



# Take it for Granted

*A quarterly newsletter released by Office of Community & Rural Affairs*

## Updates from the CDBG Program Director

By Eric Ogle



The last few months have been busy yet productive for the CDBG program and OCRA. We received and scored 44 applications for Round 1 awarding 19 communities roughly \$10 million. We drafted updates to the Minimum Plan Requirement (formerly

Minimum Technical Specifications). These are based on research, best practices and feedback from key stakeholders for all of the plans under our Planning Grant program. We launched the new Planning Grant process and application, which has fewer steps than the previous process.

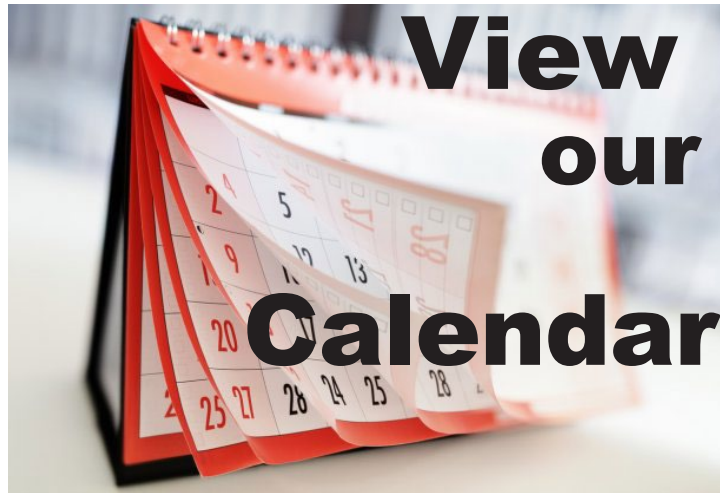
While we are proud of the work being done, we want to take a moment to thank all who have provided feedback. Without your help, we would not have been able to accomplish so much in such a short time. OCRA will continue to reach out and welcome feedback as we move onto new projects.

## A few best practices collected from the CDBG Round 1 applications

Throughout our review process, we noticed a couple of issues that impacted scoring across applications.

- 1 The first issue was a lack of documentation to support statements being made. For example, “the community experiences frequent flooding” but then no log, history of flooding or pictures were included.
- 2 The second, was not addressing the scoring questions that were provided at the site visits. In Round 1, each community was provided the list of scoring questions and this practice will continue with Round 2. We encourage you to use those questions to write the narrative and select the supporting documentation.

If you have questions, contact your Community Liaison and he/she will provide you Technical Assistance.



The complete 2018 calendar is available on our website. [View it now!](#)

## Calendar reminders

Please ensure you are aware of the following upcoming deadlines and events:

### September

- Grant Administrator Certification 301 - September 5 to 7 (3 day course, offered once)
- Grant Administrator Certification 101 - September 12 (1 day course, offered twice)
- Stellar Communities Intake of Regional Development Plans – Friday, September 21
- Main Street Community Exchange - Friday, September 28, in New Albany (Floyd)

### October

- CDBG Round 2 Proposals Due – Friday, October 5
- Downtown Development Week – October 8-12
- Broadband Summit - Thursday, October 18 (Details to be released later)

### November

- CDBG Round 2 Overdue Document/In-Kind Due – Friday, Nov. 16
- Main Street Community Exchange - Friday, Nov. 16, in Frankfort (Clinton)
- CDBG Round 2 Applications Due – Friday, Nov. 30

All applications have a submission deadline time of 4 pm (ET) to the OCRA office.

## An updated payment process is now effective

Normally, grant payments take roughly 35 days to process. However, Tera Klutz, the Auditor of State, has announced that as of July 1, 2018, the Auditor’s Office will process payments on a “prompt pay” basis. This change will impact all grantees in the following ways:

- Upon receipt of a request for payment, the LG Business Office will process the claim and send it to the Auditor for reimbursement.
- The Auditor’s Office will process the claim for payment and as soon as it is processed, a deposit will be made to the grantee’s account.
- The grantee should check his/her designated account for the deposit on a daily basis after submitting the claim. This is to ensure that CDBG federal funds are not held more than five (5) days. We do not want communities to receive a finding upon closeout of the grant.
- Both State and CDBG grantees can then pay their contractors in a timely manner reducing the burden on the community and contractor/vendor.

While the State **may still take up to 35 days** to make payment, the goal is to provide excellence in government service which includes prompt payment to our cities, towns, counties and vendors.

## Improved claim form now available

In an effort to standardize processes and improve efficiency, an updated [claim voucher form](#) is now available. Open CDBG grants should begin using the new, generic claim form by August 31.

Moving forward, a pre-populated CDBG specific claim form will be issued at Release of Funds for each grantee. All grantees that receive a pre-populated CDBG form must use the populated form when submitting a claim. Please do not open this form in Microsoft Edge as it results in formatting issues. Instructions for both forms are [included here](#). If you have any questions, please contact Megan Hruska.

## State Revolving Fund loan program updates now effective

On July 17, the Indiana Finance Authority (IFA) released a memo concerning changes made to the State Revolving Fund Loan Program by legislative action. OCRA wishes to highlight the information presented in this memo for any prior grantees or future applications choosing SRF as a funding source. We have copied the information below or you can download a [copy of this memo here](#).



From the SRF memo:

IFA administers the State Revolving Fund Loan

Program (SRF) and is bound by federal and state law in its program oversight. Since 1991, this fund has provided over 775 loans to over 380 Indiana communities for projects that have improved wastewater and drinking water infrastructure, created jobs and protected the environment and public health.



During the last Legislative Session, the Indiana General Assembly passed Senate Enrolled Act 362, which became effective on July 1, 2018. It is codified at Indiana Code 5-1.2-

10-16. The new law requires that all SRF participants that receive a loan or other financial assistance from the SRF Loan Program certify that the SRF Participant has documentation demonstrating that it has the financial, managerial, technical, and legal capability to operate and maintain its water or wastewater system in the form of an Asset Management Program (AMP). The IFA looks forward to working with SRF Participants to facilitate a smooth transition in meeting the requirements of the new law. To assist your community with the development of an Asset Management Program, find AMP documents,

including a certification form, a checklist, guidelines and guidance on the [SRF Loan Program website](#).

One component of each SRF Participant’s AMP is the requirement to have audited financial statements prior to an SRF loan closing and every two years thereafter during the repayment of the SRF loan. The SRF Loan Program is offering a one-year grace period, from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, during which time the SRF will accept a review, examination or audit of a SRF Participant’s financial statements performed by the Indiana State Board of Accounts or another independent public accountant of a calendar year ending no later than three years prior to the SRF loan closing date.

For example:

- if an SRF Participant seeks to complete a financing with the SRF Loan Program between July 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018, the SRF Participant must submit to the SRF Loan Program a Report no older than for calendar year ending 12/31/2015;
- or if an SRF Loan Participant seeks to complete a financing between January 1, 2019 and June 30, 2019, the SRF Participant must submit to the SRF Loan Program a Report no older than for calendar year ending December 31, 2016. This follows SRF current practice.

In connection with financing a project with the SRF Loan Program on or after July 1, 2019, SRF Participant’s must submit audited financial statements of the SRF Participant performed by the Indiana State Board of Accounts or another independent public accountant of the calendar year ending no later than two years prior to the SRF loan closing date. The SRF Loan Program will no longer accept reviews or examinations.

Therefore, prospective SRF Loan Program Participants are advised and encouraged to immediately undertake the steps necessary to assure an audit(s) is performed at an early enough stage so as to not delay a future project financing with the SRF Loan Program.



## New CDBG Planning Grant process and application

OCRA is excited to announce a revised process and application for the CDBG Planning Grants. The new process reduces the number of actions required by communities applying for a planning grant. For example, a site visit will no longer be required if the community engages their Community Liaison in technical assistance prior to the application being submitted. It also eliminates the submission of paper materials to OCRA. Instead, applications and draft plans must be submitted digitally.

The new process and application are effective August 1, 2018 and [can be found online](#). Please review the new process and contact your Community Liaison with any questions. Only the new application will be accepted as of August 1.

## Planning Grant applications are now being processed

With the new Planning Grant process and application, all of the 2017 funds were allocated and we have not been able to fund any plans since May. We are happy to announce that HUD has released our 2018 funds and we have started processing the backlog. We are still a few weeks away, but will be in contact with those communities soon.



## Scoring criteria for future CDBG applications

Starting with Round 2 of 2018, OCRA will use the scoring criteria that was published in Indiana's 2018 Action Plan. A copy of the criteria can be found in the Round 2 Application Packet. Please take time to review it. It will also be reviewed in detail during Round 2 site visits.

**Processing**  
(Please Wait)



## Miss an edition of this newsletter?

All editions are posted to our website: [in.gov/ocra/2782.htm](http://in.gov/ocra/2782.htm). [Email us](#) if you have any problems viewing the newsletter, subscription questions or if you would like to suggest an article.

## Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities 2019 Request for Letters of Interest

Communities across the US are exploring smart growth and other environmentally sustainable approaches to revitalize their economies, create jobs, protect clean air and water, prepare for climate change-related impacts, and improve quality of life. However, when trying to implement these approaches many communities run into barriers such as outdated zoning codes and other regulations, polluted sites that deter investment, and deteriorating public infrastructure. Moreover, many communities lack the technical expertise to implement smart growth strategies and the resources to educate local stakeholders about the environmental, economic, health, and quality of life benefits these approaches can bring.

The Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program provides quick, targeted technical assistance to selected communities using a variety of tools that have demonstrated results and widespread application. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) delivers the assistance using teams of experts who conduct workshops in the selected communities. The program is geared toward communities that are relatively new to environmentally sustainable approaches but have a basic understanding of smart growth principles and how they apply locally.

EPA is offering two tools this year to select communities:

**1** Communities that contain sites on the Superfund National Priorities List are invited to apply for our Strategies for Neighborhood Reinvestment tool. The tool will help them identify and implement policies to increase the redevelopment potential of contaminated properties by creating better conditions for real estate investment in the neighborhoods surrounding them.

**2** Communities embarking on the replacement of lead water pipes, and thus digging up and reconstructing streets, are invited to apply for our Green and Complete Streets tool. The tool will help them capitalize on water infrastructure upgrades as an opportunity to rebuild more pedestrian and bike-friendly streets that better manage stormwater on-site.

**Eligibility:** The applicant can be a local, county, or tribal government, or a nonprofit organization that has the support of the local government on whose behalf they are applying.

**Deadline:** 5 p.m. ET on October 4, 2018.

**How to apply:** Submit a two-page letter of interest signed by a mayor, city manager, elected official, or other representative of the

community.

### Tools offered:

- Tool 1: Strategies for Neighborhood Reinvestment
- Tool 2: Green and Complete Streets

**Timeframe:** eight recipients will be selected by the end of October and the EPA intends to provide all technical assistance by May 2019.

Interested communities should submit a letter of interest, in which they select one of the tools being offered and specifically outline how the tool is relevant to their development challenge. [Click here to read more about how to apply.](#)

If you have questions about this request for letters of interest, please read through the [Frequently Asked Questions webpage](#). If your question is not answered there, please contact [Charles Gurkin](#) at 202-564-2778.





## Continuing Education: OCRA GA Update training now available

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. For 2018, only 3 CE credits are required, two of which need to be a OCRA GA Update training. Below is a list of dates for the OCRA GA Update training:

September 11, 1 – 4 PM  
Bedford Public Library  
1323 K Street  
Bedford, IN 47421

September 14, 1 – 4 PM  
Peru Public Library  
102 E Main Street  
Peru, IN 46970

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

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

## Semi annual reports should include percentages

When providing progress updates for Semi Annual Reports, please list the update as a percentage. For example: construction has begun and is now 15 percent complete. Continue to send reports until the project has reached **STEP 2** in the closeout process. If reports are overdue, please send those as soon as possible, as claims cannot be processed until they are received. Please email these reports and any questions to [Emily Brackemyre](#).

## Modification requests must be submitted ahead of deadline

Modification requests for time extensions must be received prior to the deadline. Grant Services is unable to extend a deadline if it has already passed. Justification for the extension must also be included in the request. Please plan ahead and submit requests several days to a week in advance of the deadline. If you have any questions, please contact [Megan Hruska](#).

## Two draft policies are available for review and comments

Two new draft policies are available for review and public comment:

- Income survey policies
- Minimum plan requirements (formerly minimum technical requirements)

Public comment will be collected via an online survey. Drafts of these policies can be [found on our website](#). In order to avoid missing comments, we do require all comments be submitted via the survey. The public comment period for this set of policies ends on **September 10 at 8 a.m (ET)**. At the end of the public comment period, OCRA will the review the feedback, make revisions if needed, and then with final approval post them. Once they are posted, they are to be considered final and effective on their respective effectives dates.

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