

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Application Guidelines and Scoring Criteria

Please Read Prior to Applying to CDBG RFP

APPLICATION EVALUATION PROCESS & CRITERIA

- I. CDBG applicant RFPs will first be evaluated by the Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC), a ten (10) member advisory committee comprised of two (2) citizens from each City of Worcester Council District. The CDAC evaluates CDBG RFPs on a multi-point scoring system using the following criteria:
 - Proposal narrative is complete and of good quality
 - Proposal addresses a key community need
 - Proposal has relevant, clear outcomes and measurements
 - Project readiness or delivery plans are reasonable and sound
 - Organization or staff has strong experience or capacity to complete project/program
 - Proposed program budget leverages funds other than CDBG
2. Your application will then be reviewed by City of Worcester CDBG program staff and administration. City of Worcester program staff will evaluate applications based on:
 - Level of cost reasonableness
 - Experience & quality of past CDBG grant outcome-based performance reporting
 - Level of basic social safety net need addressed
 - Additional “risk assessment” factors as deemed appropriate and necessary by HUD and federal grant guidance and regulations
3. Award decisions are based on the above combined with an assessment of annual funding levels vs. RFP grant funding requests, as well as City of Worcester priorities. The final CDBG Annual Action Plan /annual RFP funding awards are at the discretion of the City Manager, through a formal presentation and recommendation made to the City Council.
4. CDBG grant sub-recipient award notifications are likely to be issued between May and June of 2026, with the CDBG grant program year commencing on **July 1, 2026**.

Application Funding Caps and Special Incentives for Applications

- Per HUD regulations, the City of Worcester will not award more than 15% of its overall annual CDBG funding for Public Service projects/program proposals

- Due to annual funding constraints, no single applicant organization can submit more than 4 CDBG RFP applications per year
- For the category of Public Facilities & Improvements, no more than \$195,000 will be awarded to any single applicant organization
- The City of Worcester seeks new applicants for Public Services category, with more information and detail on this topic and the incentive provided below:

The City of Worcester encourages applications for **Public Services** activities from prior un-funded organizations, as also described further in the CDBG Request for Proposal (RFP) document under Part IV. An estimated \$20,000 from the City's total Public Services allocation will be available, if final HUD funding amounts permit, to support impactful organizations and programs that are "new" to CDBG funding. This funding will be capped at a maximum award of up to \$10,000 per organization, for up to two (2) organizations that have not been recipients of City of Worcester CDBG Public Service funds in the past 5 program years; organizations may not have received CDBG Public Service funding from between July 1, 2021 to the present to be eligible for this set aside. All applicant organizations "new" to CDBG Public Services funding that apply for \$10,000 or less will be evaluated only against other similarly experienced applicants and therefore will be more competitively positioned for a potential funding award. In its effort to support new organizations with CDBG, the City of Worcester seeks established and impactful programs and services that have not received prior CDBG funds for Public Service activities; the City is *not* seeking to support entirely new organizations or entirely new programs (i.e. organizations or programs with one year or less of existence or program experience for example). Please also note that any applicant may apply for more than \$10,000 in CDBG for Public Services, however applicants requesting more than \$10,000 in CDBG Public Service funds that have *not* been sub-recipients of CDBG Public Services funding within the past 5 program years will be evaluated and scored against applicant organizations that already have established CDBG experience and therefore may not score as competitively.

GENERAL APPLICATION TIPS AND GUIDELINES

Projects and programs should be "SMART":

S	Specific
M	Measurable
A	Attainable
R	Relevant
T	Time Bound

Performance-Based Reporting:

- Proposal should specify **measurable outputs** and expected **outcomes** to be delivered within the CDBG grant performance and reporting year (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027).
- For Public Service proposals, provide the unduplicated number of families/persons who will benefit from the activity for the portion specifically supported by CDBG in the grant performance/reporting year.
- For Public Service proposals, define a method for documenting individual CDBG client program eligibility. This is typically done by verifying client household income against most recent HUD income limit standards.

Common Mistakes to Avoid:

- Requesting use of funds that are ineligible per grant program regulations
- Insufficient information to get a clear understanding of the proposal
- Failure to document the community need or financial need for the grant funding

- Incomplete or missing program budget information and documents
- Applications that are missing key or required attachments
- For Public Service proposals: failure to include measurable outputs and outcomes proposed for work supported by CDBG during the CDBG program year
- For Public Facilities & Improvements proposals: failure to factor federal prevailing wage in project cost estimates

Additional Considerations:

- ✓ Proposal should have a clear budget that is filled out correctly using the formulas already provided in the budget template (Excel formulas should not be deleted or “corrupted”)
- ✓ Proposal should be “cost reasonable” (cost should not be too far above similar industry related services)
- ✓ Proposal should include performance measures
- ✓ Proposal narrative should be specific but relatively brief (do not exceed the response word limits)
- ✓ Proposed program should not duplicate existing services