City of Columbus - Community Development Block Grant 2026 Application

Overview

Welcome to the 2026 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application for the City of Columbus. Please read this page in full before proceeding, as it contains important information for using this web-based application, and the CDBG program's statutory requirements.

You will have an opportunity to upload documents at the end of this application, but answers to all application questions must be completed in this form.

The City is accepting applications from non-profits and other organizations engaged in community development work throughout the City. Please see below for important information regarding the application and the CDBG program:

* **Applications are due June 20th, 2025 @ 11:59 PM.** This form will close at that time and you will not be able to submit an application after the deadline.
* Applications received will be considered for funding in the 2026 program year, January 1st - December 31st, 2026.
* The question fields in this form are not "required" to move forward or submit the application. This is to allow respondents to move forward and back through the application more easily. **All fields should be considered required in order to receive full points.**
* The only item that will prevent you from submitting the application if it is not completed is the upload of the completed budget template.
* This web form can be saved using the save button at the bottom of each page. That button will generate a unique link that can be emailed to you or bookmarked, and which will bring you back to your application so you can continue your work at a later time. Please be sure to save this link in case you are interrupted, or work in an offline document prior to entering answers into the online form.
* Information on the CDBG program and the Grants Management Section, including a downloadable Word document version of this application and the budget proposal template, can be found online at: <https://new.columbus.gov/Government/Departments/Finance-and-Management/Grants-Management>

**If you have any questions, email grantsmgmt@columbus.gov**

**Note:** In the web form, some questions will only appear if you answer previous questions in a certain way. For example, some questions only appear for those proposing construction projects. All questions are included in this document, with notation regarding when they apply.

**Reference Links**

**Review recommended before completing the application:**

Review the "Guide to National Objectives & Eligible Activities for Entitlement Communities" to ensure that your proposed project meets HUD requirements: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CDBG_Guide_National_Objectives_Eligible_Activities.pdf>

Review “Playing by the Rules: A Handbook for CDBG Subrecipients on Administrative Systems,” for requirements that must be met by potential grant recipients: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/687/playing-by-the-rules-a-handbook-for-cdbg-subrecipients-on-administrative-systems/>

For additional detail on CDBG and project eligibility, view training modules from Basically CDBG, a comprehensive resource from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): <https://www.hudexchange.info/trainings/basically-cdbg/>

**Federal regulations related to CDBG:**

Community Development Block Grants General Policies (Review for Eligible Activities – 24 CFR Part Section 570.200, Grant Administration - Subpart J, and Other Program Requirements – Subpart K): <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-24/subtitle-B/chapter-V/subchapter-C/part-570>

Office of Management and Budget Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) – review for cost eligibility information: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200?toc=1>

Agency Information

Agency name:

Agency contact name:

Contact email:

Agency street address:

Agency zip code:

Agency phone:

Provide a brief summary of your agency's mission and work (max 1000 characters):

Project Information

Project name:

Project street address:

Project zip code:

Total project cost (all sources):

CDBG funds requested:

Project type (select 1):

* Construction/rehabilitation
* Acquisition of property
* Public services (programs and other human service projects)
* Economic development / microenterprise (with job creation outcome)

If construction or acquisition are selected, the following information and questions apply:

For projects applying for funds to support construction, rehabilitation, or acquisition, the City may provide additional project management support as needed to ensure compliance with federal requirements. Depending on organizational capacity, overall project budget and project funding sources, the City's Office of Construction Management may provide bidding and construction management services and manage construction contracts.

Agencies applying for construction projects may be contacted to discuss project details and may be asked to provide additional information prior to the commitment of funds.

Are any of the buildings within the project’s scope at least 50 years old?

Y/N

If your project requires the demolition of a building, a zoning variance or rezoning of a property, or will require permits, have you initiated the required paperwork with the City of Columbus?

Y/N

Have you completed any environmental assessments of the building(s) to be rehabilitated or lot(s) on which construction will take place?

For example, a Phase I ESA, or any testing for lead based paint or asbestos within the building, or testing for soil contamination on the property. Please upload any reports produced at the end of the application.

Y/N or Other

The following questions apply to all projects:

Describe your proposed project, including specific objectives. Note whether the project is new, or an expansion of existing operations. Do not include other unrelated programs delivered by your organization. (max 2500 characters)

Define your proposed project’s measurable outputs. Outputs are specific services, products, or activities that result from the project, not the benefit/outcome that is ultimately achieved.

Example project outputs: 10 hours per week of after school youth programming; Renovation of food pantry; Installation of playground; Purchase of medical supplies for free clinic, etc. (max 1500 characters)

Community Benefit and Need

What is the need that the project addresses? Focus your answer on any data available to your organization or assessments conducted that demonstrate an unmet need in your service area. (max 2000 characters)

Are the activities/outputs provided by the project available to ALL residents of Columbus (not just specific populations or geographies)?

Y/N

If no, Describe below any eligibility criteria and/or geographic boundaries that define your service area and beneficiary population. For example, income or age restrictions, or specific zip codes eligible for services. (max 1000 characters)

Briefly describe how the local community has been or will be engaged and involved in the planning process for the project. (max 1000 characters)

What is the total number of beneficiaries your project will serve? Explain how this number was estimated. (max 500 characters)

What is the CDBG cost per beneficiary? To calculate this, divide the amount of CDBG funds requested by the number of beneficiaries. (max 50 characters)

Project Timeline

Describe any steps that your organization still needs to complete prior to the 2026 program year so that you are prepared to implement the project.

For example, do other funding sources still need to be secured? Do staff members need to be hired? For acquisition, construction, and renovation projects, have you identified the location and have you negotiated with the current property owner or secured professional architectural & engineering plan documents? (max 1500 characters)

Provide a proposed schedule for the project. Identify major project steps that will be completed during each quarter of the 2026 program year (at least 1 per quarter).

For construction projects, include engineering and design (if not already complete), procurement of qualified vendors, and construction as major project steps. For non-construction projects, include major activities such as planning, hiring, outreach, and deliverables beginning January 1, 2026.

Keep in mind, all CDBG projects require an environmental review, which will be conducted by the Grants Management Section. The ER process could take 1-3+ months depending on project complexity. (max 2500 characters)

Project Funding and Budget

What specific costs do you need CDBG funds to cover? What other resources will be utilized for the project?

Identify individual costs, such as "Program manager salary" or "Roof replacement" that make up budget line items. Be sure that narrative response matches proposed budget as submitted. (max 1500 characters)

Describe your plans to ensure sustainability.

Note: for construction, renovation, and acquisition projects, HUD requires that subrecipients continue to meet a national objective for five years. (max 750 characters)

For construction, renovation, and acquisition projects, has work already begun? Have contracts been signed? Please describe any steps already completed.

Note: awarding of federal funds carries environmental review and procurement requirements. No federal funds can be expended until all requirements are met, which may require delaying or stopping construction, or completing a new procurement process that is federally compliant. (max 1250 characters)

Reporting, Administration, and Capacity

Monthly financial and performance reporting during the grant period is a requirement of all selected subrecipients, and monitoring of all CDBG funded projects will be conducted by the Grants Management Section to ensure compliance. A report template is provided to all selected subrecipients.

Important CDBG regulations and obligations:

* CDBG grants are reimbursement grants, except in extreme circumstances
* Program staff (those directly working on a CDBG-funded program) must document time worked on the project via time sheets and can only be reimbursed for wages earned working on direct program activities
* Administrative staff that support CDBG-funded programs must either document time worked on the project, or be paid from indirect cost portion of project budget in order to be eligible for reimbursement
* All grant recipients are eligible for a 15% de minimis indirect cost rate (NB: the de minimis indirect cost rate increased from 10% to 15% beginning in October, 2024), which should be included in proposed budgets unless 100% of funds are intended for direct project activities
* All CDBG subrecipients are subject to monitoring during the program year and are required to maintain records for 5 (or more) years following the completion of a project

Please identify at least two staff members who will serve as the preparer and certifier for all financial and program reports.

Typically, a preparer is a program manager or financial manager, and a certifier is an individual in a leadership role such as program director, CEO, or CFO.

For key staff involved in the operation, management, and administration of the project, please provide names, titles, years of relevant experience, and primary role for the proposed project. If needed, upload an additional document containing this information.

For each staff member on the project, please fill the box below with the following information:

- Name:

- Title:

- Years of relevant experience:

- Primary role on project:

If a position is vacant, please indicate either “vacant” or “new” in place of staff name and list the role of those positions.

Please provide a brief summary of your agency’s capacity to deliver similar projects. (max 1750 characters)

Please include the following:

• Services the agency currently provides

• Number and demographics of clients served

• Experience managing federal funds (including years and amounts)

Describe your agency’s fiscal management procedures, including accounting system, record keeping, and payment procedures. Are these formalized in internal policies and procedures documents?

Be sure to indicate which staff member(s) will be responsible for maintaining compliance with Federal regulations, and their relevant experience, if any. (max 1000 characters)

Does your agency currently conduct an annual financial audit / single audit?

Y/N or Other

If your agency does not currently perform annual financial audits, but through this and any other anticipated federal funding the agency would exceed $1,000,000 of federal funds received in 2026 (NB: this changed from $750,000 to $1,000,000 in 2025), describe your plan for performing an audit for the 2026 program year. (max 750 characters)

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget Circular 2 CFR Part 200, the Federal Government requires that organizations expending $1,000,000 or more in Federal financial assistance in a fiscal year must secure an audit. Agencies requesting $1,000,000 or more must meet this requirement.

The associated cost of the audit could then be included in the CDBG project budget, accompanied by the auditor’s written cost estimate.

Documents to be uploaded

The budget proposal submitted **must** use the template provided, which can be downloaded here: <https://new.columbus.gov/Government/Departments/Finance-and-Management/Grants-Management>

If a document type is not relevant, you may choose to not upload the document (or may upload a document explaining why it is not relevant), however you should assume that all documents requested below are required in order to receive full consideration for funding.

* Budget proposal
* Itemized cost estimate(s) from qualified construction/design professionals (certified within last 60 days)
* Photos of building/site
  + For construction/rehabilitation projects, include photos of all areas of building with proposed improvements or lots with proposed new construction.
  + For acquisition projects, include photos of property proposed for acquisition, including interior photos of building if applicable.
* Award letters, commitment letters, grant agreements, etc. for other secured funding, if applicable – should match funding sources identified in completed budget
* Organizational chart
* Agency procurement policies, if applicable
* Articles of Incorporation/Bylaws - These are the documents recognized by the State as formally establishing a private corporation, business or agency
* List of Board of Directors or other governing body of the agency. The list must include the name, telephone number, address, occupation or affiliation of each member and must identify the principal officers of the governing body
* Current year operating budget (showing both revenues and expenses)
* Most recent audit, if applicable
* Environmental assessments or reports, if applicable
* Letters of support from community members or other institutions, if available