**CITY OF HARTFORD**



# OFFICIAL INSTRUCTIONS

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**

**Application for Program Year 50 (FY2024-25)**

**Released: January 13, 2024**

**Submission Deadline: February 14, 2024, at 11:59 PM**

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### INTRODUCTION

The City of Hartford is designated as an Entitlement Community by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and is allocated grant funds on an annual basis to meet the needs of the low-to-moderate income individuals through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and the Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) Program. Under the City's 2024-2025 CDBG program application process, eligible entities are invited to submit applications for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to carry out community development activities for the period July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025.

### ELIGIBILITY

Eligible entities:

* Community-based agencies that serve low- and moderate-income Hartford residents.
* Proof of 501(c)(3) designation from the IRS at the time of application
* Incorporated with the Secretary of State
* **Possess a SAM UEI at the time of application**.

Applications are initially screened for compliance with the HUD National Objective of *benefiting low- and moderate income-persons* and containing an *eligible activity*.

*Eligible activities* include, but are not limited to employment, youth or senior activities, job creation or retention activities, business, and microenterprise assistance.

*Ineligible activities* include, but are not limited to purchase of equipment, operating and maintenance expenses, political activities, lobbying and income payments.

### PRIORITY PROGRAMMING

In FY 2024-25, given the increasing cost of housing in Hartford, and the rising number of residents whose funds fall short of accommodating their basic needs, the City’s allocation of CDBG funding for Public Service will prioritize programming that:

1. Directly enhances the ability of residents to secure and maintain stable housing (eviction counseling, housing search, financial capability), or
2. Defrays other costs that diminish the total income available for housing (e.g. affordable childcare, utilities programs, provide access to lower cost food outlets, benefits screening).

Applications proposing other eligible activities consistent with the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan will also be accepted and considered.

### PUBLIC HEARING/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SESSIONS

The Office of Central Grants Administration will conduct two virtual Public Hearing/Technical Assistance Sessions to give an overview of the program, provide program application assistance and answer any questions about the applications and priorities. While attendance at either of the sessions is not mandatory, it is strongly suggested, as the application has been updated.

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| **Session #1** Virtual  Wednesday, January 24, 2024 @ 2:30pm  OPENFORMS: <http://tinyurl.com/mvps5wc6> | **Session #2** Virtual  Wednesday, January 24, 2024 @ 5:30pm  OPENFORMS: <http://tinyurl.com/mvps5wc6> |

### COMPLETING THE APPLICATION:

* The CDBG application.is available on OPENFORMS at:[**http://tinyurl.com/yxayfnj2**](http://tinyurl.com/yxayfnj2) The form instructs the user to enter answers **into text fields and checkboxes.** As you progress through the application, depending on your responses new choices will be presented and you will be asked to input additional or repeated information.
* **Every question must be answered**, even if only to insert “N/A” or “0.” You will not be able to advance in the application if a question is left blank. After your application is submitted a group of panelists will be instructed to score your application based in part on completeness, so **please make sure that every blank has been filled**. Some blanks require numbers, some require text. **In those requiring text, there is an indicated character limit, which includes both text and spaces.**
* **Section 8: If a field is marked “N/A,”** panelists reviewing and scoring your application **will seek an explanation**. Available space is provided in Section 8 for this purpose. When writing your explanations, **please include a section or subsection number for each**.

### Applicants are asked to upload documents (see below).

* Note also that **four of the Required Documents** (City of Hartford Grantee Certification and Official Application Signature form, City of Hartford Tax/Financial Certification and Declaration of Delinquencies form, City of Hartford Maintenance of Insurance Certification form, and City of Hartford EEO Report form), listed as Required Documents #1-4 on the application, **can be downloaded** on the Central Grants’ website. **These forms should be printed, signed in blue ink, and uploaded into the application individually where requested.** Signatures are **required** on the EEO Report, Grantee Certification, Maintenance of Insurance Certification, and Tax/Financial Certification and Declaration of Delinquencies forms.
* The application is submitted electronically through the platform. For your records, you should download your own copy as a PDF.
* The following tables list the Required Documents and Optional Attachments, and indicates (1) whether the document should be attached to the Application using its “Attach Files” button, and also (2) whether a blank form is included in the Certification Packet available for download at [Central Grants Administration – City of Hartford (hartfordct.gov)](https://www.hartfordct.gov/Government/Departments/OMBG/Central-Grants) within **FY24-25 CDBG - ESG- HOPWA Application Process**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Requested Documents** | **Upload to Application?** | **On website?** |
| 1: City of Hartford Grantee Certification and Official Application Signature (signed and dated) | **Yes** | **Yes** |
| 2: City of Hartford Tax/Financial Certification and Declaration of Delinquencies (signed and dated) | **Yes** | **Yes** |
| 3: City of Hartford Maintenance of Insurance Certification (signed and dated) | **Yes** | **Yes** |
| 4: City of Hartford EEO Report (signed and dated) | **Yes** | **Yes** |
| 5: Organization’s Board of Director’s List (current as of application date) | **Yes** | **No** |
| 6: Organization’s 501(c)(3) designation from IRS | **Yes** | **No** |
| 7: Organization's proof of incorporation from the CT Secretary of State | **Yes** | **No** |
| 8: Organization’s single audit report for most recent fiscal year **OR Organization’s financial statement** for the most recent fiscal year (ending 12/31/22 or 6/30/23) | **Yes** | **No** |
| 9: Program Staff Resumes | **Yes** | **No** |

* **The total score obtainable is 100 points.** The point totals for each numbered section, and the subtotals for each subsection, **are below**. Unscored sections are **required for the application to be considered complete**. The table below summarizes the points available for each completed section and subsection:

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| **SECTION** | **POINTS** |
| **1: Organization Contact Information** | Unscored |
| **2: About Your Organization** | Unscored |
| **3: Alignment to the City’s Community Development Priorities** | Unscored |
| **4: About Your Program** | **31 points** |
| Program Priority | Up to 1 point |
| Short Overview & Activity Description | Up to 10 points |
| Other Program-Specific Questions | Up to 10 points |
| Problem Statement | Up to 4 points |
| Unique Characteristics | Up to 6 points |
| **5: Organizational Capacity** | **19 points** |
| Resumes Uploaded | Up to 4 points |
| Staff Qualifications, specific positions | Up to 12 points |
| Other Organizational Capacity Questions | Up to 3 points |
| **6: Measuring Results – validation of efficacy** | **30 points** |
| 2021-22 data (or Year 1) | Up to 10 points |
| 2022-23 data (or Year 2) | Up to 10 points |
| 2023-24 data (or Year 3) | Up to 10 points |
| **7: Program Request and Budget** | **20 points** |
| Program Funding Sources | Up to 6 points |
| CDBG Request | Up to 1 point |
| Other Funding Sources | Up to 3 points |
| Budget Narrative | Up to 6 points |
| Other Request and Budget Questions | Up to 4 points |
| **8: Questions Left Unanswered** | Unscored |
| **9: Attachment Checklist** | Unscored |
| **10: Final Application Check** | Unscored |
| **TOTAL** | **100** |

* **Technical assistance will be available until February 13, 2024,** from Central Grants Administration, **by emailing** Ronnie Vazquez [Ronnie.Vazquez@hartford.gov](mailto:Ronnie.Vazquez@hartford.gov) or Dalia Ajodhi [Dalia.Ajodhi@hartford.gov](mailto:Dalia.Ajodhi@hartford.gov) .
* Please note that on **February 14, 2024, emailed** **questions may not be answered promptly due to the high volume of requests**. If you are seeking help, **it will be best to call**, and leave a message (860.757.9276)

### APPLICATION PROCESS AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

* Review the instructions in the application with care. Each section of the application must be completed as instructed. Missing information will prevent you from continuing to the next screen. Do not leave any applicable questions blank, and do not omit any required authorized signatures.
* Applications must be submitted **through the OPENFORMS website**. Prior year forms, or hand-written applications, will not be accepted.
* If you will be filling out the application in stages, or if you leave the application idle for an extended period, use the **Save button** located at the bottom of each screen. A pop-up screen will appear letting you know the application has been saved and a link will be provided that you can copy or have emailed that will return you to the unfinished application.
* If you do not complete the application in one sitting, you may receive notifications that your application is incomplete. This is to prevent applicants from inadvertently not completing their submission.
* Once you are satisfied with your application, click on SUBMIT and your **application, along with all required attachments, including your audit report or financial statement will be transmitted to Central Grants.**

### Your submission will be received electronically. No hardcopies are needed,

* **Central Grants Administration staff will not pre-review electronic submissions and submissions are final**.
* **Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.**

### MISCELLANEOUS REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

* Budget justification must fully account for the sums requested.
* The Board of Directors list must be current as of the application date.
* Audit reports or financial statements must reflect the applying organization’s most recently completed fiscal year.
* **Applicants are required to complete only Part 1 of the Tax/Financial Certification and Declaration of Delinquencies**. You **do not** need to visit the Tax Division or Revenue Collection Division at City Hall.

**POST-APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCEDURES**

* Staff of the Office of Central Grants Administration will screen all applications to ensure eligibility.
* The electronic application and uploaded documents will be printed and organized into reference books for use by the Court of Common Council, and Office of Central Grants Administration.
* The Tax/Financial Certifications and Declaration of Delinquencies form will be delivered to the Tax Division, and then to the Revenue Collection Division, for analysis; their results will be recorded in Parts 2 and 3 of the form.
* The Office of Central Grants Administration will review financials and other submissions received with the applications.
* Digital copies of applications will be prepared for review by panels and distributed digitally in advance of their meetings to allow for time to read and score.
* Panelists will read and score the applications, and staff of the Office of Central Grants Administration will record and calculate the composite scores for each application. It is anticipated panel meetings will conclude by the end of March-early April.
* Summaries of the applications and panel evaluations will be compiled for review by the Mayor’s Office.
* The mayor will consider the application summaries, complete applications, HUD allocation information, and other guidance deemed appropriate to arrive at recommendations regarding the applications for funding.
* The mayor’s recommendations for funding will be submitted to the Court of Common Council (City Council) for review and published in newspapers of record as required by HUD. It is anticipated this public notice will take place sometime in April.
* Two public hearings are planned for May.
  1. The Court of Common Council will hold a public hearing to receive public comment on the proposed allocations of funding. Timing of the hearing will be determined in Court of Common Council discretion.
  2. The Central Grants Administration will conduct a public hearing to solicit comments from the public regarding the allocations.
* After due consideration according to its rules and procedures, the Court of Common Council will issue a resolution authorizing funding allocation. It is anticipated the resolution will be issued in mid-May. The resolution will be posted to the website of the Office of Central Grants Administration and will indicate all those applicants which have received funding, as well as all amounts.
* The Office of Central Grants Administration will incorporate the results of the Council resolution into an Annual Plan for Fiscal Year 2024-25, which will be submitted to HUD for approval on or before June 30, 2024.
* HUD will issue the results of its review of the Annual Plan within 60 days of its acceptance of delivery to the HUD Field Office. HUD commentary on the Annual Plan is anticipated to take place no later than early September.
* After the Annual Plan is approved, HUD will issue a contract to the City of Hartford officially awarding the CDBG funding. This may not take place until October. However, funded activities may begin July 1, the first day of the fiscal year, and applicants who have been approved for funding will be able to draw down funds in reimbursement of the approved costs of those activities, under the terms of their contracts for the fiscal year once those contracts have been fully executed and the Federal funds made available to the City of Hartford.
* All CDBG funds are payable in reimbursement of actual costs expended in the provision of services, in accordance with all applicable Federal law, and **will not be advanced.**