

Critical Infrastructure projects are designed to assist eligible communities with high-priority, single-purpose infrastructure improvements that will alleviate failed or failing systems, including storm drainage and other public facilities.

Eligible communities interested in applying for one or more competitive set-aside grants must include the application(s) in their community's Community Development Program Allocation application. The application(s) must be submitted online by **Friday, June 26, 2015, at 11:59 p.m. EST.**

The following changes have been proposed for administering the PY 2015 Community Development Allocation and Community Development Competitive Set-Aside Programs. They are as follows:

- Counties that include a city that received a direct allocation for the FY 2010, FY 2011, and FY 2012 program years will be required to undertake at least one project in that city in PY 2015. There is no set dollar requirement.
- Communities with no open competitive set-aside awards may apply for up to three (3) competitive set-asides annually. Communities may apply for multiple combinations of competitive set-asides, but are limited to a maximum of two (2) of each competitive application.
- Direct cities may only have one (1) Downtown Revitalization program open at a time.
- If a community has an open competitive set-aside award at the application deadline, the community's eligibility for competitive set-asides will be reduced by the number of open competitive set-aside grants. For example, if a community has one open grant at the time of application, it may only apply for two competitive set-asides in PY 2015.
- Communities that have completed project work and drawn and expended all funds on open competitive set-aside grants can request that OCD monitor and close the project. The community must submit the request to OCD by April 30, 2015.
- Allocation projects that entail major water or sanitary sewer improvements will be evaluated in a similar fashion to Residential Public Infrastructure Grant Program projects even if Residential Public Infrastructure Grant Program funding is not an identified source. Applicants must submit evidence of plan approval and account for required household connections at the time of application.

American Community Survey

Communities are required to use U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued 2006-2010 American Community Survey Low/Moderate Income Summary Data (ACS) to qualify low- and moderate-income (LMI) area benefit projects. This data is available on the Ohio Development Services Agency's Office of Community Development's Community and Economic Development Programs web page. Applicants may also conduct income surveys to qualify areas as LMI. Income surveys must be less than five years old, use household randomization, comply with minimum sample size requirements, and be certified by the community CEO. **Income surveys may not be combined with ACS data to income qualify an area.**

Community Development Implementation Strategy

The Office of Community Development implemented a new planning requirement for Community Development, Economic Development, and Residential Public Infrastructure program funding. In odd years, starting in PY 2015, communities will be required to supplement the standard citizen participation process. The supplemental information will include developing an outreach plan for disseminating information about OCD's community development programs. Direct recipients of program funds will be required to hold a Community Development Implementation Strategy (CDIS) meeting for local stakeholders to identify needs and funding opportunities. A CDIS packet, which includes the outreach plan, meeting documentation, a needs worksheet, and a prioritization worksheet, must be submitted as an application attachment. An e-mail with additional information about the process was sent to grant administrators on January 26, 2015. The CDIS packet will also be available on OCD's website.

Program Income

Communities with high or stagnant Economic Development, Microenterprise Business Development, and Downtown Revitalization Revolving Loan Funds (RLFs) will be required to substantially disburse any existing RLF balance prior to or in conjunction with submitting the PY 2015 application. Required PY 2015 commitments will be included with the Community Development Allocation grant amount notifications.

OCD Online Grant Management System

The Office of Community Development has developed an online grant management system that will allow grantees to submit program applications, manage required fiscal operations, and comply with reporting requirements. The online application section of the system will be available to applicants starting May 4, 2015. The Office of Community Development will no longer accept paper applications or applications that are submitted on digital media. The recommended system requirements for the online grant management system are:

- High-Speed Internet Connection (test current internet speeds at: <http://www.speedtest.net/>)
 - 4 MB or greater download speeds
 - 1 MB or greater upload speeds
- Internet Explorer version 7 or greater

Training

On Thursday, April 2, 2015, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., the Office of Community Development will conduct the PY 2015 Community Development Program application training in Columbus at the Ohio Department of Transportation Auditorium, 1980 West Broad Street. Due to changes in the online application submission, we expect direct grantees to attend and encourage all former direct-city program administrators to attend.

The training will review the changes to the Community Development Allocation Program and the national objective, eligibility, and project selection criteria. The Neighborhood Revitalization, Downtown Revitalization, and Critical Infrastructure competitive set-aside grants will also be discussed. Attendees will receive application instructions, application attachments, and more information on the online submission process.

There is no registration required. Questions regarding the training should be directed to your Community Development Program Representative at (614) 466-2285.

Internet Assistance

To assist applicants, the following documents are posted or will be posted on ODSA's website:

- Draft FY 2015 Ohio Consolidated Plan
- PY 2015 Community Development Program application attachments and instructions, which are expected to be posted on or about April 3, 2015
- Complete List of All Activity Names with Outcome Measurement Names
- Environmental Review Process for General Administration, Fair Housing, and Planning Activities Funded with Administrative Dollars Policy (OCD Notice 06-01)
- Public Hearing Notification Requirements Policy (OCD Notice 07-01)

- National Objective Policy Notice (OCD Notice 15-01)
- Community Development Field Service Areas and Representatives

Pre-Submission Requirements

Community Development Program applicants are required to conduct two public hearings: one general public hearing to cover all programs the applicant administers; and at least one application-specific public hearing for each program proposed. The second public hearing may include multiple competitive set-aside programs in addition to activities identified for the allocation grant. When conducting public hearings, applicants should use the PY 2014 Community Development Program Allocation as an estimate for PY 2015 Community Development Allocation funding levels.

Pre-Submission Consultations

To improve the Community Development Program application process, the Office of Community Development will offer pre-submission consultation opportunities from April 6, 2015 to June 19, 2015. The pre-submission consultation enables the participating community to ask questions about the application and application process with an Office of Community Development Program Representative. The applicants can then make revisions, and gather required documentation before submitting a final application. To schedule a consultation, contact your Program Representative at (614) 466-2285.