

# CDBG Community Facility Improvement Program

## Frequently Asked Questions

FY 2025

1. How much funding is available for FY 2025?
  - A. There is approximately \$322,000 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 the online application portal City Data Services <https://www.citydataservices.net/>. 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. The minimum amount that is eligible for funding is \$100,000. There is no maximum, however, continue to check the website for updated funding availability. When preparing your budget please consider construction costs (including federal prevailing wage), materials, permits and fees, design, and project management costs.
4. Can we apply if we rent/lease the facility?
  - A. Yes. You 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.
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:
    - 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 (a minimum of one for City of Berkeley Department applicants), no older than 90 days
    - 51% of beneficiaries of project must be moderate or low-income

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- 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 can we apply for?

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 a 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 in order 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 renovations 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?

B. Sample scope narrative:

- a. *“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*

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*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 programming 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?
  - A. Submitted applications will be considered at the next possible Housing Advisory Commission (HAC) CDBG Subcommittee meeting. The HAC will then review applications at their monthly meeting and will make a recommendation to the City Manager for projects requesting between \$100,000 and \$200,000. Please consult with the Project Manager (contact information below), for an estimated timeline based on HAC meetings and scheduling. 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.
10. How long does it take to execute a contract with the City of Berkeley?
  - A. Once your scope and project budget are finalized and you have submitted all of your contract signatory pages, certifications, and updated insurance we will prepare your contract for execution. These projects are also subject to environmental review, which will commence after the scope is finalized and project is awarded. Environmental review must be completed prior to the contract is executed.
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. Who does 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. The City conducts and pays for the environmental review. This should not be included in your application budget. Environmental review timelines vary according the project. If you have questions about this approximate timeline, please contact us.

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13. Can we use volunteers on the project to save labor costs?
- A. Yes. There is additional certifications that we will need to collect to verify that the volunteers are eligible.
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. How can we obtain more information about the program and application process?
- A. Please [visit our website](https://berkeleyca.gov/community-recreation/community-services/community-development-block-grant-funding) at <https://berkeleyca.gov/community-recreation/community-services/community-development-block-grant-funding> and/or contact Mary-Claire Katz in Housing and Community Services at (510) 981-5414, [mkatz@berkeleyca.gov](mailto:mkatz@berkeleyca.gov)