourage and support regional coordination amongst rural communities. As such, a grant application that is included in a regional plan will be awarded 25 bonus points. To receive these bonus points requires verification of the regional plan from the CDBG Program Manager approximately two weeks before application submission (deadline will be announced each round).

Bonus Points for Regional Planning – 25 points

POINTS REDUCTION POLICY:

It is the policy of OCRA not to fund more than one phase or component of a single project type in different funding rounds. This applies to all project types, although it is particularly relevant to utility projects. If a community needs to phase a project in order to complete it, they should consider which phase would be most appropriate for CDBG assistance. Even if a community doesn’t intentionally phase a project, OCRA will take into account previously awarded projects for the same project type. A Community that has previously been awarded a grant for the same project type

will likely not be competitive and will be subject to the following point reduction. This applies to all project types, although it is particularly relevant to utility projects.

0 – 5 years since previous funding – -50 points

Example: Community submits and receives a Wastewater Drinking Water (WDW) grant in 2015. When applying for a WDW grant in 2020, they would be subject to a point reduction of 50 pts. In 2021 they would have no point reduction.

Award and Feedback

Awards will be announced in **February 2025** through a press release. Grant Services will contact each awarded community after the announcement to start the next steps in the granting process. Applications that are not funded will be contacted by their Community Liaison to schedule a feedback meeting. If you have any questions, please reach out to your Community Liaison. A map of community liaison districts can be found at www.in.gov/ocra/2330.htm.

Project Design Scoring Questions

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Project Description
Is the project description detailed and easy to understand with limited technical terms/jargon?
Are clear and measurable desired outcomes included that relate to the issues being addressed by the project?
Scope of Work
Is the scope of work clear and logical for the type of project? Are ineligible items noted?
Does the scope of work correlate with detailed budget? Per item costs are included.
Project Development and Support
Is there documentation of a robust project development process? Was there an evaluation of alternative solutions? Were multiple methods of public input used?
Are there high-quality, clearly labeled maps that identify the project area?
PROJECT NEED
Priority
Is there a 3–5-year history of issues summarized and documented?
Is frequency/prevalence of the issue(s) compelling, clearly summarized, and supported by the uploads?
Is there a clear explanation of the risk of the issue(s) having a significant impact on residents? Is adequate documentation included showing a connection between the risk(s) and residents’ daily lives?
Is this project a community priority? Is adequate documentation included in the uploads?
Is relevant data included to adequately describe the need for the project?
Current Conditions
Are the current system/facility conditions well explained and documented?
Are the current and proposed uses, programs, or services explained? If project is an expansion, does it explain, why it is necessary?
Are high-quality color pictures showing conditions within the past 5 years included? Does every picture have a caption and date stamp? If no pictures, are reasons provided?
Residential Impact
Is the residential impact of the issues being addressed by the project? Is an explanation and documentation provided?
Is residential support/need of the project outlined and documented?
Health and Safety
Are health and safety issues presently impacting residents and explained in detail?
Are existing health and safety issues well documented?
FINANCIAL IMPACT
Previous Efforts
Have there been previous efforts to address the issues by the community?
Is supporting documentation included explaining past efforts? This may include, but is not limited to, partnerships, extraordinary expenditure and/or extra labor hours.
Sustainability
Is there an adequate sustainability plan for this project?
Are there commitments stated or documented to maintain the project past the 5-year closeout window?
Financial Options

Were other viable financial options for the project investigated?
Is there an explanation of why CDBG is the best option for the project/plan? Why are other financial options not the best option?
If CDBG funds are not awarded, will the project move forward?
Local Match
Is the local match option well explained and documented?
Fund Balances
Are the fund balances and relevant documentation for the applicant and sub-recipient adequately explained?
Are all discretionary fund balances accounted for and explained?
Is the community, and/or sub-recipients', fiscal responsibility adequately shown, detailed, explained, and documented?