

Take it for Granted

A quarterly newsletter released by Office of Community & Rural Affairs

Updates from the CDBG Program Director

By Eric Ogle



As the year comes to a close, it's a good time to reflect. This past year has been busy with numerous announcements, new programs, policy adjustments and accomplishments. One could compare it to an airplane that has to make a quick turn. Some enjoy the rush, others just want to land. We understand and appreciate everyone's input and patience. As we look to 2019, we are excited for future announcements, new programs and policies and many more accomplishments. One thing is for sure, it's a journey we all share together. Have a great holiday season and New Year!

Pause in Changes

The CDBG program has undergone a lot of policy changes this year but we are currently taking a break with any new changes for the time being. This gives us time to ensure the changes are accomplishing their respective objectives and should last through Round 1 of 2019, unless a need arises.

A new Grant Management System

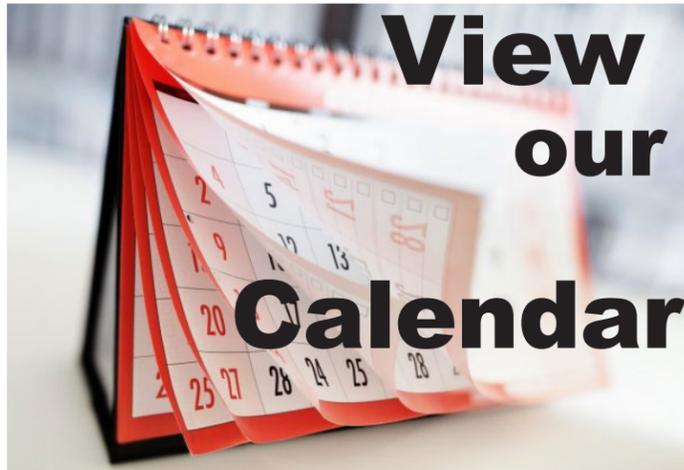
OCRA and the LG's Family of Business has selected

a new Grants Management System and have begun the development process. This new system allows us to fully digitize grant administration and automate a significant portion of the grant process. The system is user-friendly but to ensure this we may need a few beta testers. At this time, it is projected to be in use for Round 1 of 2019. OCRA is planning to provide multiple regional trainings and other support once the system is live. We will provide additional updates as the development and implementation moves forward.



Planning Grants

As the new Planning Grant process has been implemented, we have received various questions. To provide clarification, we will be hosting a webinar on Friday, **Jan. 11, 2019 at 11 a.m. that is accessible [here](#)**. This will be recorded and available for those who can't attend. We will review the process, provide clarifications and address common questions. If you have any specific questions, contact [Matt Wakefield](#).



The complete **2019 calendar** is available on our website. [View it now!](#)

Calendar reminders

Please ensure you are aware of the following upcoming deadlines for 2018

December

- National Main Street Transformational Strategy Workshop - December 6 & 7, in Winamac (Pulaski)
- Stellar Communities Designees Announced – Tuesday, December 11
- Stellar Communities Stellarbration 1 – December 19
- Stellar Communities Stellarbration 2 – December 20

Our 2019 calendar is now available

The Office of Community and Rural Affairs is excited to release the competitive grant and state program calendar for 2019. Please note: additions will be made to the calendar as new programs are released. [Click here](#) to view the calendar.

Maximum grant amount with the Wastewater/Drinking Water grant

We have become aware of some confusion regarding the maximum grant amount a community may apply for under the Wastewater/Drinking Water program. The maximum amount is based on a matrix of the community's current user rate and the total project cost. The confusion stems from the current user rate language. In the past, the user rate was the single utility rate. For example, if you were applying for a sewer project, the current sewer rate would be what is needed to determine the maximum grant amount. Going forward, OCRA will use the combined water and sewer rate on your application to determine the maximum grant amount. This change allows a community to be eligible for a greater maximum grant amount.

If a single user rate is used to determine the maximum grant amount requested at the proposal, you are able to increase the grant request prior to submitting the application. All that is required is to hold a public hearing after the proposal, and state that the grant amount requested was increased and include the new amount. If you have already advertised the public hearing with the previous grant amount but have not hosted your public hearing, you don't need to re-advertise. Please simply acknowledge there was a change in the grant amount request during the hearing, and note it in the minutes. Finally, update your application and CDBG budget to reflect the increase.

If you have any questions, please contact [Eric Ogle](#) or [Matt Wakefield](#).

Indiana Bond Bank to provide financing options to Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs grant recipients

The Indiana Bond Bank announced the launch of The Gap Avoidance Program (G.A.P), which is designed to bridge funding shortfalls faced by recipients of Community Development Block Grants, that is administered by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs.

"The Indiana Bond Bank created G.A.P. in response to financing shortfalls threatening to stall critical community development projects across Indiana," said Mark Wuellner, Indiana Bond Bank's Executive Director.



The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs identified cities and towns who are facing financing gaps after being awarded funds as a part of their Community Development Block Grant projects. These funding gaps can cause project delays and force communities to find new funding sources in a short period of time.

"As this trend began to emerge, we found a great partner in the Indiana Bond Bank to help us provide an option for cities and towns who need additional funding," said Jodi Golden, OCRA Executive Director. The Indiana Bond Bank built G.A.P. off its years of experience structuring statewide pooled financings. In a pooled financing transaction, multiple entities with similar financing needs come together in one transaction to achieve economies of scale.

"Without G.A.P., each community would be on its own to cover funding shortfalls," Wuellner said. "That's burdensome and inefficient. We designed G.A.P. so that communities will be able to tailor loan terms and repayment structures to their individual needs, while enjoying the collective benefits of a single process and shared costs."

Golden said that by allowing communities from across the state to come together to achieve better results, G.A.P. feels like a natural extension of the ongoing conversation on the power of regional solutions.

The Gap Avoidance Program will be operated as a pooled loan program, with notes repayable on terms of up to ten years. Notice of intent to participate in G.A.P. is [now available online](#). Applications for the first round are due January 15, 2019.

If you have questions, please contact [Brian Carman](#), Program Development Director at the Indiana Bond Bank.

Continuing Education: Last chance to take the OCRA GA Update training

Under the new Grant Administrator Certification and Continuing Education policy that was effective as of March 15, a certified Grant Administrator must complete six (6) CE credits each year to be able to renew their certification. Two (2) of the six (6) credits **must be** an OCRA GA Update. Below is the last chance to take the OCRA update training:

December 10, 1 – 4 PM
Ft. Harrison State Park Inn
5830 N. Post Road, Indianapolis, IN 46216

Register for these events by [clicking here](#). [Visit our website](#) for information about continuing education.



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