



# TCC Minutes

**Committee:** Housing & Community Development

**Date + Time:** 7/10/25 2:00pm

**Location:** City Council Chambers

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**Attendees:** Chair Gadus, Vice Chair Jones, Hartman, McPherson, Williams, Driscoll

**Absentees:** Melden

**Also Present:** Sarantou, Komives

**Presenters:** Rosalyn Clemens, Director of Housing & Monica Brown, CDBG Coordinator

**Public Attendance:** 50

**Legislative Aide Facilitating:** Evan Snapp

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## Topics...

- Community Development Block Grants Working Meeting

## Discussion...

- Gadus: Let's get started with this Housing and Community Development meeting. Our topic today is CDBG, Community Development Block Grants. Thank you everyone for being here, I know there is a lot of passion that you have for this topic. Please sign your name by the door to make a public comment when it is time.
- Clemens: Good afternoon. I'm joined by Monica Brown, our grants manager. We oversee the CDBG program, the HOME program and ESG program. These each are our large block grants for community development. These grants support about 97% of our Housing development work. They are considered entitlement grants, and have been proposed to be cut, including a 87,000 reduction for this year. We are advocating through our congressional delegation to save our funds. This year, we provided HUD with our 5-year consolidated plan, which includes our priorities and planning research, needs assessments, etc. What we hope to do today is have our consultant provide an overview of the plan. HUD caps what we can spend for public service at 15%. Many of our applicants provide this type of public service, but they cannot all be accepted or we will go over the cap. Just some context. Monica Brown will go through some of the process we've gone through.
- Brown: Good afternoon. In the process of doing this, we have been doing our 26 Action Plan and the 5-year Consolidated plan. We must submit these to HUD. Our application process for CDBG funding started in January, apps had to be sent in by February. We held several public hearings between April and May. We held open office hours for community partners. We have a Citizen participation plan, and we go through a citizen



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review board. We also had a public comment period. We expanded education and marketing from previous years. Homeless service providers are in their own category, all non-homeless service providers have a different committee. Our city staff are on an internal review board, but we don't score applications, that is reserved for other committees. All our applicants attend a mandatory submission design meeting, where we go over federal guidelines that must be followed. We had an interview week where we interviewed all applicants. The Director approves, then the Mayor's office, and City Council offers the final approval. The evaluation criteria involves board composition, financial viability, project budgets, and 1:1 match for both CDBG and ESG funds. We look at past performance. We had 35 applications, requesting a total of 4.7 million.

- Clemens: Our 2025 funding amounts to \*\*\*\*\* relative to 2024\*\*\*\*\*
- Clemens: HOME partnership development funds help housing rehab programs, down payment assistance, etc. We have a couple of large rental housing projects that we are committed to, including Thurgood Marshall School. Some ongoing projects take up funds that have been allocated but are still being spent. The ESG program is for the Emergency Solutions Grant. We had about a 900,000 dollar reduction in this program.
- Clemens: The consistent priority need in our city is affordable housing, including housing rehab. That is why we dedicating our 2.3 million carryover to programs dedicated to affordable housing issues. A goal of this administration has been to update, upgrade and maintain our Parks and Playgrounds, especially in low-income areas of the city. Only 6 of my department's employees are funded by General Fund. Everyone else is paid by "administrative fees" of about 20% of our available funds. Managing this process is laborious and we need every one of the full-time employees. About 14% of the total allocation is for public service organizations. A smaller 2% is for capital improvements, another small portion is for capacity building activities within the community. This is how we are proposing to spend the CDBG grant, meeting all necessary thresholds.
- Clemens: Next, I want to go over some of the organizations, and their proposed allocations. \*SEE SCHEDULE A/B\*
- Clemens: Public Service Activities: 15%, NRSA Public Service: 2%, Affordable Housing: 33%, Planning and Administration: 20%, Economic Development: 2%, Neighborhood Parks and Community Centers: 25%, Code Enforcement 1%, Other (Neighborhood Capacity Building Institute) 2%. The total is \$7,046,960.00. Schedule B relates to the Expenditure of Carryover Funds, which as we said is 728,799.00 dedicated to the Housing Preservation and Rehabilitation Fund. That finishes our overview, and we will be happy to answer questions.
- McPherson: I would love to know more about how to help folks get involved in the roofing program, which is a great program. As well, I'm interested in improving the functionality of the Homelessness board. It was a hard winter and the homelessness needs were severe.



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- Clemens: We used some of our funds to set up three different Winter Crisis Centers in partnership with the homelessness board. I can answer your question about the roofing program in depth, by referral.
- Gadus: The first public speaker is Joe Balderas
- Joe Balderas: I am here on behalf of Sofia Quintero Arts and Culture Center. I operate our community garden. We grow pesticide free produce that we give away to the community for free. We grow about 3000 lbs each year. People with food security come to us. We are the only provider of fresh produce, other food pantries give out dry goods or processed, canned foods etc. We are in what is considered a food desert. Our only grocery is very limited. Other stores are just for conveniences, not for healthy food. Please help us, we really believe this is so important for the community, especially the children.
- William Farnsell: Thank you to the City Councilmembers. I am the CEO of Neighborworks. I heard on the news today that there will be a huge new drone manufacturing facility built in Columbus. My point being that our area is not getting these type of economic development homeruns. Our work in this community is about grassroots economic development and workforce development. We have proven the effectiveness of the Financial Wellness Center. I'm asking you today to reconsider our non-funding in CDBG this year. We were informed that we would not receive funding for the first time this year, despite always hitting our goals, benchmarks and thresholds. We have done everything possible to prove we still deserve this funding. We want to promote entrepreneurship in this community so we can eventually hit our own economic boom 'homerun'. Thank you.
- Williams: Just to clarify, your CDBG request was for the Financial Wellness Center. Last year, your organization did not spend all its funds, and some were returned this year. So can you speak to that? What are the numbers that were left on the table last year and this year.
- Farnsell: I believe it was approximately 24,000 dollars last year, and for this year is about 40,000. We don't know where we're at in the last couple months financially because we haven't received our allocations. We're at an awkward standstill for this year's accounting, but our programming remains strong and effective.
- Farnsell: If we don't get this funding from the city this year, we will definitely have to layoff some of our employees. We have a proven track record of 45 years, and I hope that speaks for us.
- Clemens: What we do during our process is look at performance metrics, which includes money left on the table, reimbursements, operating costs, trends, and many other factors. We have to make tough decisions based on how these organizations compare to each other. We want fiscal discipline for these dollars during tough economic times.
- Veronica Martinez: I am a managing attorney with Legal Aid of Western Ohio (LAWO). I am here asking council to accept the recommendation for funding LAWO. We have been



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providing legal services in the area of Housing law to low-income residents for years. It is more important than ever, as evictions continue to rise along with the cost of rent. We recently had a win, that you may have seen in the news, where a landlord was not able to provide water to a tenant. They are now forced to make the necessary investments to improve their property. For residents, our services are sometimes life-changing. We are on track to spend all of our current year allocation and are assisting hundreds of households.

- David Johnson: I'm here for my organization; Johnson Produce Market. We operate a fresh food market on Pulaski Street that provides good nutritious food to members of the community, especially kids that need something nutritious. I'm here because we were denied funding and I can't figure out what else I needed to do. This is the second year we were denied funding.
- Clemens: Thank you for being here. We are aware of your project and its merits but ultimately you were missing documentation at the deadline, I'm sorry. This is why it's important to follow through with our available training workshops and consultations we offer.
- Johnson: Yes, I know, but I did consult with Monica Brown and we thought we were doing everything right.
- McPherson: We appreciate what you do sir, so I recommend that you join the Capacity Building Institute in the winter that will give you the tools to properly submit next year and have all your documentation in order.
- Noah Woods: Hello Council, I'm a staff attorney at Fair Housing Center. Our allocated funding will continue to support all residents regardless of finance or demographics. We educate folks to prevent housing discrimination and offer flexible assistance across the city. We hope the recommendation of the committee is accepted. Thank you.
- Tracy Britt: Hello and thank you. I'm a board member of Neighborworks. I can tell you all about the greater workers we have in our organization and how hard we work to make this organization useful in the community. They change lives. If you have the ability, please just reduce our funding, but don't take it all away. This will have a negative impact on the people we serve.
- Brian Hull: So I will present quickly, I'm the consultant on this series of CDBG funding since I worked on the Consolidated Plan for your Housing and Community Development Department. I will show you a slideshow with an overview of community needs and analytical findings that are based on community feedback, housing strategy, and a rigorous needs assessment. This is all required by HUD for the successful submission. Our planning has also included in-depth market evaluation, literature review of neighborhood plans and other available data. The goal is short-term action for long-term development. We engaged 15+ agencies in Toledo in support of this planning process.
- Theresa Gadus: Seeing no further questions, this meeting is adjourned.



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