



**PY 2020 Ohio Consolidated Plan  
Community and Economic Development Programs  
Advisory Committee Meeting**

**State Library of Ohio, Columbus, Ohio  
November 5, 2019  
9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

**Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:**

Bill Arnett, City of Zanesville  
Ryan Baker, City of Xenia  
Joyce Barrett, Heritage Ohio  
Mary Church, City of Ashtabula  
John Cleek/Hannah Diewald, CDC of Ohio  
Kelly Cole, Brown County  
Terri Fetherolf, Vinton County  
Ethan Harris, Clark County  
Michelle Hister, Poggemeyer Design Group  
Michelle Hyer, Buckeye Hills  
Ralph Kline, Ironton-Lawrence County CAO  
Craig Knapke, Access Engineering  
Sherry Loos, Ohio RCAP  
Angie McConnell, GLCAP  
Dennis Miller, Maumee Valley Planning Organization  
Susan Moore, ORDC  
Katie Saba, W.E. Quicksall & Associates  
Nathan Simons, HAPCAP  
Krista Somerton, Van Wert County ED  
Karen Sprague, Gallia County  
Evelyn Warr-Cummings, Marion County RPC  
Jeannette Wierzbicki, OMEGA

**Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) Employees:**

Haley Callahan  
Karli Gibson  
Jared Jodrey  
Ben Kepple  
Tiffany Laffitte  
Mary Oakley  
Wesley Watkins

**Agency Updates: Ohio Development Services Agency**

Mary Oakley announced leadership changes at Development and introduced staff from the Office of Community Development's (OCD) Community Investments section. Ms. Oakley also shared information about Development's role in Census 2020 and encouraged participants to educate residents in their communities about the importance being counted.

## **Community Development Programs**

Haley Callahan reviewed changes to the Community Development Programs for PY 2019. Downtown Revitalization is no longer under the Community Development umbrella. Funds are now accessed through the Target of Opportunity Program. The program is now open cycle and focuses on building rehabilitation. The grant ceiling is \$250,000 grant ceiling and a maximum of three buildings can be included. Neighborhood Revitalization now has a \$750,000 maximum award; increased from \$500,000. Critical Infrastructure remained open cycle with a grant ceiling of \$500,000.

Ms. Callahan also summarized PY 2019 funding. Approximately \$11.2 million in Allocation grants were awarded to the 51 eligible odd-year communities. Neighborhood Revitalization grants were awarded to eight communities to complete projects in ten target areas. Critical Infrastructure grants were awarded to twelve communities to complete 13 high priority public facilities projects. Two additional communities were permitted to use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Economic Development (ED) Revolving Loan Funds (RLF) to alleviate critical conditions.

Grant agreements have been e-mailed. Grantees may now print, sign, and return the contracts via e-mail.

Critical Infrastructure second round applications are due December 13, 2019. Pre-applications must be submitted by November 22, 2019. Pre-applications are not required for round one resubmissions. Ms. Callahan encouraged applicants to discuss projects with their OCD representative prior to submission. OCD plans to approve all high-ranking applications but grant agreements will not be issued until funds are available.

Ms. Callahan reviewed project averages for the Allocation, Neighborhood Revitalization, and Critical Infrastructure project averages. The average Allocation grant is \$220,000 or approximately \$44,000 per project. The averages for Neighborhood Revitalization and Critical Infrastructure are \$750,000 and \$372,000, respectively.

Ms. Callahan initiated a discussion about the pros and cons of the Allocation program vs. competitive grants. Participants stated Allocation is a source of match for competitive programs when local government funds aren't available, the funds build administrative capacity in working with new staff, and funds can be used for smaller projects that don't fit the competitive model. Funds also provide opportunities for partnering with other local agencies, don't require a match, and allow planning for phased projects. There are often more requests than funds available.

Participants also stated \$750,000 was an appropriate level of funding for the Neighborhood Revitalization Program or that the grant ceiling should be increased to \$1 million. It was also stated that there should be increased coordination with housing projects for a comprehensive program.

Participants also discussed the \$500,000 Critical Infrastructure grant ceiling. Most wanted to keep the \$500,000 maximum and agreed \$300,000 was too low.

## **Citizen Participation**

Karli Gibson informed participants that OCD is creating a new Citizen Participation Policy. The policy will include public notice and hearing requirements, recommendations, and best practices. Participants agreed this will be helpful and acknowledged confusion about how to handle jurisdictions within their counties that may be eligible for funding as direct grantees, how to address application to community development and housing programs, and partnerships.

## **Target of Opportunity**

Tiffany Laffitte summarized historical performance of the Target of Opportunity Program. On average, OCD has awarded around \$1 million annually for the completion of six projects. Typical projects include downtown building rehabilitation, senior centers, homeless shelters, emergency infrastructure projects, demolition, and non-profits serving limited clientele populations. New applications will be reviewed to ensure alignment with Agency priorities.

OCD is reviewing pre-applications and opening full applications for downtown revitalization projects. Application review will start soon by order of submission. Approximately \$1 million is available.

Ms. Laffitte summarized common pre-application deficiencies; differences between area and spot slum and blight, administration allowances, eligible applicants, and budget rounding.

Ms. Oakley reminded participants to use RLF dollars for small projects rather than applying for new funds and as leverage for competitive awards. Ohio communities hold approximately \$20 million in local accounts and those funds need to be expended.

## **State of Ohio Priorities**

Ms. Oakley reviewed how existing CDBG resources can be used to further State of Ohio investment priorities.

Planning: CDBG funds can be used for asset management inventories, feasibility studies, and comprehensive and strategic plans in low- and moderate-income (LMI) areas or that address LMI populations or alleviate blighting conditions. Sherry Loos, with the Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP), explained the state statute requiring communities to develop asset management plans for water and wastewater systems and RCAP's role in assisting communities comply. Participants agreed few communities have funds to undertake planning and acknowledged it is an important tool to prepare for the future. Participants responded positively to OCD making Target of Opportunity funds available for planning.

H2Ohio and Lead Abatement: Support failing wastewater and water supply systems across Ohio, particularly in economically disadvantaged areas throughout the state and reduction of lead contamination.

Ms. Oakley informed participants that Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is drafting revisions to the federal lead and copper rule, which may require an inventory and replacement of lead pipes, and additional testing. EPA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) have partnered to provide guidance and have developed a resources website. Ms. Oakley reminded participants CDBG funds can be used to replace lead distribution lines and lead service laterals for LMI communities and households. Committee members stated that communities don't have the funds to inventory infrastructure for lead or copper, but most aging communities likely have contaminated lines. Funds for replacement will also be difficult to access as costs will outweigh resource availability. Participants suggested lead be considered a documented health hazard for Residential Public Infrastructure application rating.

OCD is also working with the Ohio Department of Health to identify properties with lead hazard control orders. OCD funds can be used to demolish these properties.

RecoveryOhio: CDBG funds can be used to support the mission of recovery from opioid addiction. Ms. Oakley reviewed eligible uses including emergency monthly housing payments, job training, education, drug abuse counseling and treatment, health care, childcare, and services for homeless

persons, and assistance for recovery treatment centers and health clinics. Ms. Oakley shared that HUD is encouraging communities to evaluate their current use of CDBG funding through stakeholder meetings to re-prioritize projects to meet the greatest need.

Ms. Oakley also shared information about The Support for Patients and Communities Act, which was signed into law October 24, 2018. The bill provides funding for temporary housing for individuals in recovery from a substance abuse order. Ohio expects to receive five percent of the \$25 million federal allocation. OCD will work with Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services to implement the funding when it is appropriated. Participants acknowledged the opioid crisis but stated they don't often work directly with effected populations.

### **Residential Public Infrastructure Program**

Wes Watkins shared historical data with the committee, including number and state-wide distribution of projects funded and the amount of funds awarded. The grant ceiling was increased to \$750,000 for PY 2018. As a result, all grant funds were awarded by the June 30, 2019 program year end. Participants stated the increased availability of grant funding per project is necessary due to the high costs of infrastructure, amount of pipe required to reach unserved areas, and the LMI areas the program serves. Committee members expressed a willingness to move projects to the following fiscal year if all current year funds are expended.

The committee discussed timing of grant funds. EPA awards principal forgiveness based on Median Household Income data, which is updated annually. Therefore, moving projects from one year to the next may impact the amount of grant funds available.

Mr. Watkins explained OCD will consider readiness to proceed, timing requirements of leveraged funds, and documented health hazards to prioritize projects if funds are low.

Meeting participants requested OCD consider engineering inspection reports, infiltration and inflow studies, and water line breaks as documented health hazards and add points to the rating system for functional obsolescence. Several committee members expressed that requiring a community be under findings and orders to receive funding was the equivalent of awarding bad behavior. Communities are using local resources to make temporary corrections to avoid EPA citation rather than saving resources to secure grant funding and implementing a permanent solution.

Mr. Watkins requested program practitioners submit revised scoring matrices for OCD consideration. OCD plans to revise the rating system for PY 2020 with regionalization, sustainability, affordability, lead abatement, and health hazards as priorities.

Mr. Watkins asked if \$100,000 was an appropriate amount of funding for household connections given requirements to connect households to sanitary sewer service and concerns about lead services laterals. Committee members stated that the amount of assistance required varied greatly for each project and asked that OCD allow flexibility to move funds between public facilities and household connections during the grant period.

### **Economic Development/Revolving Loan Fund**

Ben Kepple presented historical program performance data, including grants awarded, funds awarded, and low- and moderate-income (LMI) jobs created, for PY 2018 and PY 2019 to date. In response to a participant's inquiry, Mr. Kepple shared that the demand for infrastructure and loan projects remained almost a 50/50 split over the last few funding periods.

Mr. Kepple explained OCD is working on two documents to guide both local government and business applicants through job creation requirements. The first is a policy notice that includes methods for certifying job creation. The second is a one-pager for businesses to assist in determining whether the project is a good fit for the program. Committee members stated that additional guidance is appreciated. However, they acknowledged not every business expansion is appropriate for CDBG assistance and that it will always be difficult for businesses to understand, comply with, and document LMI job creation.

Jared Jodrey provided data from the past three years of the Revolving Loan Fund program; waivers, economic development loans, and jobs created. Mr. Jodrey explained OCD is still working to move RLF reporting to OCEAN/Salesforce.

### **Training**

There has been a lot of turnover in local government grant administrators. OCD scheduled implementation basics training sessions for November 18 and November 20, 2019. Ms. Oakley stated the training sessions are for administrators with less than two years of experience and encouraged participants to attend or send new staff from their communities.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.