

Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Funds

Guidelines | August 2011

> ready > set > succeed



Table of Contents

Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Funds Guidelines

I.	Introduction	1
II.	Project Objectives	1
III.	Project Narrative	3
IV.	Requirements	4
V.	Review of Proposals	5

Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Funds Guidelines

I. Introduction

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) provides assistance to states and local communities to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities and empower low-income families and individuals to become fully self-sufficient.

In support of the goals and objectives of the CSBG toward the amelioration of the causes and effects of poverty, the Department of Community and Economic Development follows its mission to foster opportunities for businesses and communities to thrive in a global economy, enabling Pennsylvanians to achieve a superior quality of life.

Federal and State law stipulate that approximately five percent (5%) of the federal Community Services Block Grant funds may be used for discretionary projects. Eligible applicants include non-profit community-based organizations or governmental entities. A qualified initiative must serve clients who are at, or below, 125% of the federal poverty guidelines.

II. Project Objectives

CSBG Discretionary funds are intended to advance methods of reducing poverty and revitalizing low-income communities. To support the mission and principles of Governor Tom Corbett's administration, for 2011 Pennsylvania's discretionary funds will be **dedicated to supporting three targeted and strategic initiatives:**

- **Social entrepreneurship activities, targeting specifically social enterprises.** Social entrepreneurship develops independent business activities and is active on the market in order to solve issues of employment, social coherence and local development. Its activities support solidarity, social inclusion and growth of social capital. A social enterprise is a business venture that achieves its primary social or environmental mission using business methods. The social needs addressed by social entrepreneurs and their enterprises and the business models they use are as diverse as human ingenuity. Social enterprises apply market-based strategies to create sustainable job opportunities for low-income people. Social enterprises directly address social needs through their products and services or through the numbers of disadvantaged people they employ. This distinguishes them from "socially responsible businesses," which create positive social change indirectly through the practice of corporate social responsibility. A social enterprise must be directly associated with the non-profit organization and must address specific community needs toward mitigating social and poverty concerns.
- **Supporting a Pennsylvania Career Pathways Partnership.** The approach of the Career Pathways program is to provide comprehensive and wrap around services to participants as they advance in their chosen career path to self-sufficiency. The partnership of providers work with a specific cohort of participants toward removing barriers, providing necessary skill sets and specific curriculum to ensure success to self-sufficiency for each participant.
- **Diversity initiatives** shall include activities that encourage and assist people of minority races, ethnicities and cultural groups to participate fully in Pennsylvania's economy and communities. It also includes diversity intended to support the integration of others based on gender and age into non-traditional roles through training and employment within the economy and community. These initiatives should promote the integration and diversity of people to strengthen the quality of life for all residents of the Commonwealth.

The deadline for submissions of CSBG Discretionary proposals is September 15, 2011.

Applications for CSBG discretionary funds should: be project-focused; have clear objectives, definitive timelines and measurable outcomes; and be part of a larger effort of leveraging funds and/or filling resource gaps.

1. Applications for CSBG discretionary funds related to **social enterprises** should present a direct connection to the broader regional assets and challenges, a connection to an existing or new social enterprise, and should demonstrate elements of sustainability within the community. Applications should demonstrate the coordinated investment of funds aimed at building upon regional assets that catalyze private investment.

Organizations tend to be called social enterprises based on:

- a. serving vulnerable populations (economic, social, cultural, etc.),
- b. sourcing from sustainable sources or vulnerable populations,
- c. increasing sustainability or decreasing wastes (lean enterprises),
- d. and generally contributing to community welfare. This ranges from training and community development organizations and associations (and cooperatives) to youth support organizations and more traditional businesses with a double or triple bottom line.

Projects are to reflect strategies that promote self-sufficiency and sustainable economic development and community building, that link social, physical and economic infrastructure efforts to form comprehensive community development that benefits the self-sufficiency work for the low-income working population, and that promote, leverage and/or partner with community and/or economic development programs.

2. The Department of Education is conducting pilots of the Career Pathways program in seven (7) of Pennsylvania's workforce investment areas. Applications for CSBG discretionary funds **supporting a Pennsylvania Career Pathways Partnership** are limited to the following 13 **Community Action Agencies**: Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Beaver County Community Services Program, Commission on Economic Opportunity, Community Action Program of Lancaster, Community Action Southwest, Fayette County Community Action Agency, Greater Erie Community Action Committee, Pittsburgh Community Services, Inc., Schuylkill Community Action, Trehab, Inc., Venango/Crawford Counties Office of Economic Opportunity, Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council and Westmoreland Community Action. A partnership should present a clear collaborative approach with the essential partners of the Adult Basic Education providers, Local Workforce Investment Board, including Title I providers, and Community Action Agencies.
3. Applications for CSBG discretionary funds related to **diversity** projects may include services that promote self-sufficiency of minority groups including, but not limited to the following: training/education, counseling, homeownership assistance, housing referral/counseling, or case management. These services may include efforts to affirmatively further fair housing, training and education leading to employment, and/or other services that promote self-sufficiency. These projects may include educational support for people into non-traditional career paths, such as female welders or male nurses, as examples. These projects may also include integration to increase age diversity and opportunities. All diversity initiative proposals must provide outcome measures that demonstrate significant results in employment and/or self-sufficiency or expanding housing opportunities. Section III. Project Narrative, under G. Outcomes, of these guidelines further describes inclusion of such outcome measures for all applications.

All applications will be reviewed to ensure that applicants are presenting efforts related to achieving the CSBG objectives, leveraging, establishing clear partnerships, ensuring project sustainability and identifying measurable outcomes.

CSBG discretionary funds are not intended to support on-going projects. Therefore, projects that are selected will be funded for no more than two (2) consecutive years. Discretionary funds are competitive (funding for a second year is not guaranteed). The applicant must demonstrate the ability to sustain the project without CSBG discretionary monies.

DCED reserves the right to award discretionary funds to any organization engaged in activities outside of the competitive application process as deemed appropriate.

III. Project Narrative

In addition to the information requested in Section IX of the Single Application for Assistance on www.newPA.com, a completed application must include the following information:

- A. **Agency Background:** A brief profile of your agency that includes the following components that demonstrate a connection to the project and the ability to support the project:
 - a. Date of incorporation
 - b. Overall mission or purpose of the agency
 - c. Primary services of the agency
 - d. Demonstrated ability of agency to achieve results (such as staff capacity, past/present achievements, successes, resources)
 - e. Annual budget and recent audit
- B. **Statement of Need:** A clear and specific description of the needs that are to be addressed by the project, and how the project will meet those needs. Any available evidence or statistics that were used to support the identified need(s) are to be included. Specific detail about the project and the community or targeted area in which the project is to occur that can be used to demonstrate need includes, but is not limited to low-income population, unemployment rate, percentage of residents receiving public assistance, vacant buildings, school dropout rates, etc.
- C. **Project Plan:** A comprehensive outline of critical project details including objectives, employment impact (jobs), expected outcomes and project timeline. Clearly outline the approach, plan and activities that will support the goals and objectives. Indicate the expected impact of this project on its targeted population/community residents through projected outcomes and goals. Provide details on how the project aligns with CSBG objectives and DCED mission and reflects strategies that promote self-sufficiency and sustainable development and community building.
- D. **Eligibility Determination Plan:** A description of the validation process that will be used to ensure those being served by the project are low-income individuals at or below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines.
- E. **Sustainability Plan:** A description of how the organization will ensure that the project continues after the CSBG discretionary resources are completed, and, if applicable, how funds will be raised and leveraged to continue the project.

- F. **Linkages and Collaboration:** Identify project partners and other collaborators. This section should demonstrate the strategic approach to the integration of larger, local networks of partners and the community. Include a listing of the organizations who are a part of your approach with whom you plan to work; demonstrate a shared agenda for action and strategies to serve the low-income population, what role those organizations will play in the project and describe how this project links with their efforts but does not duplicate services. Provide a description as to how the project promotes, leverages and/or partners with community and/or economic development programs in the service area.
- G. **Outcomes (Community Impact Measures):** Detail the community impact and changes that are anticipated as a result of this activity. This section should explain the clear measures of success, concrete measures by which the overall effectiveness of the project can be evaluated, along with measurable outcomes, using empirical evidence to the degree possible. This section should also address options that improve the intra- and inter-agency coordination. Outcomes presented should be both short-term and long-term and should include measures such as new partnerships (memoranda of understanding), employment attained, barriers removed, number of new jobs, persons employed in quality jobs (greater than minimum wage with benefits), number of jobs sustained (employed for at least 6 months), improved homeownership rate, residential vacancy rate, increased racial diversity, business revenues collected/maintained among others.

IV. Requirements

All grant requests for CSBG Discretionary funds must adhere to the following requirements:

- A. Project funds must be expended between January 1 and September 30, 2012.
- B. Project funds are not to be used for the purchase or permanent improvement of real property.
- C. To apply for funding, the application must be submitted using the electronic on-line Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) Single Application for Assistance located at www.esa.dced.state.pa.us. Please reference the single application number (generated upon submission of your application) on any documents sent with the signature page or submitted via US Mail.
- D. Audit costs must be included in the project budget, as well as the source of funds paying for the audit, if the application request is for \$100,000 or more.
- E. Approved applicants will be required to procure fidelity bonding in the amount of 50% of the grant award for anyone authorized to sign checks, certify vouchers and/or handle or control funds, checks, securities or property.
- F. Approved applicants may be required to submit regular reports of grant activity utilizing the Community Organization Planning and Outcomes System (COPOS) and any other department (DCED) reports as required. Information regarding these reporting processes will be sent to the grantee upon execution of the contract.

NOTE: DCED reserves the right to monitor and/or audit the project at any time to assure contract compliance.

V. Review of Proposals

The deadline for submissions of CSBG Discretionary proposals is September 15, 2011. Approval of any project is effective as of the start date of the contract between DCED and the grantee. Applications will be reviewed against standard criteria and ranked based upon the effectiveness of how well it addresses the following factors:

- **Agency Background** – Application describes a strong history of meeting strategic initiatives based on goals and objectives.
- **Identification of Problem** – Information is provided that documents the extent of the problem to be addressed with the project including measurable goals and outcomes.
- **Project Plan** – Details the project and includes objectives, number of clients to be served, jobs impacted, measurable outcomes, project timeline and other parameters related to how this project will be completed. Project demonstrates a clear alignment with DCED mission and reflects strategies that promote CSBG objectives, self-sufficiency and sustainable development, community building.
- **Operational Methodology** – Application describes the operational approach and methods that the agency will use toward ensuring that goals and objectives are achieved. The operational approach and methods described include an effective approach to assess the project status, progress in meeting goals and procedures etc. and details how the organization will evaluate progress to ensure the project succeeds.
- **Eligibility Determination Plan** – Application describes how those being served by the project are determined to be low-income at or below the 125% federal poverty threshold.
- **Linkages and Collaboration** – Application describes collaboration with other organizations or initiatives in the region. Project promotes, leverages and/or partners with other regional community and/or economic development programs.
- **Outcomes/Community Impact** – Application describes clear and specific intended outcomes that provide the true impact of the investment of funds on the overall community efforts.
- **Budget** – Application budget is correct and supports the project. A budget justification is included that provides sufficient detail so there is a clear understanding of how costs were calculated and why they are necessary.