



RICHLAND COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

GUIDELINES FOR CDBG APPLICATION REQUEST PROPOSALS | PY 2023-2024

The Richland County Community Development Office is accepting proposals for PY 2023-2024 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Local nonprofits, Faith-Based Organizations, and County Departments are invited to submit Public Service, Public Facility, and Infrastructure project proposals for consideration.

This is a competitive grant program seeking Application Request Proposals for projects principally serving U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) designated low-and moderate-income (LMI) residents and areas of *unincorporated* Richland County. Projects must meet HUD eligibility requirements and align with the Richland County Annual Action Plan and Five Year Consolidated Plan. Applicants must attend one of the CDBG Informational Workshops and are strongly encouraged to review all materials available at <http://richlandcountysc.gov/CDBG-NOFA> prior to the submission **deadline of 11:59 PM on Monday, September 4, 2023.**

To ensure an eligible and competitive proposal, please review the following **Guidelines for Application Request Proposals** along with these resources linked on the NOFA webpage: *2023 Annual Action Plan, 2022-2026 Five Year Consolidated Plan, Richland County CDBG Policies & Procedures, and the HUD Playing By the Rules Handbook* for CDBG Subrecipients.

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GUIDELINES FOR PY 2023-2024 CDBG APPLICATION REQUEST PROPOSALS

I) BACKGROUND

Richland County released a **Notice of Funding Available (NOFA)** to announce the availability of funding for the Program Year (PY) October 1, 2023 - September 30, 2024 for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. The CDBG Program is funded and regulated at the federal level by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and administered locally by the Richland County under the auspices of the Community Development Division of the Grants Department. The CDBG Program is authorized under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. The regulations implementing the CDBG Program are located in the 24 CFR, Part 570.

The County's objectives for this program are in accordance with HUD's National Objectives, which seeks the development of a viable community through the implementation of the following Objectives, principally for the benefit of low-and moderate-income (LMI) persons:

- **Benefiting Low and Moderate Income (LMI) Persons**
 - o LMI – Individual Benefit
 - o LMA – Area Benefit
 - o LMC – Limited Clientele Benefit
 - o LMH – Housing Benefit
 - o LMJ – Creates or Retains Job Benefit
- **Addressing Slum or Blight; or**
- **Meeting a Particular Urgent Community Need**

In addition, the Richland County identified Priority Needs are as follow:

- Priority Need 1: Improving and enhancing public facilities such as parks, trails, libraries, and recreational spaces. This includes accessibility upgrades.
- Priority Need 2: Rehabilitating and improving infrastructure like streets, sidewalks, bridges, storm water systems, and utilities (Broadband/internet access improvements)
- Priority Need 3: Accessibility Improvements: Enhancing accessibility and removing barriers for disabled persons in public spaces and buildings.
- Priority Need 4: Funding food and nutritional services for low-income, unemployed, and homeless populations
- Priority Need 5: Supporting programs and services for youth, elderly, disabled, and general LMI households.
- Priority Need 6: Removing dilapidated and unsafe structures through demolition and code enforcement.

Richland County invites applications from qualified entities to apply for funding for projects and activities that are consistent with locally developed CDBG Program Priorities and to address the federal/local Consolidated Plan objectives.

II) FUNDING AVAILABLE

As a CDBG Entitlement Community, Richland County receives an annual allocation of CDBG funds. For program year (PY) 2023-2024, the County will receive **\$1,723,394**. During the 2023-2024 funding cycle, competitive applications are limited to CDBG Public Service, Public Facilities, and Infrastructure Improvement Activities.

Available funding is as follows:

- **Public Services | \$258,509** -- Funding for youth programs, services for persons with disabilities, senior services, job training, housing counseling, homeless prevention programs, along with general social/welfare programs for LMI persons and households.
- **Public Facilities and Infrastructure | \$801,079** – Funding for improvements to neighborhood and recreation facilities; street and sidewalk improvements in CDBG target areas; sewer, wastewater, and infrastructure (including broadband) improvements in CDBG target areas; handicap accessibility improvements and removal of architectural barriers; slum and blight removal.

The County has designated **\$663,806** to Community Development Planning and Administration, Housing Revitalization, Special Economic Development Activities, and Non-Public Service Activities for County-run projects identified in the 2022-2026 Consolidated Plan.

This NOFA and Application Request Proposal is a one (1) year funding request.

III) SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS: Please follow these Instructions for the submission of your Application Request Proposal:

- Please review the complete “Guidelines for CDBG Applications” before completing the Application Request Proposal.
- Mandatory Workshop: Community Development staff will lead two CDBG Information Workshops during the month of August 2023 to help to help applicants develop project proposals for CDBG funding. *Pre-registration and attendance are required for any organization not currently receiving CDBG funds.* **Register for one of the CDBG application training workshops using links provided at <http://richlandcountysc.gov/CDBG-NOFA>.**
- A Pre-Application Form called an “Application Request Proposal” is available on the County’s CDBG NOFA webpage. Completeness of pre-application will be part of evaluation.
- The Application Request Proposal document should be used for all Public Service, Public Facilities, and Infrastructure project proposals.
- County Departments with multiple eligible projects may submit more than one proposal summary for consideration.
- Please type all information. A digital copy is available to complete electronically and should be emailed to communitydevelopmentinfo@richlandcounty.gov by 11:59 PM on Monday, September 4, 2023 for consideration.
- Please submit all responses on the form unless an attachment is specifically requested.

- Please do not revise/delete application format if preparing application from electronic version; your application will be returned to you if altered.
- Visit the County’s website for CDBG regulations and guidance on eligibility at <http://richlandcountysc.gov/CDBG-NOFA>.
- All proposals are required to be consistent with federal and local plans for spending. Therefore, it is required that each applicant is familiar with the County’s current Annual Action Plan and Consolidated Plan, available for reference on the County’s NOFA page.
- CDBG funding period covers agency programs conducted between October 1, 2023 and September 30, 2024. Subrecipient funding is dependent on HUD’s issuance of the County’s annual CDBG agreement which usually occurs in August.
- DEADLINE: All proposals must be submitted by 11:59 PM on Monday, September 4, 2023 for consideration for funding. Late proposals will not be accepted.
- Community Development staff will review all proposals to identify those that best address the priorities designated in the 2023 Annual Action Plan.
- Applicants selected to submit a full application for funding will be notified by September 15, 2023 of next steps.
- Questions regarding the preparation of the Application Proposal Summary should be directed in writing to Sean Taylor, Community Development Coordinator for Richland County at taylor.sean@richlandcountysc.gov.

IV) **ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES:** Each applicant should carefully review and follow these guidelines; the County has the right to reject any application proposal that does not adhere to them.

- **Eligible Applicants:**
 - i. Richland County Departments
 - ii. Private and Public 501 (c)(3) Non-Profit Organizations
 - iii. A member of the Richland County Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP)
 - iv. Faith-Based Organizations - In accordance with the U. S. Department of HUD Rule on Faith-Based Organizations (Faith-Based Initiative), September 30, 2003 (24 CFR Part 92 et al):
 - Faith-Based organizations are able to compete for federal grants for social service programs without having to completely separate their religious tone and mission from the services that:
 - a. Reduce poverty
 - b. Improve opportunities for low-income children/youth/families.
 - c. Revitalize low-income communities
 - d. Empower low-income families and individuals to become self-sufficient
 - e. Help people who are in need.
 - Faith-based organizations are eligible to receive HUD funding on an equal footing with any other organization. Federal funds are not used to support inherently religious activities such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization. Faith-based organizations are no longer

required to form a separate, secular organization 501 (c) (3) to receive funds as was previously required.

- Faith-based organizations may receive HUD funds to acquire, rehabilitate, or repair buildings and other real property, as long as the funds only pay the percentage of the total cost attributable to the HUD activities. However, HUD funds may not be used to acquire or improve sanctuaries, chapels, and other rooms that a congregation uses as its principal place of worship.
- **Public Service Priorities:** youth programs, services for persons with disabilities, senior services, job training, housing counseling, homeless prevention programs meeting the following criteria:
 - i. A minimum request of \$50,000 is required for Public Service proposals.
 - ii. CDBG funds will only be used to support new or expanded public services to residents of unincorporated Richland County. For existing services, applicants must demonstrate a quantifiable increase in the level of service provided.
 - iii. The Community Development team will prioritize organizations and projects with the capacity and structure to easily expend funds by September 15, 2024.
 - iv. Allowable Costs: CDBG funds are restricted to funding direct program implementation costs that are necessary, reasonable and related to the grant.
- **Public Facility and Infrastructure Priorities:** Improvements to Neighborhood and Recreation Facilities, Street and Sidewalk Improvements in CDBG Target areas, Sewer and Infrastructure Improvements in CDBG Target Areas, Removal of Architectural Barriers, Slum and Blight Removal.
- **Location:** Only proposals for projects benefiting *unincorporated* Richland County are eligible.
 - i. All beneficiaries/participants of proposed public service programs must be residents of unincorporated Richland County and verification records must be available for annual on-site monitoring visit.
 - ii. Proposals for Public Facilities or Infrastructure improvements must be located in and primarily serving LMI residents of the unincorporated County.
- **LMI:** At least 51% of beneficiaries/participants of public services, public facility improvements, or infrastructure investments must be low or moderate-income persons and documentation will be required for the annual on-site monitoring visit.
- **HUD Income Limits** –U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determines income eligibility for activities funded by the CDBG Program (*See table on Page 6*). It is imperative that applicants anticipate and plan for the methods they will use to determine and document either the incomes of the persons that they serve or that the area being improved is located in a HUD-designated Low-Moderate Area (LMA).
- *Questions on verifying income eligibility of a project should be the directed to Sean Taylor, Community Development Coordinator at taylor.sean@richlandcountysc.gov.*

FEDERAL INCOME GUIDELINES RICHLAND COUNTY FY23

# of persons in household	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
30% LIMITS	\$17,650	\$20,150	\$22,650	\$25,150	\$27,200	\$29,200	\$31,200	\$33,200
VERY LOW	\$29,400	\$33,600	\$37,800	\$41,950	\$45,350	\$48,700	\$52,050	\$55,400
60% LIMITS	\$35,280	\$40,320	\$45,360	\$50,340	\$54,420	\$58,440	\$62,460	\$66,480
LOW INCOME	\$47,000	\$53,700	\$60,400	\$67,100	\$72,500	\$77,850	\$83,250	\$88,600

- **Match Requirements:** A 25% match is required for all CDBG funded projects. In-kind services are not considered as matching funds.
- **Expending Funds:** CDBG Awards are disbursed as reimbursements. Community Development is seeking projects that can easily expend funds by September 1, 2024, although infrastructure projects that require 12+ months will still be considered. Final awards may be revised based upon annual funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- **Allowable Expenditures**
 - i. Salaries and wages for staff directly carrying out CDBG activities.
 - ii. Purchases qualifying as supplies - items under \$5,000 per unit that are consumed within one year. (Ex: Computers under \$5,000.)
 - iii. Equipment over \$5,000 per unit with a useful life exceeding one year, that is permanently installed facility equipment is eligible with County approval.
 - iv. Rental costs for space used by the CDBG program. Shared rent must be allocated fairly.
 - v. Food integral to program service delivery like youth and preschool or as part of a Food Bank program.
 - vi. Audit fees limited to the prorated CDBG share of the total budget.
- **Disallowed Expenditures**
 - i. The general rule is that any cost or activity that is not authorized under the federal CDBG regulations is ineligible to be assisted with CDBG funds.
 - ii. Expenses considered inherent government responsibilities.
 - iii. Political activities and religious activities.
 - iv. Vehicles, transportation, mileage tied to routine travel. Only mileage over \$500 is eligible and must be tracked using a detailed log with supportive documentation.
 - v. Fringe benefits for staff.
 - vi. Insurance costs like general liability, directors, vehicles, equipment, and special policies are not eligible for reimbursement through CDBG funds and remain the responsibility of the organization even if program-related.
 - vii. Construction/repair utilizing volunteers.
 - viii. Property and equipment not integral to facilities.
 - ix. Administrative costs unrelated to direct services.

V) PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND SELECTION CRITERIA:

- Only complete Application Request Proposals received by the deadline of 11:59 PM on Monday, September 4, 2023 will be considered for funding and reviewed.
- After the close of the Application Request Period, Community Development staff will review each submitted application for completeness and for basic CDBG program eligibility.
- As applicant and grantee of the Community Development Block Grant funds, programs and services operated by Richland County have the highest priority in the Public Service funding pool and will be funded according to program needs and in conformance with HUD eligibility requirements and national objective requirements. Allocations to non-profit organizations are an additional benefit to the community when the funds are available in the total CDBG budget. The County develops a 5-Year Consolidated Plan, which requires the most efficient use of the CDBG allocations to accomplish HUD goals.
- All applicants will be notified by September 15, 2023 if they are invited to submit a full application for CDBG funding.
- Applicants selected to submit a full-application will be notified of next steps within a general timeline as follows:
 - i. September 15, 2023 – Applicants notified of selection to move forward.
 - Application workshops, Technical Assistance from Community Development staff, and access to the full application through Neighborly Software will be provided for a period of 30 days.
 - ii. October 15, 2023 – Full CDBG Applications Due through Neighborly
 - iii. By October 31, 2023 - CDBG Committee Review Panel evaluates and ranks grant applications for funding.
 - iv. November 2023 – Community Development funding recommendations will be forwarded through the County Administrator to the County Council. Upon approval, applicants will be notified of awards.
 - v. By November 30, 2023 – Environmental Reviews conducted and Contracts executed selected projects.