



**CITY OF PORTLAND**  
**Executive Department**  
**Jon P. Jennings, City Manager**

March 29, 2021

Members of the Portland City Council:

I am pleased to submit to you my recommendations for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

I would like to commend the CDBG Allocation Committee on their hard work and dedication to the City's Community Development Program. I have reviewed the Allocation Committee's recommendations and acknowledge the difficult scoring decisions that were made by the Committee. I reviewed all of the applications and carefully considered the Allocation Committee's recommendations before forming my recommendations [*City Manager's Recommendations AI*]. As you will see from my recommendations, I have made changes to the Allocation Committee's recommendations that I feel align with the current goals and needs of the City.

The needs of the City have been drastically impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic, creating many unique challenges for our community. Creativity and collaboration are key to addressing these needs. A coordinated, collaborative approach with community partners will not only meet the needs of our community, but also support a broader network of social supports for individuals in need of assistance. I believe my recommendations will allow our community to achieve this goal.

The City of Portland, as a result of the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), received supplemental Community Development Block Grant funding (known as CDBG-CV3) in the amount of \$634,669. In October, the City Council approved the allocation of \$100,000 for the Winter Sustainability Grant Program, and \$524,699 for rental assistance. Shortly after, the State of Maine launched a statewide rental assistance program. In order to limit confusion for Portland residents, MaineHousing indicated they would prefer the City not engage in a local rental assistance program as Portland residents would be eligible to access the statewide program. With the state rental assistance resources available, I am recommending the previously allocated \$524,699 be re-programmed into the FY22 CDBG Allocation.

1) *Social Services*. This year we had a wide array of competitive social service applications. As in past years, there are more deserving applicants than funds available. What makes this year unique is the City has additional CDBG resources available to address the impacts of COVID-19. In addition to the annual allocation for social service, I am also recommending CDBG-CV3 funding be re-programmed to fund most of the remaining applicants not funded through the annual CDBG allocation and which meet the CDBG-CV requirement to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID 19.

I feel strongly that programs serving the growing homeless population provide a vital resource to the most vulnerable members of our community, and are key to decreasing and containing the spread of COVID-19, in what are historically congregate settings. I am recommending that CDBG-CV3 funding be used to fund the Amistad Peer Outreach Program, Public Health Mobile Medical Outreach Program, Greater Portland Family Promise Homeless Prevention, and the Preble Street Food Program. All four of these programs are by nature designed to prevent, prepare for, or respond to the current pandemic, thus are eligible to receive CDBG-CV

funding. Funding the Preble Street Food Program with CV funding frees up \$55,000 from the annual CDBG allocation. In addition, there is \$20,000 available from the proceeds of the sale of the Cotton Street Lot. It is my recommendation that the City Council allocate the \$20,000 in Cotton Street proceeds, and the remaining \$55,000 in CDBG funds, to Catholic Charities Immigrant Legal Services program, allowing the program to be almost fully funded. With these recommendations, fourteen (14) of the fifteen (15) applications would receive funding, a historic opportunity for the City's CDBG program.

Without CDBG funding, it is likely a majority of these programs will not be able to operate, creating additional gaps in service, and an increased strain on an already limited system. An estimated 9,320 individuals and 48 families will be served through these programs. From medical care to food security, these programs will address the critical needs exasperated by the Coronavirus pandemic through a collaborative process and network of providers. The network of social service agencies in Portland has faced extreme challenges through the pandemic, from adapting programs to adhere to social distancing, to protecting staff members and clients, all while continuing to operate with a minimal disruption to services. The resiliency and dedication these agencies have displayed is commendable. The impact these programs will have in our community is immeasurable. The City is in a unique position to support these agencies and the great work they do within our community.

- 2) *Development Activities.* These funds play a critical role in the physical infrastructure and the economic development of our city. This year, in addition to the annual \$90,000 in TIF funding, I am also recommending \$150,000 of CDBG-CV3 funding be allocated towards public facilities.

TIF funding has very specific allowable uses. I am recommending that the \$90,000 in Downtown TIF funding be applied to the DPW Washington Ave Sidewalk Accessibility Improvement project. Without the additional allocation of TIF funding this project would not be able to proceed. This project not only enhances pedestrian safety, but also provides additional space for area businesses, many minority owned, to have expanded opportunities for outdoor dining and sales.

I am recommending CDBG-CV3 funding be applied towards a public bathroom pilot program, initiated by Parks, Recreation and Facilities and the Department of Public Works. This funding will assist in addressing a largely unmet need caused by the Coronavirus pandemic.

- 3) *Administration and Planning.* The Planning and Urban Development Department is required to submit a non-competitive application to the Allocation Committee. The Planning and Urban Development Department submitted a request of \$404,356 with the understanding that no more than the HUD imposed administration cap of 20% could be recommended for funding. These funds are used to both administer the program as well as fund long range planning work for through the Planning department. The staff have adjusted their budget to \$395,196 to meet the estimated FY21-22 cap; therefore, I am recommending full funding to administer the program.

In addition to the Community Development Block Grant recommendations, I would also like to present recommendations for the Emergency Solutions Grant Program. As previously stated, creativity and collaboration are key to addressing the vast needs in our community, particularly the members of our community who are experiencing housing insecurity.

As a result of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), the City received supplemental Emergency Solutions Grant funding (known as ESG-CV2) in the amount of \$1,004,425. ESG-CV funding must be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to meeting the CV requirements, ESG funding is restricted to five eligible program components including; street outreach, emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, rapid rehousing, and administration.

The Health and Human Services Department and Housing and Community Development Division worked to identify gaps in services, areas in need, and viable solutions to aid in addressing these issues. One of the most prominent needs has been a day space to provide meals and shelter for those experiencing homelessness. My recommendations include funding for several food programs. These programs are currently operating through a mobile distribution model,

forcing individuals to eat outside on the streets. While social distancing and maintaining CDC guidelines is of the utmost importance, we believe this can be done while providing a humane and safe space for individuals to access meals. I propose that the remaining CDBG-CV3 funding, in combination with ESG-CV2 funding, be distributed through a competitive application process to provide and operate a day space for homeless individuals.

To aid in street outreach I am recommending funding for Spurwinks's Behavioral Health Outreach Worker program based at 22 Park Ave. The behavioral health outreach workers serve as case management, street outreach, and triage specialists for support services. This program will provide triage and case management services in Portland shelters and housing accessed by Long Term Stayers, with the primary focus on the unsheltered homeless population. Twenty-two Park Ave will serve as an ultra-low barrier-housing program designed to stably house a small group of people who have historically faced difficulties with housing security and retention. The program will also provide outreach in Deering Oaks Park to address some of the issues that emerged in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. The program will assist people outside and gathering in the surrounding area, with a goal of bringing Long Term Stayers into housing and ensuring their success.

To aid in homeless prevention and housing stabilization services, the Health and Human Services Department has designed a Prevention and Diversion program, modeled after the Pine Street Inn Front Door Triage Program in Boston, MA. This program would be located on the peninsula with other social services offices and staff would have the ability to connect with individuals before they enter emergency shelter and homelessness. Staff will have the ability to seek alternate resources, connect with property owners to mediate evictions, and enroll individuals in prevention case management services. The program will operate seven (7) days a week, providing Portland residents access to homeless prevention services every day of the week.

Lastly, I am recommending additional funding be allocated towards Shelter Operations and Essential Services for the Family Shelter. This funding will address a portion of the additional costs arising from cleaning and maintaining social distancing requirements while ensuring families experiencing homelessness continue to be able to access safe and secure shelter. The Family Shelter continues to see a steady flow of families in need of shelter; this additional funding will ensure services continue to be provided.

These funding recommendations will follow the regulatory requirements set forth by HUD, while also helping to address the critical needs and gaps in services in our community. I want to take this opportunity to thank the staff in the Housing and Community Development Division and the Health and Human Services Department for thinking strategically and presenting creative funding solutions that will have a tremendous impact in our community. These recommendations represent a collaborative approach between City Departments and local social service agencies to address the needs in our community and provide an opportunity to implement effective change and support.

I thank you for the opportunity to share my recommendations. I hope you accept my recommendations and join me in commending all of the good work being done in our city.

Sincerely,



Jon P. Jennings  
City Manager

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**CDBG Recommendations 2021-2022**

Administration and Planning				Request	Priority Impact/ Goal 33 pts	Guiding Principles 30 pts	Capacity to Deliver 25 pts	Partner/ Collabor 12 pts	Point Deductions	Total	Committee Recommendation	City Manager Recommendation	Council Allocation	
Type	Priority	Organization	Program/ Project											
1	AP	All	Planning & Urban Dev Dept.	CDBG Admin and Planning	\$404,356						\$404,356	\$404,356		
<i>Total Admin &amp; Planning Available</i>				\$391,727							<b>Subtotal:</b>	\$404,356	\$404,356 #	\$0

**Development, Economic Development and Construction**

Type	Priority	Organization	Program/ Project	Request	33 pts	30 pts	25 pts	12 pts	Point Deductions	Total	Committee Recommendation	City Manager Recommendation	Council Allocation	
7	CON	HA	Youth and Family Outreach	337 Cumberland Ave	\$220,000.00	32.75	29.00	22.50	11.63	0.00	95.88	\$220,000	\$220,000	
10	ED	EO	Coastal Enterprise Inc.	Portland Microenterprise Assistance Program (PMAP)	\$48,000.00	30.25	26.63	22.88	11.00	0.00	90.75	\$48,000	\$48,000	
9	ED	EO	COP - Housing & Economic Development	Business Assistance Program (BAP)	\$205,000.00	30.88	26.13	22.38	10.75	-0.25	89.88	\$205,000	\$205,000	
5	CON	NI	Boys and Girls Club of Southern Maine	Kitchen Remodel	\$80,000.00	28.25	29.38	23.63	8.75	-1.25	88.75	\$80,000	\$80,000	
3	CON	NI	COP - Parks, Recreation and Facilities	Community Gardens Equity Project	\$98,763.00	26.38	29.13	22.75	8.75	-0.75	86.25	\$98,763	\$98,763	
6	CON	NI	Port Resources	Group Home Heat Pump Project	\$26,000.00	28.14	28.29	21.00	8.57	0.00	86.00	\$26,000	\$26,000	
8	CON	HA	Alpha One	Critical Access Ramp Program	\$42,000.00	31.13	27.25	21.50	0.00	-0.25	79.63	\$42,000	\$42,000	
2	CON	NI	COP - Department of Public Works	Washington Ave Sidewalk Accessibility Improvements	\$300,000.00	30.125	23.125	18.13	7.25	-0.25	78.38	\$177,123	\$267,123 *	
4	CON	NI	Maine Irish Heritage Center	State Street Fence Restoration	\$20,000.00	20.88	19.63	18.88	8.63	0.00	68.00	\$0		
<i>Estimated Total Development, Econ Dev. &amp; Construction Requests</i>				\$1,039,763										
<i>Estimated Total HUD Allocated Development Funds Available</i>				\$896,886							<b>Subtotal:</b>	\$896,886		
<i>Estimated Total Funds Available to City Manager and Council (HUD Funds + TIF)</i>				\$986,886							<b>Subtotal:</b>		\$986,886	\$0
<small>* TIF Funding = \$90,000;</small>														

