Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

**Community Services Block Grant-Discretionary (CSBG-D)
SFY2025 / FFY2024 Application Guidance**

Application Deadline: May 17, 2024, 5:00pm EST

Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Jacob R. Day, Secretary
Julia Glanz, Deputy Secretary

CSBG-D Overview

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and is administered by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, Division of Homeless Solutions. The CSBG Act (42 U.S.C. §106) authorizes the Secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services to make grants to the States for the purpose of alleviating the causes and conditions of poverty in communities.

Under the CSBG Act, the state may utilize five percent of the federal allocation as discretionary funding to support activities that eliminate poverty, promote self-sufficiency, and promote community revitalization. Funds may also support training, technical assistance, and capacity-building for Community Action Agencies.

In addition to evaluating SFY25 CSBG-D applications against federal guidelines and program objectives, the Department will assess how closely proposals align with goals of the Moore-Miller State Plan and the Department's top 5 objectives. The Moore-Miller State Plan outlines 10 priorities that support the administration's mission to Leave No One Behind. The Plan includes objectives and goals for each priority area, and key performance indicators that measure success of implementation strategies. Additionally, the Department of Housing and Community Development has identified 5 programmatic objectives that align with and support priorities in the Moore-Miller State Plan:

1. Provide shelter for all. Shelter must be treated as a human right. Leaving no one behind applies to a roof over the head of every Marylander. We must identify measurable goals and supporting policies that seek to solve veteran, youth, and chronic homelessness.

2. Expand affordable housing. More Maryland families ought to spend less of their income for safe, accessible, dignified, and energy efficient housing. Our work will require scale to address the estimated 96,000+ housing units we need right now in Maryland. It will also require policy to reflect the full costs of housing – including energy costs.

3. Right the wrongs of the past. Policies of the past both disinvested in certain places and further divided the course of some Maryland families based on their race. Our policy decisions must amount to a deliberate counteraction to redlining, urban renewal, and destructive urban highway programs. We must also seek to recover what resources we can for the generations of families who were robbed of wealth-building through home ownership and the intentional disinvestment in Black neighborhoods.

4. Make lovable places. Much of the work we do will be to build places: homes, community centers, neighborhood catalysts. The greatest multiplier effect any building, public square, street, or volume can have is to be lovable. Design lends dignity to people's lives and can change perceptions of projects and investments.

5. Connect all Marylanders. Access to information is an indispensable part of survival in today's economy. Broadband is a utility that is to that survival what municipal water systems were 150 years ago. Equitable access to the benefits of participation in the economy depends on our ability to provide broadband, the tools to put it to use, and digital fluency to capitalize on that access.

Eligible Funding Categories

The funding categories listed below are those outlined in the Department's CSBG State Plan as approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Eligible activities are not limited to the examples provided.

Proposed projects must include measurable outcomes that help individuals move toward self-sufficiency. Funding requests typically exceed available resources. The Department will not accept multiple applications from the same organization. Final awards depend on the amount of funds appropriated by the US Congress and made available by the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Competitive Funding Categories

- **Innovative Programs to Address Poverty** – Programs and projects that alleviate poverty, workforce development initiatives, outreach programs, homelessness solutions, and other projects that serve a targeted population. **Awards in this category are capped at $50,000.00.**

- **Asset Building Programs** - Programs and activities aimed at establishing and increasing savings of low-income households. Examples of activities that may be funded through this category include Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), budget counseling, reducing unbanked or underbanked populations, and increasing access to benefits. **Awards in this category are capped at $25,000.00 for local programs and $100,000.00 for statewide programs.**

- **Addressing Service Gaps -** Activities that specifically address documented gaps in services for low-income households. **Awards in this category are capped at $25,000.00.**

Set-Aside Category (Not Available for Competition)

- **Statewide Coordination and Communication among Eligible Entities.** The Department has set aside $75,000.00 to support training, technical assistance, and capacity building activities provided by the Maryland Community Action Partnership.

Ineligible activities will not be considered or funded and will result in a deduction from the total amount requested. Requests that exceed funding category caps will be reduced if the application is recommended for funding.

Eligible Applicants

1. Community Action Agencies
2. Non-profit organizations that serve households with incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL)

Grant Term & Available Funds

The grant term for the FY25 CSBG Discretionary Round is July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025.

Approximately $450,000.00 in CSBG Discretionary funds is available to support proposals in the competitive funding categories outlined above. Requests must be within the caps set for each category. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate that CSBG-D funds will be leveraged with other funding sources to implement their proposals. The Department may allocate less funding than requested, with the understanding that outcomes will be adjusted.

Application Sections & Scoring

- Universal Application Questions (20 Points)
- Program-Specific Questions (65 Points)
- Application Budget & Budget Narrative (15 Points)

Program Contact

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Submission Guidelines

Key Dates

April 22, 2024   SFY25 Application Round Opens

May 1, 2024   Application Training via Zoom ([Register Here](#))

May 17, 2024   Applications Due by 5pm via the [DHCD Project Portal / IGX](#)

June 28, 2024   Award Notices & Grant Agreements Distributed

July 1, 2024   SFY25 Grant Term Begins

June 30, 2025   SFY25 Grant Term Ends

Application Checklist

New Applicants

If you are a first-time applicant you must request and receive a user account to access the [DHCD Project Portal (aka IGX)](#). On the Portal home page, click the "New User? Register Here" link and complete the request form. In the Notes field of the request form, enter CSBG-D as the funding program of interest. If you submit a request for a new user account and do not receive a response in 2-3 business days, contact the System Administrator at NRSystemSupport.dhcd@maryland.gov for assistance.

All Applicants (New & Returning)

Follow the steps outlined below to ensure you are submitting a complete application.

I. **Review and update your organization's profile in the DHCD Project Portal (IGX):**
   - Ensure your organization's <u>full legal name</u>, street address, and payment/mailing address are correct (including suite numbers, PO Box etc.)
   - Contact the System Administrator at NRSystemSupport.dhcd@maryland.gov if user accounts associated with your organization should be added or removed
   - Upload documents listed below to the Organization Uploads section:
     - IRS W-9 form - signed and dated in <u>2024</u>
     - Agency organizational chart
     - Current board roster
     - Most recent federal Single Audit or independently audited financial statements
     - Articles of Incorporation
     - Bylaws
     - IRS 501(c)(3) Determination Letter
     - Certificate of Good Standing from [Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation](#)
     - Copy of Charity Registration Status from [Maryland Secretary of State website](#)

II.   Initiate a Community Development and Services (CDS) Application FY2025
A link to the CDS application template is available under the My Opportunities menu of your account home page / dashboard.

III.   Complete the Application Information Form
There are several sections of the Application Information form that require responses. See the instructions below for completing each section.

Applicant Organization Information - provide information for your organization's primary point of contact for this application.

Application Details – select **Community Services Block Grant-Discretionary** as the program for this application. Also provide a brief project name and description. Do not check the box to indicate this application represents a subsequent phase of a program or project.

Application Request Amounts – select Operating/Non-Capital as the funding type and enter the total amount of your FY25 funding request. This is the amount you will use to develop your application budget.

Program/Project Address Location – select "yes" to indicate if the program address is the same as your organization's mailing address. Also select the county or counties that will be served by your organization during state fiscal year 2025 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025).

Program/Project Address Designation – select any designations that apply to your organization's service area. There is also an option to select "none" if none of the designations apply to your organization's service area.

Universal Application Questions - the Application Information page includes four questions that all organizations are required to complete. Applicants are encouraged to include relevant evidence-based data in their responses. Up to 5 points will be awarded for each question in this section. Limit responses to 2,000 characters.

IV.   Complete the Application Budget Form
CSBG-D funds may only be applied to operating costs. Capital projects are not eligible for funding. The Total Amount Requested and the Total Program/Project Cost shown on the Application Budget form must match the amounts entered on the Application Information form.

You will complete a detailed application budget (in Excel) and upload it as an attachment to your application. Do not provide a detailed budget in the Application Budget form in the portal. Only fill in the first row of the budget table to show total operating costs and total leverage (see example below).

Activity/ Use of Funds	Award Amount(s)		Additional Source(s) of Funds			Totals by Activity/ Use of Funds
	Capital Amount	Operating Amount	Awardee Amount	Other Source Amount	Name of Other Source	
Operating Costs		$50,000.00		$100,000.00	Donations	**$150,000.00**

V. **Upload responses to Program-Specific Questions and your detailed CSBG-D application budget to the Application Attachments and Authorization form**
In addition to the universal application questions listed on the Application Information form, you will also complete a set of program-specific questions and upload them as an attachment to your application.

VI. **Add the name and title of your organization's authorized signer to the Application Attachments and Authorization form**
Your organization's authorized signer is the person with authority to apply for funding and execute contracts on behalf of your organization.

VII. **Save and submit your application in the DHCD Project Portal**
Save all information entered and uploaded to each form in the portal. Otherwise, this information will be lost, and you will have to re-enter it.

To submit your application, click the green submit button located at the bottom of the Attachments and Authorization form. Next, confirm submission of your application by selecting "Submit Application" on the form pictured below. You also have the option to cancel the application if you no longer want to proceed.
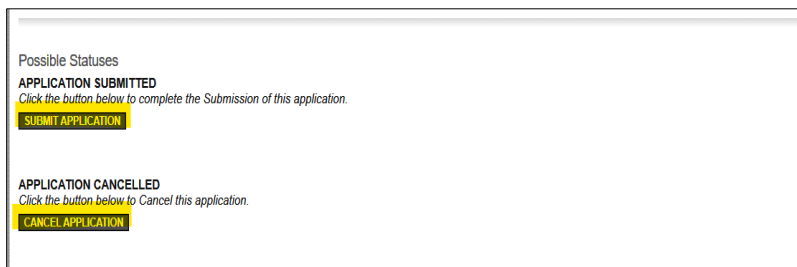
IMPORTANT NOTES:
If you are not able to complete and submit your application in one session, be sure to save the information you enter and upload before exiting the Project Portal.

To return to an application you started in a previous session, locate the application form link in your My Tasks list. Avoid creating multiple application forms for the same program.

We will review steps for navigating the Project Portal and completing application forms during the application training webinar on May 1, 2024. A recording of the training webinar will be available on the CSBG page of the DHCD website after May 1, 2024.