

Items 24-1120 and 24-1121: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Notice of Funding Available and Community Needs for the 2025 Program Year (4/1/25 - 3/31/26) (Public Hearing And Discussion)

Items 24-1122 and 24-1123: Creation of the 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program (Public Hearing And Discussion)

Community Development Committee

Wed, Aug 28, 2024 4:30PM

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 00:59

Then we'll move to our public hearings and appearances. We'll begin with the first public hearing, and I'm going to take this a little bit out of order—talked with everybody beforehand. But I'm going to take the public hearing portion and then the informational item portion, and then back up to public hearing and informational item.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 01:16

So public hearing and appearance number 24-1120 the Community Development Block Grant, CDBG, notice of funding available and community needs for the 2025 program year (April 1 2025 through March 31 2026). This is a public hearing. Is there anyone who wishes to speak? This is a public hearing. Is there anyone who wishes to speak? This is a public hearing. Is there anyone who wishes to speak?

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 01:47

There being none, I will close that public hearing, and we'll move on to informational item 24-1121, the CDBG, notice of funding available and community needs for the 2025 program year. Would Olivia want to start? Community Development Specialist Galyon, please.

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 02:08

Okay, so I'll just give you kind of a quick summary of the CDBG application process, and then this public hearing was associated with it. So, one requirement of our application process and of some of our CDBG requirements overall, is to hold public hearings and opportunities for the public to put in their input onto the ways that we will be spending the funds.

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 02:34

So typically, our application process starts sometime around early fall or late summer, depending on how you define it. And we start with predicting kind of where we think our allocation will end up at based on the last three or four years of funds from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development for the community development block grant fund. And then we kind of portion out the amount that we have for our core city programs, which include the housing rehab loan program, the neighborhood grant programs, administration, and fair housing—and fair housing is a required component of CDBG funds—the Appleton Housing Authority. And then a new one this year has been the Community Resource Navigator position. So last year that was applied for as a department project, but now it's going into our core programming as well.

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 03:25

So then once those requests are or the amounts are determined for those projects, then we move on to our city department application process. Just a note that that did open recently, and that's about a six-week process for city departments to apply. And then once those—once that process is closed, those are received and checked

for eligibility, and then the core set of projects, and then any city department application projects that are received are brought forward and determined eligible are brought forward to Com Dev Committee and Common Council for approval, for preliminary approval of those funding amounts.

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 04:05

Once that's determined, we then move into our community partner application process. There is some pre application training that community partners are required to go through, and then they have about a month to apply for various projects. And these are all like nonprofit organizations typically that are applying for those. And so then, once those are all received, they're again checked for eligibility and reviewed by staff, and then they're passed on to our CDBG Advisory Board who scores them, or, you know, reviews them on their own and then comes together in a public, open meeting that, again, community members can give feedback at to kind of make recommendations to Com Dev and Common Council for approval of these preliminary allocations.

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 04:54

And one note on those is that they are preliminary until we get our final allocation amount from HUD. Sometimes that comes in February; sometimes, like this year, it didn't come until May. So, you never really know exactly when that'll come, but once that then is received, then we make adjustments as needed and then bring those final allocations forward.

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 05:16

So, a big part of that process, though, is seeking community input, seeking what kinds of issues in the community people are facing, or what kinds of areas people are interested in having projects funded and that kind of stuff. So, this is the first of several public hearing opportunities and public feedback—seekings of public feedback that we'll be doing during this process.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 05:40

Thank you and your—our best estimate at this time for the CDBG funds that we potentially could receive from HUD?

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 05:48

I believe we said somewhere around like \$588,000-\$590,000. For reference, this year we received \$590,504, but it can vary. Sometimes, like a couple years ago, we received almost \$620,000 and then went down to \$576,000. So, it can kind of vary, so we did try to go with a more conservative number that was closer to the last few years.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 06:15

And those core items that you spoke about were—which were the first to come off the top of this, do we have a general idea of what kind of dollar figure that those come in at, so that we know what the balance will end up being, as far as grants?

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 06:30

Yeah, so that can vary year to year. Some years, like some of these projects don't request any funds. The Neighborhood Grant Program doesn't always depending on how much program income we receive. The Housing Rehab Loan Program might not necessarily. But when we begin that process, and during the budgeting phase, actually, that the city does earlier in like June, we kind of try to get an idea of how much we would expect in funds for those and assess with, like, what we have available as well from prior program years that maybe hasn't been spent yet, and kind of try to make an assessment there on how much that would be. And then that's—we provide the number that we have remaining to city departments as, like, the amount that would be available to them taken out of our larger estimation.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 07:21

Director Homan, did you wish to then add to that?

Director Kara Homan (Community And Economic Development) 07:27

It will all be detailed out in the mayor's budget when it's released. We're currently working through that process right now, but it will outline the estimate of what each particular core program area would be and then what the balance is.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 07:42

But essentially, we're in a hurry up and wait until HUD gives us a final dollar figure?

Director Kara Homan (Community And Economic Development) 07:46

Correct.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 07:48

Thank you. Does anyone else on the committee have any questions? Alder Smith.

Aldersperson Martyn Smith (District 4) 07:53

Yeah, I have a couple questions. Is—to what extent is it kind of expected, kind of the groups that are always getting funded, and to what extent are there, you know, do we get input from the public on things they've really liked or seen versus things that—or is that more of a formality, as it kind of has worked out?

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 08:18

Yeah, typically, we don't get a ton of public input on—when we have these public hearings. There is some public—like, if there we have a survey, sometimes that gets a little bit higher response level, but it is in some ways a formality, but we do have to make sure that we're including these opportunities for public input. One area that we sometimes get it more is once the actual applications have been processed, and like, during that Advisory Board meeting. That is now an open public meeting, so that might be an area where we get it, or, like, a little bit later in the process when the actual recommendations from the Advisory Board are being brought forward. I would say that's probably when we get more feedback.

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 09:00

But again, in the past, we haven't really gotten much feedback from the public on this process. As far as the organizations go, that again, it kind of depends. Sometimes they'll come and kind of give their point, but it does also vary. It's not the same organizations necessarily being funded every year, and for our outside organizations, there's not a guaranteed amount of funding that will be available to them. It really depends on what, you know, we require at the city level for our programs that we that we operate. And then if there are any department applications that are eligible projects where those come in at as well.

Aldersperson Martyn Smith (District 4) 09:40

If—and if I could just follow up. You know, a lot of these organizations, Pillars and the Building For Kids, etc, are well respected. Everybody, you know, is happy that money goes to those. Is there a place, though, for like startups or newer nonprofits to request and ask for money? Is that something that would be, you know, not in those huge amounts, but in smaller amounts?

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 10:04

Yeah, there's definitely opportunities. It does kind of depend just on, like I said, the amount of funds that we have available overall for these nonprofit organizations. Some years we have more available, and somewhere—some years we have less money available. It also depends on the type of project they have. There are certain categories. So public services, we can only give up to 15% of our overall allocation to organizations that are providing a public service, and so that can sometimes impact it versus if, like, an organization is doing an update to a public facility that's serving people experiencing homelessness. You know, there's not the same restriction on our funding ability—availability for that. So, it does kind of just depend too on what kinds of applications come in, and then how the—what types of projects they are, and then how the advisory board kind of ranks those projects.

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 11:01

But there is not like a preference, necessarily, for like organizations that received it previously. And we actually do have a preference, or we have information on our application asking about how they would continue this project in future years without CDBG dollars. And you know, do try to try to emphasize that receiving it one year doesn't always mean that they'll receive it, but that, you know there should be other funding sources in mind as well, and that kind of stuff. So.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 11:35

Deputy Director Kress.

Deputy Director David Kress (Community and Economic Development) 11:37

Yes. Thank you chair. Just one thing to add as it relates to the public participation component of CDBG. Obviously, there are mandatory requirements for holding a number of public hearings, and we always hope that there's more involvement than we're seeing here this afternoon, but I do want to point out that every five years, we prepare a consolidated plan. In fact, there's an information item coming up next on the agenda, and as a part of that process, there's a more concerted effort made to do more community outreach and really hear from stakeholders throughout the community about newer emerging trends. So, I think that's where there, again, there's more of a concerted effort to identify areas that maybe hadn't previously been a focus and bring them into the fold as it relates to CDBG. Okay.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 12:22

Thank you. Anyone else? It's important to note that Alderman Wolff is our representative from this committee to the CDBG Advisory Board. Thank you for that. All right, there being no further discussion on this, we can move back up, please, to public hearings.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 12:42

Public Hearing number 24-1122, as so nicely referred to initially by Deputy Director Kress. Creation of the 2025 through 2029 consolidated plan for the Community Development Block Grant CDBG program. This is a public hearing. Is there anyone who wishes to speak? This is a public hearing. Is there anyone who wishes to speak? This is a public hearing. Is there anyone who wishes to speak? There being none, I will close that public hearing.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 13:14

And we can move on to informational item 24-1123, creation of the 2025 through 2029 consolidated plan for the CDBG program. Who would like to speak on this? Olivia.

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 13:28

I'll speak on this one.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 13:28

Thank you.

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 13:30

One requirement that the US Department of Housing and Urban Development has to receive Community Development Block Grant funds is that communities submit a five year plan known as a consolidated plan for how we plan to spend the funds that we'll be receiving for that from them in the next five years, and kind of set some goals for, you know, say the number of housing units that will be rebuilt—rehabilitated, or the number of people that will be served by the public services that we might fund with our programs. So, this is a five-year requirement. The last one was completed in 2019 for the 2020 through 2024 year—for the cycle. And so right now, we're working on updating the plan's data, the narrative, the spending goals, and then are also kicking off the community engagement process to gauge the needs of the community and kind of gauge what kinds of projects, again, people are interested in and the areas of focus that we might want to consider when putting together the Consolidated Plan.

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 14:37

So, this includes this public hearing that was just held, but it also includes other opportunities for public engagement. So, there will be a public survey that's going out asking people about, like, areas of concern they might have, or kinds of types of things that they're experiencing. There's also a stakeholder one that's directed at non-profit organizations and other organizations that are serving community members on a day-to-day basis and providing for, say, basic needs or providing childcare, other types of things like that. And then also, I am working on setting up interviews as well to just kind of get a better gauge from the stakeholder organizations on the types of issues that they're seeing emerging in the community and how we might consider those as we kind of move into the planning phase for the next five years of these funds.

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 15:32

So yeah, like I said, this is kind of our kickoff of the public engagement process for that, and we—you can expect to see further items for the consolidated plan coming forward, probably near the end of this year, and then approval early 2025 for submittal to HUD before or around the start of our program year of 2025. So.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 15:55

I assume there's not an issue with working on this five-year plan at the same time that we're working on soliciting grants applications for the 2025 program year?

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 16:06

Nope, there's no problem with that. And HUD doesn't dictate when we are required to go through our application process or really many steps of the application process for our year-to-year CDBG allocations. They do leave that up to communities. But here in city of Appleton, we like to get this started, you know, sometime around August, so that we can go through all those steps, have enough time to get applications submitted, have enough time for organizations or departments to ask questions prior to submitting their applications, and then have enough time for review and any sort of funding updates we would need to make so that once the program year starts and we have approval from HUD to start spending funds, we can hit the ground running and really get those projects going, rather than trying to start in April when our program year starts. But yeah, so there's no sort of restriction on doing these kinds of different aspects of planning and everything at once.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 17:07

Excellent. Thank you. Anyone else have any questions? Alder Smith.

Alderson Martyn Smith (District 4) 17:10

Yeah, it's my first time through this, so I just have questions. So, if as we go through the public comments, say plausible—say homelessness is something that people are concerned about or see a lot of and you hear that a lot, then the process would be, "Okay, we hear this from the community. So maybe we'll expand, you know, our money for programs or nonprofits that head toward that issue." So that—would that be the how you would use the public and then try to—

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 17:40

Yeah.

Alderson Martyn Smith (District 4) 17:40

—figure out how the money gets distributed?

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 17:42

Yeah, so we would consider the types of feedback that are kind of submitted and those areas of interest. So, for that situation—again, that one can be restricted in some ways, depending on if it's a public service that's being offered to people experiencing homelessness. But at the same time, if we know that there could be, like, physical improvements to shelters to expand them or to allow for, you know, for them to add more beds or to be able to ensure that they're able to remain open the whole year, or something like that, that's kind of another area where we might try to kind of get at meeting some of those services and put a goal of, you know, using funds for public facilities improvements, but that they are, you know, going to be targeted towards, like, specific population that need it, like people experiencing homelessness. So, but that's definitely an area that, when we receive feedback like that, that we would try as best as we can within our limits to incorporate that into our goals. And we do set specific numerical goals for how many people we'd like to how many people would like to assist with some of this funding or how many units that that might be constructed or renovated or anything like that that are focused specifically on housing for people experiencing homelessness. So, there's opportunities like that as well to kind of give ourselves goals in that sense.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 19:14

Thank you. Anyone else have any questions? Comments? All right.