

CDBG Public Facility Improvement Program
Frequently Asked Questions
FY 2027

1. How much funding is available for FY 2027?
 - A. There is approximately \$1,203,918 available funding. Reference the NOFA flyer on the [CDBG Community Facility Improvement Program webpage](#) for the application reviewing period.
2. How do we apply for the CDBG Community Facility Improvement Program?
 - A. Applications can only be submitted through City Data Service's [online application portal](#). All of the NOFA materials including a Word document version (for reference purposes only) can be found on the [CDBG Community Facility Improvement Program webpage](#).
3. Is there a minimum or maximum amount of funds we can apply for?
 - A. Applicants are encouraged to apply for the amount of funds reasonably needed to complete the project. Funds requested cannot exceed the amount available in the NOFA and applicants should at minimum apply for \$100,000. When preparing your budget please consider construction costs (including federal prevailing wage), materials, permits and fees, design and other professional fees, contingency (at least 15% of construction costs), and project management costs. As a requirement of the application process, applicants should request sample proposals from contractors to assess construction costs.
4. Can we apply if we rent/lease the facility? What if the facility is owned by the City?
 - A. Yes. However, the applicant must have, and provide evidence of, five-year site control (e.g. lease agreement).
5. Can the project manager be a member of our organization staff?
 - A. Yes. Applications for funding include evaluation of the project manager's background in managing similar programs and projects. If the total project budget from all sources exceeds \$250,000, the project manager should have experience with complying with Build America, Buy America Act requirements. Expenses for project management may not exceed 10% of the total project expenditure.
6. What are the program eligibility requirements?
 - A. There are a number of eligibility requirements. Please use this quick checklist to pre-determine your program eligibility:
 - ☐ Non-profit Organization or City Department operating a public building
 - ☐ Minimum five-year site control
 - ☐ Minimum \$100,000 funding request
 - ☐ Meet CDBG program type (Health and Safety, Accessibility, Energy Efficiency)

- ☐ Either obtained permits or have consulted with the Berkeley Permit Service Center
- ☐ Identified Project Manager (PM) with experience managing construction projects (hired PMs encouraged)
- ☐ Three cost estimates (one estimate by Public Works for City of Berkeley Department applicants), no older than 90 days
- ☐ 51% of beneficiaries of project must be moderate or low-income
- ☐ Provide compelling evidence of project need and impact to beneficiaries
- ☐ Good standing with City of Berkeley if previously awarded funding

7. What types of improvements are eligible?

- A. CDBG guidelines regulate the type of work that can be done using these funds. The City of Berkeley is prioritizing projects including the following activities:
- I. Health and Safety: Reducing health and safety concerns relating to safety code, such as lead-based paint removal.
 - II. Accessibility: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) barrier removal, with a focus on path of travel.
 - III. Energy Efficiency: Weatherization, electrical upgrades, water savings via faucets/toilets, etc.

8. How much detail should I provide in the application project scope?

- A. Your scope should be sufficiently detailed to present a clear picture of your proposed project. This is your chance to not only describe your rehabilitation improvements but also make the case for why this is needed and the impact the rehabilitations will have on beneficiaries. Consider providing information on the following:
- a. What are you proposing? Please include as much detail as possible, such as how many rooms will undergo rehabilitation.
 - b. Why do you need it?
 - c. Who are the beneficiaries and do they meet the CDBG low/moderate income requirement?
 - d. What is your full project and construction timeline?

Sample scope narrative:

“SeniorStars agency is currently operating out of a 1940s building that has had very few accessibility upgrades and or other rehabilitation improvements. We serve up to 100 low-income and disabled seniors on a daily basis. Seniors use both our auditorium and five smaller classrooms for educational, physical therapy, and social service programming. The current configuration of both the

main entry into the auditorium and the five smaller classrooms are not ADA compliant. The scope for this project includes addressing the path-of-travel accessibility barriers to the entry way and into the five classrooms. Front entrance: build new ADA ramp, widen doorway, level the threshold and add an automatic door opener. Classroom doorways: widen doorways in all five classrooms to be ADA compliant and add an automatic door openers on four of the five rooms (one excluded because of building constraints). All of the spaces are primarily utilized by our senior clientele. We anticipate the project to take 6 months including design, permitting and construction. The project will begin in July and end in December. Once complete, all seniors will be able to access and benefit fully from our programing by being able to enter through the front door, and enter four of the primary classrooms.”

9. How long is the review process for project application acceptance? When will the funding period begin?
 - A. Submitted applications are scheduled to be considered by the Housing Advisory Commission (HAC) Public Facilities Improvements Subcommittee in September 2026. The HAC will then review applications at its October 2026 meeting and will make a recommendation to the City Manager for projects requesting between \$100,000 and \$200,000. If a project is recommended for funding, documents will be prepared for execution. For projects at and above \$200,000, the HAC will make a recommendation to Council. Considering both the HAC and Council schedules, the full timeline is estimated to be between two to four months. The timeline outlined here is approximate and subject to change. Funding will be available when the contract with the City is executed; however, no project hard costs may be incurred until environmental review is complete.
10. If my application is approved for funding, what are the steps and timeline to start the project?
 - A. Several steps are required before a project commences and can take six months or more depending on the scope and scale of the project. The following list is not exhaustive and only includes high level steps:
 - ☐ City Manager (projects below \$200,000) or City Council approval (projects at or over \$200,000)
 - ☐ Contract Execution
 - ☐ Environmental Review
 - ☐ Final plans and obtain permits
 - ☐ Approval to release bid
 - ☐ Contract with contractor
 - ☐ Begin project

11. Do we need to have permits before applying for CDBG funds?
- A. Obtaining permits is strongly encouraged prior to application submission. The permitting process can bring forth unforeseen changes to the scope that are important for both the Environmental Review as well as accurate bids from prospective contractors. If you have not yet obtained your permit, we do require that you have at minimum, consulted with the Permit Service Center (510-981-7500) to get an accurate understanding of what permits will be required, estimated permit costs, ADA compliance and any other issues.
12. Is environmental review required for all projects? Who completes the environmental review? Does the applicant include this cost in their application budget? Is there an approximation of how long that environmental impact inspection takes?
- A. Environmental review is required for any project receiving federal funds, including CDBG, regardless of the type or scope of the project. You are responsible for having environmental review completed for the project in coordination with the contract monitor. The project budget must include environmental review, and the anticipated cost is between \$15,000 and \$20,000 to have a review completed by a consultant. Environmental review timelines vary according the project, and the process will be discussed in depth at a pre-award conference. The City will provide a list of possible environmental review consultants and may help coordinate the review; however it is the responsibility of the awardee to ensure an environmental review is conducted following the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development/National Environmental Protection Action (NEPA) requirements.
13. Can we use volunteers on the project to save labor costs?
- A. Yes. There are additional certifications that we will need to collect to verify that the volunteers are eligible. Please include the use of volunteers in your scope of work.
14. Are religious institutions eligible for this funding?
- A. This funding may be used for the rehabilitation of structures only to the extent that those structures are used for conducting eligible activities under a HUD program or activity. Where a structure is used for both eligible and explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization), this funding may not exceed the cost of the share of rehabilitation attributable to eligible activities in accordance with the cost accounting requirements applicable to the HUD program or activity.

Additionally, rehabilitation of sanctuaries, chapels, or other rooms that a HUD-funded faith-based organization uses as its principal place of worship, **may not be paid with direct Federal financial assistance.**

For example, a one-room church applies for CDBG funds to make several necessary repairs. On Sunday morning, the church serves as a place for congregational worship. During weekdays, the church is used to operate a “soup kitchen” for homeless individuals. Accordingly, except for the few hours on Sunday morning when the church holds worship services, the one-room church is used for the purpose of providing meals to homeless individuals—a purpose that is eligible for HUD assistance. **The one-room church is ineligible for CDBG-funded improvements because it is the congregation's principal place of worship.**

15. If we currently have a CDBG-funded rehabilitation project happening, are we eligible to apply for these funds for different/additional work?
 - A. In general, we want to see clear delineation across CDBG-funded projects so that there is no confusion as to how compliance requirements apply to each project. The different/additional work you are seeking may need to be incorporated into the current project rather than treated as a separate project. Please contact Contract Monitor for the current project to discuss your specific situation.
16. Will a State-funded childcare center qualify?
 - A. To be eligible for this NOFA, at least 51% of the children served by a State-funded childcare center must be from low- and moderate-income households in Berkeley. Additionally, the applicant must demonstrate site control.
17. Are large appliances and HVAC systems eligible?
 - A. Furnishings that are not an integral structural fixture are generally ineligible. HVAC systems are eligible for funding.
18. Do we need to have a specific program use identified for the site before we start the application process? We have a building that needs capital improvements before it can be used for shelter, but we are still in the process of applying for the operational funding for the programming.
 - A. Yes. Applications are reviewed for project readiness and impact to low- to moderate-income clients, among other factors.
19. When does funding need to be spent?
 - A. Funding should be spent in accordance with the proposed project schedule. The schedule may be adjusted after award and before construction starts.

20. Can CDBG funds be used for relocation costs if the facility's residents need to be relocated during construction?

A. Relocation expenses are not eligible under the CDBG/public facility improvement program.

21. How can we obtain more information about the program and application process?

A. Please [visit our website](#) and/or contact Jiro Arase in Housing and Community Services at (510) 981-7599, JArase@berkeleyca.gov