Community Development Block Grants 201 Part 2: the What, the Why, and the How of Project Development

OCRA & GRANT SERVICES

Housekeeping

BEFORE WE GET STARTED, LET'S GO OVER SOME INFORMATION THAT WILL BE HELPFUL TO KNOW DURING THE COURSE.

TECH ASSISTANT

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Note: This training is being recorded for internal purposes only.

To minimize disruptions during this course, please use the hand sign reaction for questions.

Due to the size of this class, please hold all content related questions until the knowledge checks.

After this course, you will be able to do the following:

- List the CDBG Process and Identify the Role of Project Development within It.
- Define Citizen Participation and review the administrative procedures for community engagement and stakeholder management.
- Define and differentiate between the CDBG Project Development Phases.
- Write and Submit a CDBG Application.
- Determine common issues with the CDBG Applications.

Knowledge Check

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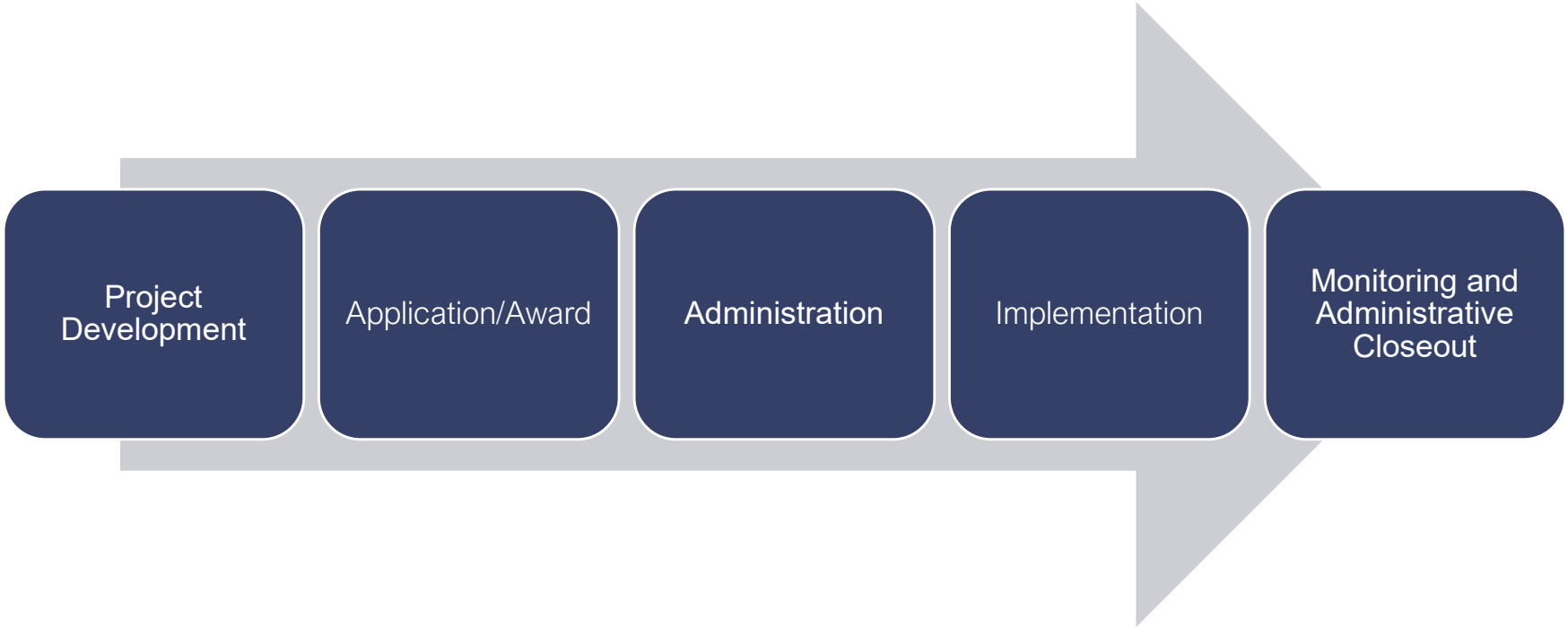
OCRA CDBG Phases



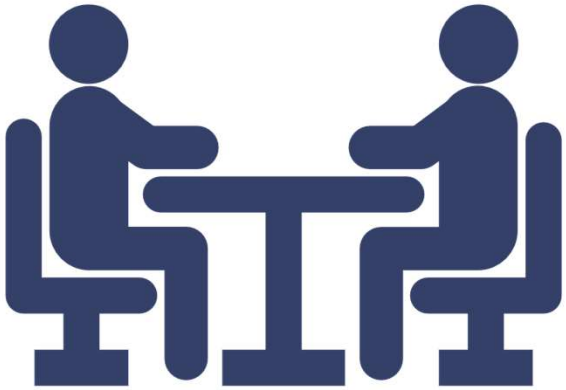
CDBG Knowledge Areas

Project Development	Application/Award	Administration	Implementation	Monitoring & Administrative Closeout
• Assess need for the project • Gather Community Input • Conduct Citizen Participation	• Submit App. • Threshold Review • App. Funded or Denied • Feedback Meeting (if not funded)	• FEPS • Grant Agreement • Consultant and Engineering Procurement • Release of Funds	• 1st Plan Draft Submitted • CL Review and Feedback • Corrections Made • Final Public Hearing and Adoption	• Closeout Request • Monitoring • Admin Closeout

Planning Grants

Project Development	Application/Award	Administration	Implementation	Monitoring & Administrative Closeout
• Submit Proposal • Threshold and Site Visit	• Submit Proposal • Threshold & Site Visit • Submit App. • Threshold & Scoring • Application Approved or Denied • Feedback Meeting (if not awarded)	• FEPS • ERR • Grant Agreement • PRE-ROF • ROF • Labor Release	• Construction • Claims Submission	• Closeout Request • Monitoring • Admin Closeout • 5-Year Follow-up Verification

Construction Grants



Project development is a dynamic interaction of community engagement, stakeholder management, project management, grant writing, and application management.

Citizen Participation

THE ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

The primary goal of citizen participation

Provide residents, especially Low- and Moderate-Income (LMI) citizens of the community where CDBG funded activities will take place, an opportunity to participate in an advisory role in the planning, implementation and assessment of the programs and projects.

Citizen participation also reduces the potential for complaints and legal challenges against the grantee.

Grantees are expected to take appropriate action to encourage the participation of all citizens, including minorities and non-English speaking residents, as well as persons with disabilities.

Prior to the submittal of the Planning Grant Application and Proposal for a Construction Grant, the grant applicant (community) must conduct a public hearing.

CDBG-funded projects are required to have a minimum of two public hearings, held at two different phases of the project.

Public hearing notices must be published at least 10 full days prior to the meeting date.

Check that the hearing occurs on the 11th day or after.

Check the Newspaper on the Day the Notice is To Be Published.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

On or about December 17, 2021, the Town of Brooklyn intends to apply to the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs for a grant from the State Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Wastewater/Drinking Water Program. This program is funded by Title I of the federal Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended. These funds are to be used for a community development project that will include the following activities: Wastewater System Improvements Project. The total amount of CDBG funds to be requested is $700,000.00. The amount of CDBG funds proposed to be used for activities that will benefit low- and moderate-income persons is $357,000.00. The Town proposes to expend an estimated $7,921.500.00 in non-CDBG funds on the project. These non-CDBG funds will be derived from a loan thru the State Revolving Loan Program.

The Town of Brooklyn will hold a public hearing on November 16, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., at the Brooklyn Kids Park Shelter House located at 3277 East Centenary Road, Brooklyn, In 46111. The public hearing is to provide interested parties an opportunity to express their views on the proposed federally funded CDBG project. Persons with disabilities or non-English speaking persons who wish to attend the public hearing and need assistance should contact Karen Howard, Clerk Treasurer at (317) 831-3343 no later than November 12, 2021, every effort will be made to make reasonable accommodations for these persons.

Information related to this project will be available for review prior to the public hearing as of November 16, 2021, at the Town Hall, in Brooklyn, Indiana 46111. Interested citizens are invited to provide comments regarding these issues either at the public hearing or by prior written statement. Written comments should be submitted to Karen Howard, Clerk Treasurer, no later than November 15, 2021, in order to ensure placement of such comments in the official record of the public hearing proceedings. A plan to minimize displacement and provide assistance to those displaced has been prepare by the Town of Brooklyn and is available to the public. This project will result in no displacement of any persons or businesses. For additional information concerning the proposed project, please contact Amy Miller, Cornerstone Grants Management, Inc. at 317-384-1748 or write to: Town of Brooklyn, 10 East Mill Street, Brooklyn Indiana 46111-0159.

To be published: October 27, 2021

Sample Public Hearing Notice

The notice must be posted in public facilities such as such as the Town Hall, Post Office, Grocery, etc.

Documentation

Original Affidavit of Publication for each legal advertisement.

Original sign in sheets.

Minutes signed by the community official presiding over the meeting, or their designee.

Copy of Physical Ad

A Third Party-Authorization Letter is required for GAs to take minutes.

The Grantee must also respond to any written comments that are received during the public hearing process.

Step 1: Conduct Analysis

CONDUCT THE FOUR-FACTOR ANALYSIS PRIOR TO ADVERTISING THE INITIAL PUBLIC HEARING.

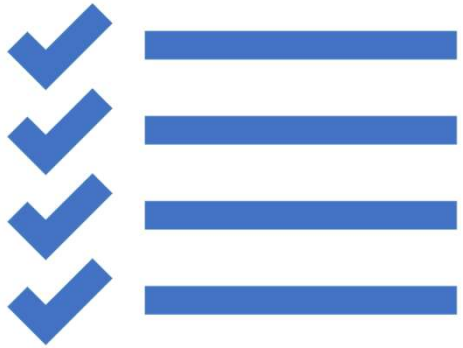
Step 2: Provide Language Assistance Plan (If Necessary)

1) Post notices of the CDBG application public hearings in areas frequented by Limited English Proficiency persons of the threshold population(s) in the language(s) spoken

2) Provide translation services at public hearings if requested to do so by Limited English Proficiency persons.

Step 3: Develop LAP

If a community meets the threshold, they are required to develop a LAP and provide a description of outreach efforts prior to Release of Funds.



Step 4: Documentation of LAP

OCRA will monitor for compliance with LAP throughout the project development and implementation process. Grantees are advised to consult the OCRA Section 3 Officer with questions regarding LAP compliance.

Break

CDBG Project Development Process

Research Ideas and Identify Issues and Solutions

Research and Discuss projects with local communities that have developed CDBG Projects. Communities that can provide OCRA evidence of regional collaboration receive 25 bonus points on the CDBG Application.

Check with local leaders, area government agencies and related public and private agencies, and financial institutions that may have existing grant awards and/or contracts to do similar work.

If a similar program is already in place, you may need to consider alternative sources of funding, to avoid any duplication of efforts.

Define the Project

A CDBG Project is a temporary effort with a finite end that creates a solution for a community's specific issues; it provides funding for a service or outcome that meets the National Objective.

Good projects solve an issue with a community and are sustainable for years after all grant funds are expended.

A well-defined project ensures the community has everything it needs to execute the project successfully.

Seek Professional Advice

After defining the project, seek professional advice from consultants, engineers, project managers, OCRA, and etc.

Note: This should be a high-level conversation as you should not give these individuals an unfair advantage.

When you officially begin the procurement process , you will present a well-defined project and its issues, and then, consultants and or engineers will bid based on your project needs.

More information on exact procurement requirements will be noted in CDBG 301.

Identify Funding Resources

Review the objectives, eligible uses, and restrictions of potential funding programs.

The most competitive applications will show alignment of interests, intentions, and needs.

Get to know some of the agency personnel.

CDBG highly encourages applicants to seek multiple funding sources as program availability and funding vary each round and quarter. CDBG funds are last resort funds.

Get Organized: eGMS and Other Considerations

eGMS is the online grants management system utilized by CDBG and other LG FOB agencies.

To ensure maximum organization consider doing the following:

- Provide naming conventions for electronic documents-Give examples/Keep it simple.
- Keep a notebook handy to write down ideas.
- Gather important documents and ensure that they are easily accessible.
- Maintain a file labeled "Ideas" or some other convenient title and review from time to time.
- Identify any documents that need to be signed by a Chief elected official
- For more information visit the GMS Resources page on the OCRA website.

Read the CDBG instructions and announcements.

Typically, for CDBG there are 2 rounds for Construction Grants and Planning Grants are opened quarterly depending on the availability of funds.

All CDBG Rounds will be announced via Gov Delivery. As a grant administrator, it your responsibility to sign up for the CDBG Updates. You will also need to periodically check the OCRA Calendar.

To Sign up for OCRA updates, click the link below:

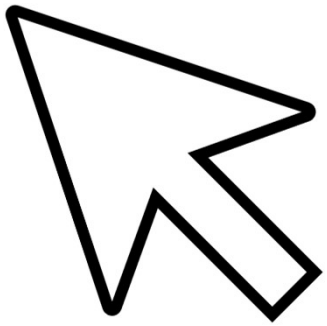
https://www.in.gov/ocra/

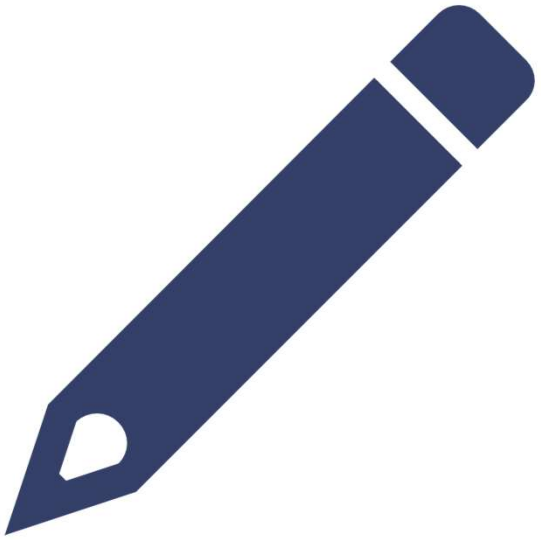
To view the OCRA calendar, click the link below:

https://www.in.gov/ocra/newsroom/calendar/

To view CDBG Resources, click the link below:

https://www.in.gov/ocra/cdbg/cdbg-resources/





Write

HELPFUL INSIGHTS ON HOW TO WRITE FOR A CDBG APPLICATION

Consider writing outside of eGMS.

Applications should be typed, collated, copied, and packaged correctly (according to agency instructions, if any).

Each packet should be inspected to ensure uniformity from cover to cover.

Neat and well-organized submissions can leave a positive impression with the reader about the application contents.

Remember character limitations. Check the application in eGMS and note and make adjustments as needed.

Basic Components of a CDBG Application

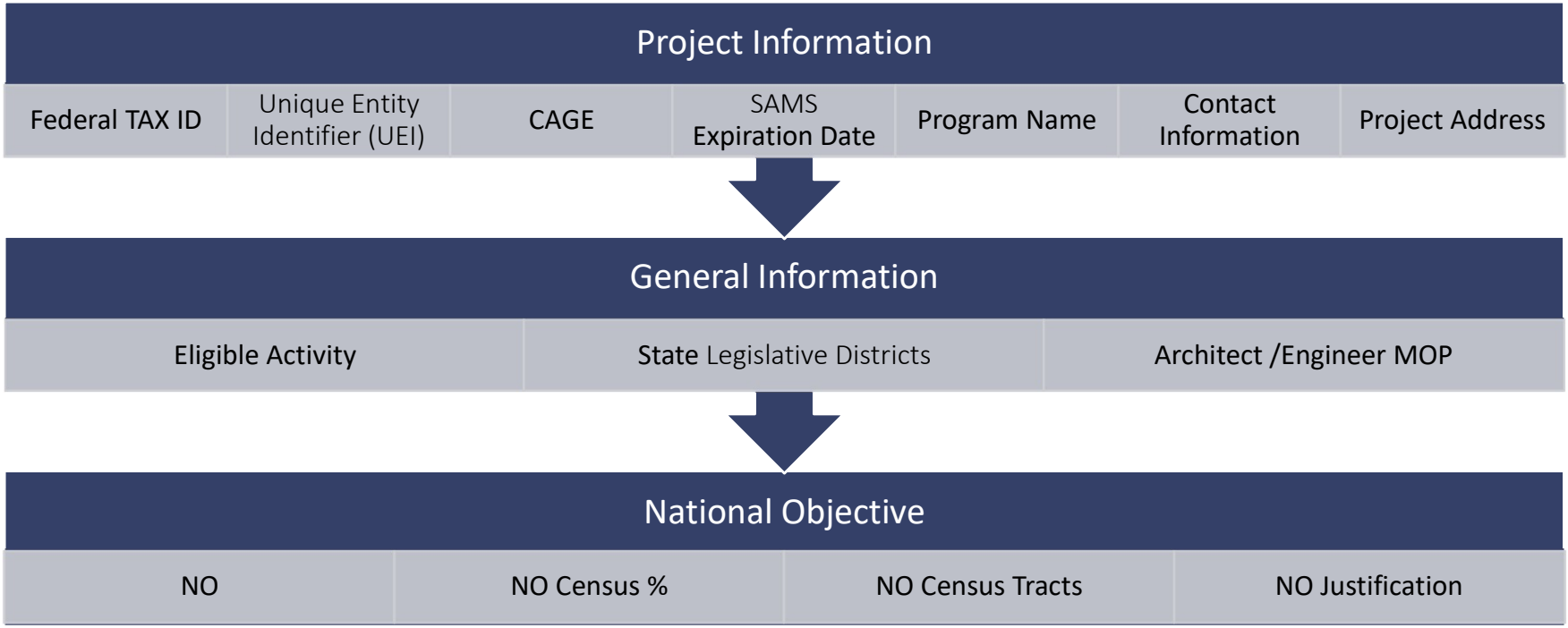
- Project Information
- General Information
- National Objective

- Measurable Outcomes
- Scope of Work
- Project Development and Support
- Summary of Work

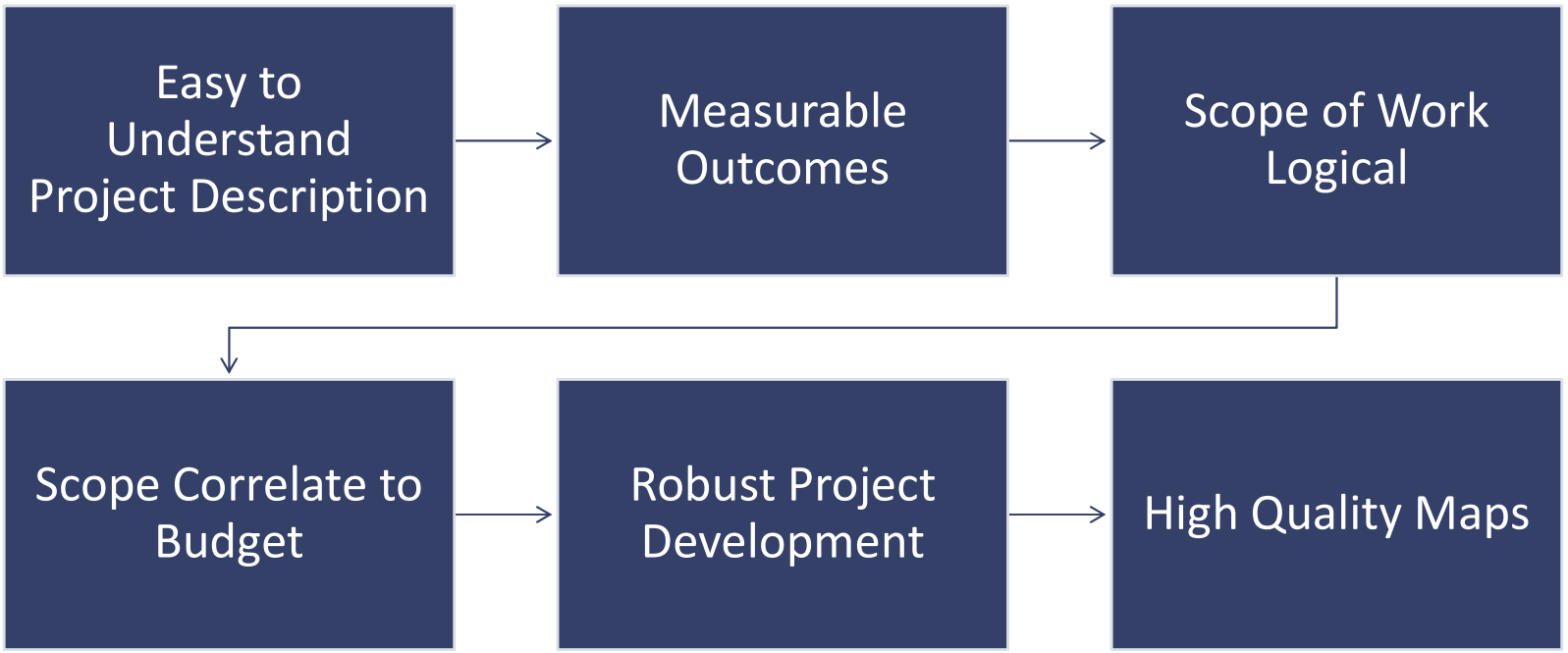
- Priority
- Current Conditions
- Residential Impact
- Health and Safety

- Previous Efforts
- Sustainability
- Financial Options
- Local Match
- Fund Balances

Introduction: Who are you?



Project Description: What is Being Funded?



Project Description

Appears at the beginning of the application = The initial impression

The first part of the application package seen by OCRA's agency reviewers.

Encompasses the main elements necessary to communicate the primary objectives of the project.

Summary should describe:

- A fundable project which can be supported by local need
- Alternatives considered in lieu of financial support
- Anticipated impact(s) of the project during and after the award period
- Desired outcomes and deliverables for the project

Program Description (Cont'd)

Provide innovative features of the project which could be considered distinct from others under consideration should be highlighted.

Well-written applications will justify any proposed course of action that will be taken and will explain why it is the best course to ensure effective performance of the program.

Provides clear guideposts to attachments that complement the narrative and provide supportive data/documentation, references, and any other information requiring any more in-depth analysis.

- Gives the reader and scoring committee with immediate access to details if and when clarification of an idea, sequence or conclusion is required – For example, timetable and schedule, work plan, legal papers, letters of support, etc. Wherever possible, USE clear guideposts. It is critically important to reference within the narrative where in the appendices these documents can be found.

Measurable Outcomes

Identify all of your objectives.

Well stated objectives should be SMART and clearly relate to any goals identified- Be sure to consider quantities or measurables.

The application should describe the methods you will use to achieve the stated objectives.

Figures or benchmarks used should be verifiable - IF the application is funded, the stated objectives could be used to evaluate program's progress, so be realistic.

Be sure to include clear baselines in each outcome.

Scope of Work

The scope of work should list and (briefly) describe any specific projects features for implementation.

Scope of work is explained and is clear and logical for the type of project.

Ineligible items are clearly noted.

Scope of work and detailed budget correlate completely.

The Budget

A strong budget justifies and accounts for all program-related costs and is consistent with the Scope of Work (SOW) in the application narrative and in the uploads.

Any matching funds or ineligible costs should be distinguished from any grant-funded activities in the budget.

Per item costs are included.

All budgeted amounts add up correctly and reflect allowable percentages.

CDBG Detailed Budget - Milton Three Utilities Study

Date		November 1, 2021

Item	Project Manager	Senior Engineer	Project Engineer	Total Cost	CDBG Amount	Local Amount	Ineligible Amount	Total Amount
Project Kickoff	8	8		$2,800	$2,800		$0	**$2,800**
Preliminary Data Collection	12	12	12	$5,400	$5,400		$0	**$5,400**
Preliminary Calculations/Analysis Drinking Water	4	8	4	$2,500	$2,500		$0	**$2,500**
Preliminary Calculations/Analysis Wastewater	4	8	4	$2,500	$2,500		$0	**$2,500**
Preliminary Calculations/Anaylsis Stormwater Drainag	4	8	4	$2,500	$2,500		$0	**$2,500**
Site Visits, Field Inspections, and Condition Assessmer	20	20		$7,000	$7,000		$0	**$7,000**
Field/Flow Testing - Drinking Water	8		8	$2,200	$2,200		$0	**$2,200**
Performance Evaluation/Testing Wastewater, by Engineer	8		8	$2,200	$2,200		$0	**$2,200**
Drainage Observations by Engineer during rain/snow events		16		$2,800	$2,800		$0	**$2,800**
Mapping	8		8	$2,200	$2,200		$0	**$2,200**
Final Calculations for Drinking Water	4	4	8	$2,200	$2,200		$0	**$2,200**
Final Calculations for Wastewater	4	4	8	$2,200	$2,200		$0	**$2,200**
Final Calculations for Storm Water	4	4	8	$2,200	$2,200		$0	**$2,200**
Stakeholder Engagement	16	8	8	$5,000	$5,000		$0	**$5,000**
Alternative Development and Cost Estimates	16	24	24	$9,400	$9,400		$0	**$9,400**
Site Visits to evaluate proposed equipment at other installations	24	24		$8,400	$8,400		$0	**$8,400**
Planning/Report Development & Mapping	24	60	80	$22,700	$22,700		$0	**$22,700**
Presentations/Public Hearings	8	8	8	$3,600	$3,600		$0	**$3,600**
Adoption/Final Deliverables Preparation	8	4	1	$2,200	$2,200		$0	**$2,200**
Grant Administration				$0		$10,000	$0	**$10,000**
TOTALS	**184**	**220**	**193**	**$90,000**	**$90,000**	**$10,000**	**$0**	**$100,000**

Project Development and Support

Document robust project development.

Evaluate alternative solutions.

Use multiple methods of public input.

Provide high-quality, clearly labeled maps that identify the project area.

What's a Summary of Work and What are we looking for?

A summary of work is a brief description or media summary of a project to inform the media, citizens, and other important stakeholders.

OCRA uses these statements when you are awarded for the project for announcements. When you use this section in the application to further expound on your project description, it can delay the process of generating an announcement!

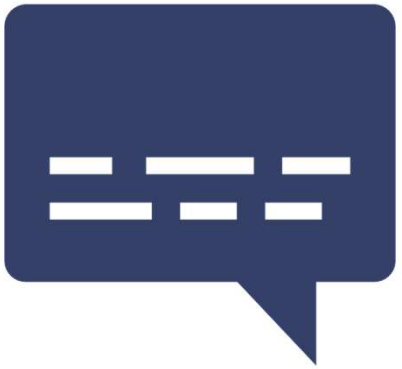
Summary of Work: Best Practices

Project summaries should be written in a simple, accessible, and non-technical way.

Think carefully about the main message that you wish to convey. Focus on the 2-3 main elements of the project scope that you want to highlight.

Start by identifying the program and the award amount, including any local match and match sources for the project. …

Describe the problem or need the project is solving. …



Summary of Work: Best Practices Cont’d

Outline the recommended solution, or the project's objectives.

Explain the solution's value.

Wrap up with a conclusion about the importance of the work.

Stay on the subject, within the word limit. For this type of media summary, you should try to restrict yourself to 500-600 characters.

Once you are done writing your media summary, think of whether this represents the project and the community well, while meeting your professional objectives.

Examples of Strong Summaries

- The **City of Cannelton** is awarded $500,000 to eliminate hazardous environmental conditions at the former Can-Clay Corporation property. This environmental remediation project includes the removal of hazardous materials including asbestos, drums and containers, brick debris, clay pipe debris, PVC pipe, scrap tires and sawdust to significantly improve a blighted area that is approximately 26 acres in the heart of the city.
- The **Town of Francisco** is awarded $75,000 for the demolition and clearance of the abandoned, deteriorated building known as the old “IOOF” building located at 84 S.R. 64 in Francisco. Removal of the building will protect the health and safety of residents and will be a key component to making the downtown area more marketable for future growth and development.
- The **City of Knox** is awarded $137,674 to demolish the former Moose Lodge building located in the downtown district of Knox. The proposed project will demolish the structure and includes the removal of approximately 6,900 square feet of asbestos-containing floor tile and approximately 5,100 square feet of asbestos-containing mastic, which was used as tile adhesive. The completion of the project will improve the downtown’s appearance and make it more attractive to visitors, residents and future developers.

Examples Cont'd

- The **City of Linton** is awarded $324,450 to clear the old, abandoned Eagles Building located at 60 E. Vincennes St. in Linton. Once the asbestos is abated and the demolition is complete, the lot will be leveled and stabilized with stone and covered with a 6-inch layer of clean topsoil, graded and seeded. A small concrete pad will be located on the site and the historic carved limestone "Eagles" logo will be permanently placed.
- **Miami County** is awarded $333,070 to eliminate a blighted, unsafe structure that is known to have environmental issues with asbestos, a history of vandalism and a loss of structural integrity. Activities include demolition of the building, removal and proper disposal of materials, and remediation of any hazardous materials, which includes most notably asbestos and possibly lead base paint. Upon completion, the site will become local public greenspace.

Break

Project Need:
Why do you need funding for the project?

3-5 Year History of Issues	Frequency/Prevalence of Issues	Risk of the Issues	Project a Community Priority
Survey Results and Other Data Included	Current Conditions Well Explained	Current Uses/Services Explained	High Quality Pictures
Residential Impact of Issues Addressed	Residential Support/Need Outlined	Health and Safety Explained	Health and Safety Documented

Project Need

Clearly state the problem to be addressed with the grant funding - Be clear and concise.

Describe the primary beneficiaries -- who are they and how will they benefit from this project.

Discuss the nature of the problem - with documentation - what are the issue(s) and what previous efforts have been taken to resolve it. Why haven't they been successful?

Explain what will happen if the project is not funded?

Review the requested resources needed - how they will be used to solve the problem/to meet the needs outlined.

Diverse types of data should be collected to support needs and included as appendices.

Diverse data types include historical, geographic, quantitative, factual, statistical, and anecdotal information. *This includes citizen or public input and any studies or planning documents completed by local, state, university partners or paid consultants.

Priority

Describe and provide documentation that shows a 3–5-year history of the issues.

Describe and provide clear and detailed documentation that shows frequency/prevalence of issues

Describe how the issues have a substantial impact/ risk on the health and safety of the residents of the community and/or had a major impact on their daily lives.

Explain and provide evidence that the project is a priority to both the local unit of government and residents.

Provide and show a need for the project with survey results and other data.

Current Conditions

Clearly and fully explain the current conditions.

Clearly explain in full detail the current and proposed uses, program, or services clearly explained in detail. If an expansion,

Directly show conditions through high-resolution color photos with captions and date stamps.

Residential Impact

Clearly explain with details and documentation the impact to residents.

Outline substantial residential support/need and provide documentation that is clear and complete.

Tell the Community's Story with Data

Primary > Secondary

- Direct from residents
- Historic

Types of Data

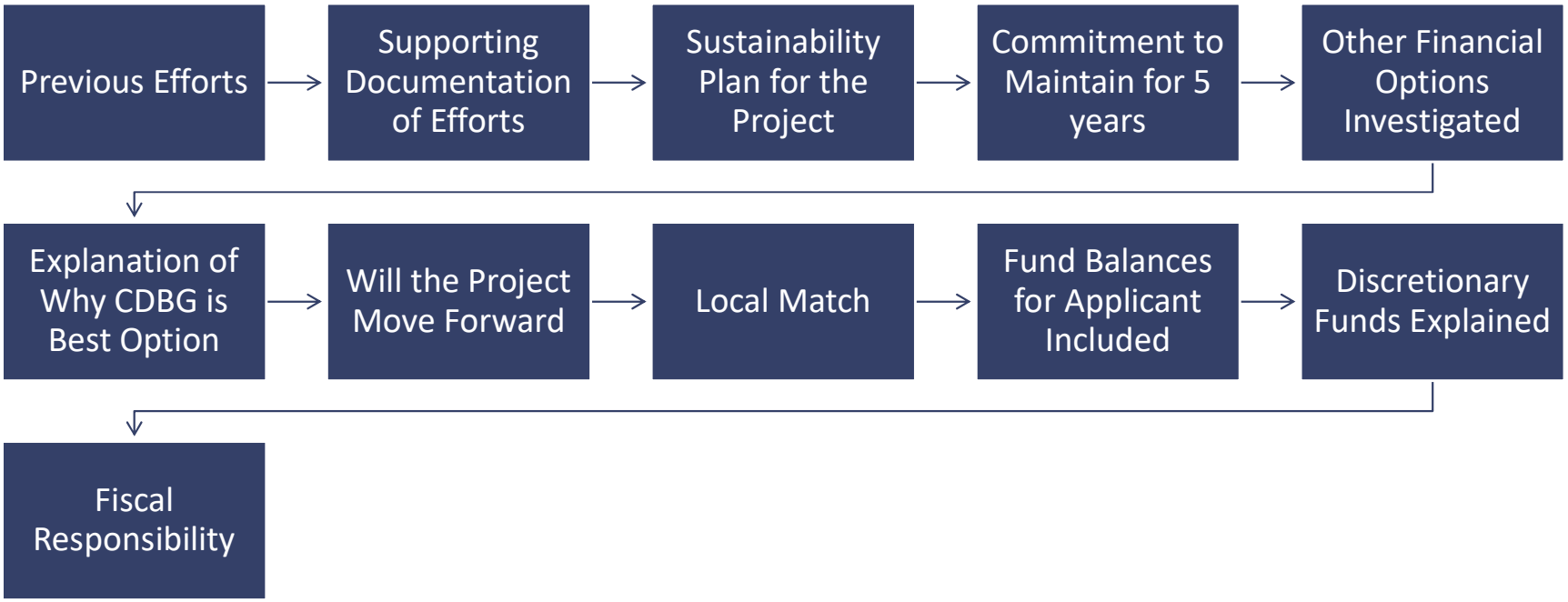
- Surveys
- Publicly Available Data
- Direct from the Utility or facility
- Photos
- Social media posts
- Meeting Minutes

Health and Safety

Provide evidence of the presence of health and safety issues that are substantial in nature and are explained in detail.

Document health and safety issues and include data and photos showing the impact on residents.

Financial Impact: How ready are you to take on this fiscal responsibility?



Previous Efforts

Provide evidence that the community has made an effort by devoting as many resources as possible, but still has not been able to address the problem.

Provide detailed documentation that outlines past efforts including partnerships, expenditures, or labor hours.

Sustainability

Provide a plan is included that details how the community will sustain the project. Has all three Who, What, and How elements of the plan.

Provide an explicit statement that the community will maintain the project/plan for 5 years after closeout.

It is a good idea to build some sort of sustainability plan at the start of a project -Even if the sustainability plan has to be revised as the project moves forward, it is easier and more cost effective to modify a good design than to try and craft a new one.

Financial Options

Provide evidence that three or more other financial options were investigated.

Explain clearly why CDBG grant is the best option for the project.

State and explain clearly why the project would not move forward without CDBG funding.

Local Match & Fund Balances

Explain fund balances in detail and include uses, allocations, etc. Provide complete documentation.

Ensure that all the discretionary fund balances are accounted for and provide complete documentation.

Provide evidence and documentation that supports fiscal responsibility and clearly delineates roles and other governance information.

Explain local matches in detail and includes all sources and amounts

Seek Feedback

Ask for constructive criticism

Seek out a neutral third party to review the proposal draft for continuity, clarity and reasoning.

For example, has the writer made any unsupported assumptions? Used technical jargon/ excessive language in the proposal?

Pay special attention to the instructions and communicate with the Community Liaisons throughout the process.

Plan around the established deadlines. For EX: If seeking feedback on application, do not wait until a week before the application is due to ask for assistance.

Common Issues with Applications

Technical Language “If you don’t understand it, neither does the average citizen.”

Missing clear timelines of events in the Project Need section.

Not including resident input/impacts in the Project Need Section.

Poor Quality Maps

Not referencing attachments in the narrative.

Types of Documentation (Note this varies on the program!)

- Rate Study
- IDEM Violations
- Research Articles
- Letters from Resident/ Business Owners
- Surveys
- Facebook Posts
- Minutes from Public Hearings
- Photos

Discussion: Project Development

https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/03aa9e5f-7f80-457c-bf4c-097bed13caeb

What are some ways that a grant administrator can engage with their community and OCRA?

Why is the project development process important?

Take a few minutes and raise your hand or answer in the chat.

After this course, you have learned how to do the following:

- List the CDBG Process and Identify the Role of Project Development within It.
- Define Citizen Participation and review the administrative procedures for community engagement and stakeholder management.
- Define and differentiate between the CDBG Project Development Phases.
- Write and Submit a CDBG Application.
- Determine common issues with the CDBG Applications.

Other resources for information on project development. Note: This list is not comprehensive.

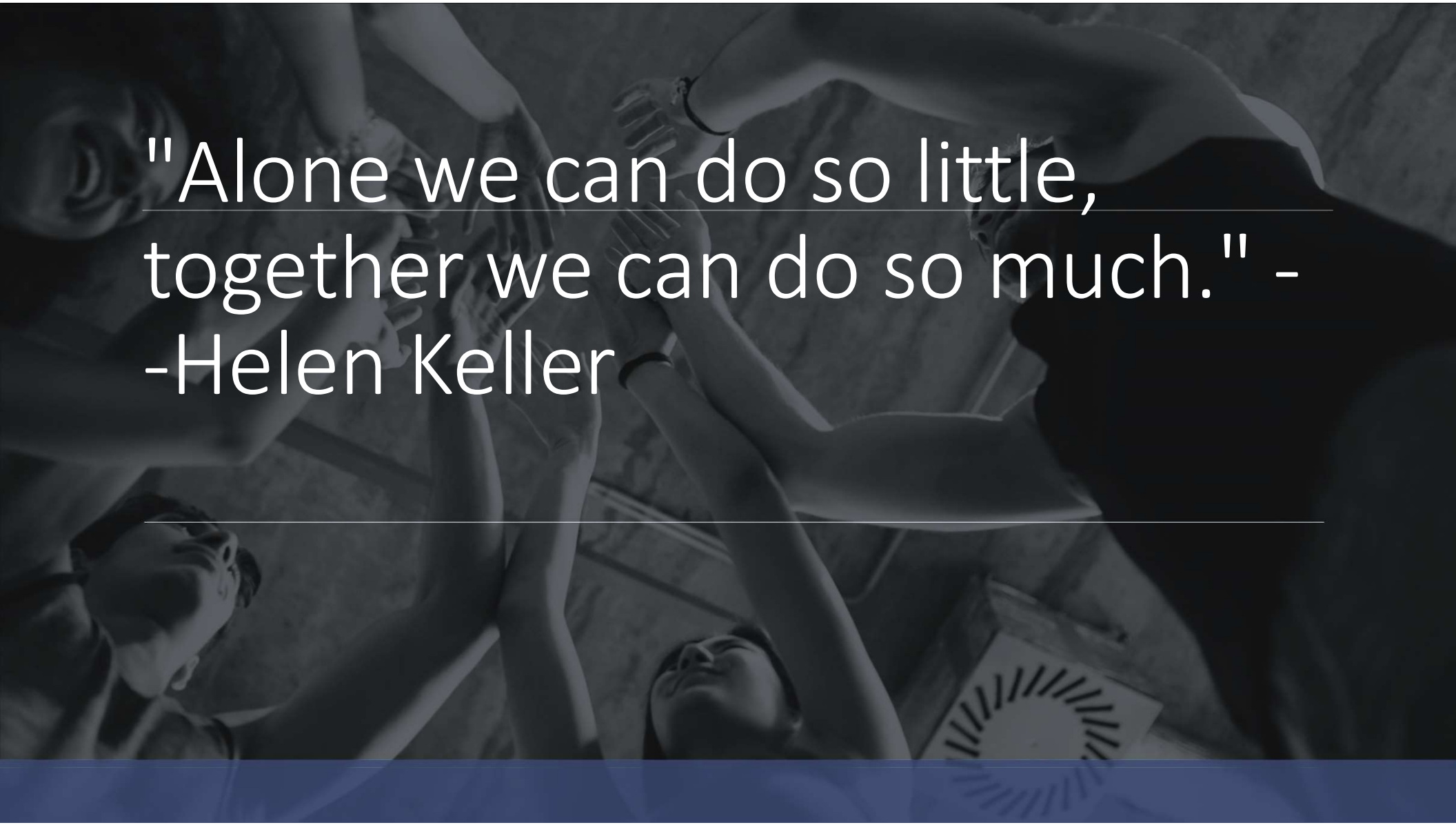
http://Grants.gov

http://indianaplanning.org/professional-development/citizen-planner-manual/

https://www.bsu.edu/academics/centersandinstitutes/indiana-communities-institute/events#accordion_prodevttools

https://www.in.gov/ihcda/

For questions related to eGMS Application, reach out to Matt Wakefield.


"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much." --Helen Keller