

Instructions for CDBG Project Proposal Form

Each year Travis County receives funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. This program may fund a variety of projects benefiting residents of the unincorporated areas of the county (and the Village of Webberville.) Projects may include social service activities, street reconstruction, water and sewer improvements, and preservation of affordable and decent housing, among others. The CDBG Project Proposal Form is to be used for suggestions or requests for specific eligible activities to be considered for the Travis County CDBG program.

Submission Guidelines

Travis County encourages the submission of a variety of eligible project ideas from Travis County Departments or participating urban county municipalities, non-profit-organizations or resident groups. Before completing the Project Proposal Form, please refer to the enclosed background material:

- Overview of Eligible CDBG activities,
- Description of CDBG National Objectives,
- CDBG Project Types and Activities,
- CDBG Project Evaluation Criteria, and
- CDBG Income Eligibility Limits.

We encourage those interested in filling out a proposal form to also visit Travis County's website (www.traviscountytexas.gov/cdbg) where additional CDBG background information is found.

Timeline for Submitting Project Ideas

Travis County receives CDBG funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development through a program-year cycle. Each program year starts on October 1st and ends on September 30th. A planning process for determining how the funds are to be used takes place from January through August each year. Additionally, the County prepares a Consolidated Plan assessing community needs and the strategic direction for the program.

The annual planning process can be summarized into the following steps:

- Project ideas are accepted at any time throughout the year; however, those received after March 31st are postponed for consideration until the next program year.
- Travis County Commissioners Court selects projects by vote during the month of May or June.
- A final Action Plan document is submitted to HUD before August 15th, outlining the projected uses of the funds for the next program year.

On the following page is the annual timeline for development of Action Plans.

Timeline for Development of Action Plan						
February	March	April	May	June	July	August
Solicitation of Project Ideas (Deadline for submission of project proposals is March 31 st)	Evaluation of Project Ideas		Travis County Commissioners Court Approves Projects			Final approval of Action Plan by the Commissioners Court and Submission to HUD by the 15 th
Five (5) Public Hearings seeking input on community needs and uses of funds			Two (2) Public Hearings and a 30-day Comment Period to comment on proposed CDBG uses			

Considerations

Those submitting project proposals should consider the following:

- Funds are limited and demand generally far exceeds availability, therefore funding of submitted proposals is not guaranteed.
- Proposals of eligible road or water/wastewater activities that are not funded on a given year are retained for evaluation for subsequent years. All other types of projects must re-submit annually for consideration.
- Depending on the type of activity, project implementation might take from 1.5 to 5 years. Priority is given to projects that take 1 to 3 years to implement.
- Neighborhood specific projects require a level of sustained commitment and involvement from neighborhood residents from the inception of the project through its implementation and completion.
- Due to changes in data to determine low to moderate income areas, all neighborhoods or areas requesting funds for infrastructure (streets, water or wastewater) or other types of area of benefit projects will be required to complete a primary survey. If a project appears to be feasible, CDBG staff will contact the neighborhood to begin the process.
- Certain type of project ideas that are submitted by non-profit organizations may be accepted, however, a competitive process will take place to determine what other organizations are available for the same activity and determine which agency meets the CDBG program’s interests and requirements best.
- CDBG funds must only be used in the **unincorporated areas** of the county or in the **Village of Webberville**. If you live in the City of Austin and have a community need, please visit the website of the Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department at <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/housing> where you will find information on the City’s CDBG program. If you have needs in one of the other 19 municipalities, contact your city’s administrative offices to determine what programs they have available to them.

Additional Questions?

Additional questions may be directed to Christy Moffett via email christy.moffett@co.travis.tx.us or phone at 512-854-3460.

Overview of Eligible CDBG Activities

All Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) projects must meet the following requirements:

- ✓ Projects must meet one of the three National Objectives as defined by HUD:
 - Benefit Low/Moderate Income Persons
 - Address Slum or Blighted Areas
 - Address an Urgent Need

- ✓ Projects must be an eligible activity as defined by HUD. Travis County has outlined a series of eligible activities it is most likely to consider. Please see Pages 5 and 6 to review the list, however, the County will accept a proposal for any eligible activity. For a comprehensive list of eligible activities, please visit HUD’s website: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/entitlement/>.

- ✓ Projects must benefit people in the unincorporated areas of Travis County, i.e. those residing outside any city limit or people living in the Village of Webberville.

- ✓ The total amount of funds allocated for Public Service projects must not exceed 15% of the total allocation.

- ✓ Activities to be undertaken must be in one of the priority categories approved by Travis County Commissioners Court. The categories are ranked as High, Medium or Low Priorities, which indicate the following:
 - **High Priority:** Travis County plans to use funds made available for activities that address this unmet need during the period of time designated in the Strategic Plan.
 - **Low Priority:** If funds are available, activities to address this unmet need may be funded by Travis County during the period of time designated in the Strategic Plan. Also, Travis County will take actions to locate other sources of funds to address this identified unmet need.

Prioritization of Categories for the PY14–18 Consolidated Plan	
Category	Priority
Infrastructure	High
Housing	High
Community Services	High
Populations with Specialized Needs / Services	High
Public Facilities	Low
Business & Jobs	Low

HUD National Objectives Definitions

Federal regulations define the parameters for using CDBG funds according to the national objectives as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in 24 Code of Federal Regulations Part 570. Proposed projects must meet one of three national objectives. They must: 1) benefit low- and moderate – income persons; 2) aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight; or 3) meet a need having a particular urgency.

Below, you will find abbreviated definitions of these national objectives. For comprehensive definitions, please visit HUD’s website (www.hud.gov). Please note that project compliance with the national objectives will be determined by Travis County CDBG staff.

Activities benefiting low - and moderate - income persons

CDBG projects, which benefit low- and moderate - income persons, must demonstrate at least 51% of those served must be identified as low to moderate - income persons. In addition, seventy (70) percent of the CDBG dollars spent annually must benefit low to moderate - income residents.

HUD’s definition of low to moderate income is based on the Median Family Income of the Austin/Round Rock Metropolitan Service Area. Income limits are updated every March. For current definitions of the Median Family Income for Travis County, please refer to the last page of this document.

Generally speaking, most projects will be restricted to serve only low to moderate income people with the exception of street and water infrastructure projects.

Activities benefiting slum or blighted areas

CDBG projects, which prevent or eliminate slums or blight, include activities that prevent or eliminate slum or blight on an area or spot basis or through the special designation of urban renewal. Designation of a slum or blighted area can occur through one of two ways: 1) the area, delineated by the County, meets a definition of a slum, blighted, deteriorated or deteriorating area under State or

local law or; 2) throughout the area there is a substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating buildings, or the public improvements are in a general state of deterioration.

The County must maintain documentation on the boundaries of the area and the condition that qualified the area at the time of its designation. Additionally, the assisted activity must address one or more of the conditions that contributed to the deterioration of the area.

Urgent Need: Activities addressing urgent needs

Under certain circumstances, CDBG funds may be used to address an immediate threat to public health and safety. CDBG may address community development needs having a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community for which other funding is not available. The threats must be of recent origin or have recently become urgent, and the County must prove that it is unable to finance the activity on its own as well as prove that no other sources of funding are available. A condition will generally be considered to be of recent origin if it developed or became critical within 18 months preceding the certification of the urgent need by the County.

Project Activities

Below is a list of activities from which to select for funding consideration. Please remember that activities in Community Services, Housing and Infrastructure categories are high priorities.

Project Type: Business and Jobs

- Activities: Commercial Exterior Repair
- Microenterprise Loans
- Small Business Loans

Project Type: Community Services

- Activities: Case management and Outreach for Adults and Youth
- Homebuyer Assistance Counseling or Foreclosure Prevention Counseling
- Housing Discrimination Outreach, Education and Legal Services
- Interim Housing Assistance (i.e., 3 month rental assistance, crisis related)
- Job Training
- Literacy/Adult Education and English Language Proficiency Services
- Senior or Disabled Services
- Youth Supports or Programs

Project Type: Housing

- Activities: Creation of New Rental Housing
- Creation of New Single Family Homes
- Homeownership Assistance (i.e., down payment assistance)

Repair of Rental Housing
Repair of Single Family Homes

Project Type: Infrastructure Needs

Activities: Drainage Improvements
Other Infrastructure (i.e., sidewalks, curb and gutter)
Slum/Blight Removal
Street Improvements
Water and Sewer Improvements

Project Type: Public Buildings and Facilities

Activities: Building Accessibility/Architectural Barrier Removal
Child Care Centers/Day Care Centers
Health Clinics
Homeless Facilities
Neighborhood or Community Centers
Parks
Recreational Facilities

Project Type: Populations with Specialized Needs/Services

Activities: Domestic Violence Supportive Services
HIV/AIDS Supportive Services
Homeless Outreach and Supportive Services
Mental Health Supportive Services
Special Needs Housing (i.e., HIV, MHMR, substance abuse, etc.)
Substance Abuse Supportive Services

Proposal Review Process and Project Evaluation Criteria

Travis County CDBG staff will first review all submitted proposals for eligibility and consistency with the CDBG national objectives. Eligible projects will then be ranked according to following evaluation criteria:

1. **Addresses a high priority goal of the Strategic Plan:** Projects addressing one of the three high priority categories identified in the strategic (consolidated) plan will be given priority. Projects addressing one of the priorities ranked medium will be considered but are less likely to be funded.
2. **Feasibility of project:** Projects that have the ability to be implemented and completed within 18 months will receive more favorable review. Phased projects for which 12-18 months of work would leave an incomplete project with little to no impact will be considered with less priority.

3. **Impacts a significant number of households:** Project scope and the number of persons benefiting will be considered to determine the level of project impact.
4. **Benefit to low/moderate-income persons:** Projects that benefit low- and moderate-income households will receive a more favorable review. The higher the percentage of low-to-moderate income benefit, the more favorable the review. It is likely that every area of benefit will need to conduct a primary survey of residents' income in order to confirm that the area has a sufficient percentage of low/moderate income persons.
5. **Leverages/matches with funding from another source:** Projects that utilize other funds (federal, state, local, private) and public/private joint efforts will receive more favorable review.

After reviewing and ranking all the proposals benefiting the CDBG service areas, the CDBG staff will make funding recommendations to the Travis County Commissioners Court. The Commissioners Court makes the final selection of CDBG funded projects and will provide a 30 day public comment period and hold public hearings to receive comment on the proposed uses of funding prior to submission to HUD.

Income Eligibility Limits

To qualify to receive CDBG-funded services, the income of the household must not exceed the federal maximum income limits established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The income limits for the Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area (the area applicable for Travis County) are as follows:

Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Median Family Income = \$76,800												
ADJUSTED INCOME LIMITS (by Household size)												
	1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons	6 Persons	7 Persons	8 Persons	9 Persons	10 Persons	11 Persons	12 Persons
Very Low Income (30 % Limits)	\$16,150	\$18,450	\$20,750	\$24,250	\$28,410	\$32,570	\$36,730	\$40,890	\$45,050	\$49,210	\$53,370	\$57,530
Low Income (50 % Limits)	\$26,900	\$30,750	\$34,600	\$38,400	\$41,500	\$44,550	\$47,650	\$50,700	\$53,800	\$56,850	\$59,950	\$63,000
Moderate Income (80 % Limits)	\$43,050	\$49,200	\$55,350	\$61,450	\$66,400	\$71,300	\$76,200	\$81,150	\$86,050	\$90,950	\$95,900	\$100,800

This table was updated on 3/18/15.

Effective March 6, 2015

Note: Income limits change annually. The limits shown here will be in effect until HUD releases new data, typically in December of each year.

If you have a household larger than 12 people, please contact the CDBG Office to get the proper limits.