

TOWN OF BROOKLINE

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (CDBG)

What is it?

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is one of the longest-running programs of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Enacted in 1974, CDBG provides funds to over 1200 communities throughout the country to address critical needs such as quality affordable housing, public facilities, infrastructure, job creation and public services that serve a majority of low-moderate income residents and families. Born from community input and support, CDBG provides freedom to communities to make local choices and decisions on how to best implement these funds.

How does Brookline benefit from CDBG?

The Town of Brookline receives an annual allocation of approximately \$1.3 million in CDBG funding to provide resources to a variety of community projects and programs. The Town has received over \$40 million in the last thirty years and has leveraged millions more from public and private sectors to help these funds spread even further to support projects and programs that help make Brookline a high-quality and inclusive place to live.

Affordable Housing

CDBG has supported both the expansion and improvement of affordable housing developments in the Town. For many years, the CDBG program has provided funding to the Brookline Housing Authority for capital projects such as the Egmont Street Playground, the addition of security cameras, and energy efficiency projects. CDBG has also assisted the Town by providing funding for acquisition of properties for increased affordable housing, such as Pine Street Inn's renovation of two lodging houses on Beals Street.

Public Services

CDBG provides funding to a variety of service agencies such as programs through the Brookline Housing Authority, the Brookline Community Mental Health Center, The Public Schools of Brookline and other organizations that assist low-income residents in the Town. This includes programs that support English as Second Language, early childhood intervention, job readiness assistance, services for residents that have mental or behavioral challenges, and numerous others. By serving both children and adults, public service programs supported by CDBG in Brookline work directly with the Town's most vulnerable populations by providing necessary social services to help these residents successfully incorporate themselves into the workforce, school, and the community as a whole.

Economic Development / Job Creation

CDBG supports eligible businesses with direct financial assistance, technical assistance grants and loans to help create jobs. In recent years, the Town of Brookline has used CDBG to offer micro-enterprise loans which assisted businesses with five or fewer employees.

Public Facilities/ Park Improvements / Infrastructure

CDBG funds that support public facilities such as town-owned and non-profit-owned buildings, streets, parks playgrounds, and infrastructure improvements are an important part of the community development strategy and greatly assist in creating a diverse, sustainable community. The Town of Brookline has utilized these funds to support the Gateway East Project, the Brookline Community Mental Health Center, Brookline Avenue Park, the Brookline Senior Center, and numerous other projects.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (CDBG) BASICS

A) Authorized by Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, the CDBG program is one of the longest continuously run programs at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

B) The CDBG program aims to develop strong communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanding economic opportunities, principally for low-and moderate-income households.

How can these funds be utilized?

CDBG Funds can be utilized to fund activities that meet one or more of the National Objectives set by HUD:

A) Benefit to Low to Moderate Income Residents

B) Prevent Slum and Blight (eg. HUD designation. Brookline is not eligible)

C) Meet Urgent Community Needs (eg Natural Disasters)



Beals Street Pine Street Inn Project



Emerald Necklace Area Street Infrastructure Improvements

Eligible Activities

- A) Activities Related to Housing
- B) Other Real Property Activities
- C) Public Facilities
- D) Activities Related to Economic Development
- E) Activities Related to Public Services
- F) Assistance to Community Based Development Organizations
- G) Other Types Activities, Planning and Administration of the Grant
- H) Eligible Activities and National Objectives

HOUSING

A Brief Perspective on Affordable Housing

Affordable housing means housing available to households earning no more than 80 percent of area median income at a cost that does not exceed 30 percent of their monthly gross income. In the greater Boston area, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development updates annually their area median income statistics to determine eligibility for most housing assistance programs. The area median income is the median family income, adjusted for household size, within a given metropolitan or non-metro area.



St. Aidan's: 20 affordable rentals, 16 affordable owner-occupied units
CDBG Funds Invested: \$500,000 for a conservation easement, historic preservation and open space purposes

Facts about Housing and Housing Income in Brookline

Brookline faces a housing crisis. The high cost of housing and the existing barriers to access affordable housing makes it very difficult for families to afford living in Brookline.

Some facts:

- Brookline's largest housing problem is affordability with some of the highest housing costs in Massachusetts and those costs continue to rise.
- Over a third of all (34%) of Brookline's households have low or moderate incomes. That is, one household out of every three households lives below 80% of area median income.
- Low income renters, a population of almost one-fifth of all Brookline households, are severely cost-burdened by paying more of 50 percent of their income toward housing costs.
- While a number of low and moderate income renters seem high, these cost burdens affect both low income renters as well as homeowners.
- Low to moderate income families with children are the population most vulnerable to be at-risk of homelessness in Brookline. They have an urgent need of being placed in affordable housing, along with the elderly and people with disabilities.
- Over a third (36%) of all Brookline households pay more than 30% of household income toward housing costs and nearly one-fifth (18%) of all Brookline households pay more than 50% of their household income toward housing costs. Long waiting lists for all affordable units – individuals, families, seniors and disabled.
- Brookline rents are among the most expensive in the Commonwealth; the average reported rent for a one-bedroom unit in Brookline is currently \$2,100 - \$2,500 and \$2,800 - \$3,100 for a two-bedroom unit

Source: 5 Year HUD Consolidated Plan. Housing Needs Assessment.

Housing Goals

Housing Goals

The 2016 Housing Production Plan proposed a set of goals and strategies to tackle the affordable housing crisis in Brookline. The goals focus on new productions of units, preservation of existing units, design and experience of neighborhoods and targeting of populations in need.

Production & Preservation: Provide more than 10 percent of Brookline's year-round housing stock as affordable housing to address documented housing needs and preserve the long-term affordability and physical condition of existing affordable housing units.

Populations in Need: Create housing that supports documented housing needs for seniors, people with physical and cognitive disabilities, young adults, and low/moderate income families.

Population Diversity: Actively promote and preserve economic, racial, and social diversity throughout Brookline through provision of more rental units and housing affordable to a range of incomes from extremely low- to middle-income.

Neighborhood Integrity & Stability: Protect and enhance the physical and architectural character of Brookline's neighborhoods and encourage new environmentally- sustainable affordable housing in all neighborhoods that complements neighborhood identity and provides additional public benefits where possible, such as public green space.

Related Community Goals: Recognizing housing as but one of many elements to help achieve community development and preservation goals, encourage sensitive reuse of historic resources and new residential development on previously developed or underutilized sites that:

- enhance existing neighborhoods
- help strengthen the local economy and tax base
- support an active and accessible transportation system
- preserve and maintain priority open space
- support other related community goals

Housing Types: Encourage development of innovative and diverse housing options such as intergenerational housing, co-housing, cooperative housing, service-enriched housing, accessory apartments, naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs), and microunits.

Local Implementation Capacity: Build local capacity to address housing needs through collaborative public/private partnerships, expanded local resources, and leveraging of federal, state, and private funding



86 Dummer Street: 32 affordable rental housing units
CDBG Funds invested: \$600,000 for land acquisition through Ground lease for 99-years
April 16, 2013

Numerical Goals

If pursued systematically at a rate of 131 SHI units (or more) per year, the 10 percent statutory minimum could be achieved within three years.

Current Status: The town continues to process a number of 40B Comprehensive Permit projects which will add a significant number of affordable units to Brookline's housing stock. Since 2016, the town approved eleven 40B projects containing a total of 728 rental units, of which 199 will be affordable to households earning 80% of AMI or less. Four additional 40B projects are in various stages of approval. These projects could add as many as 287 additional rental units, of which 71 would be affordable to households earning 80% of AMI or less.

CDBG Resources

Brookline Housing Division

The Housing Division works with the Housing Advisory Board, and other town boards, committees, and departments to develop and implement the town's affordable housing goals, policies, strategies, and programs; responding to changing statutory and regulatory requirements, market opportunities, and resident needs.

Responsibilities of the Housing Division include:

- Assisting developers of affordable units to market, select, and qualify buyers
- Collaborating with other divisions on comprehensive and project-specific planning efforts
- Monitoring affordable ownership and rental units to assure continued residency / affordability
- Providing technical and financial assistance to income-eligible homebuyers
- Referring those seeking affordable ownership and rental opportunities in Brookline to available resources
- Working with developers of market-rate units to fulfill the affordable housing requirements of the Zoning By-Law(PDF).
- Working with owners of affordable housing to preserve existing affordability
- Working with non and for profit developers to create additional affordable housing in affordable or mixed income projects

The Housing Division is part of the Community Planning Division, and it is tasked with responsibilities found in Section 3.12.7 of the Brookline Town By-Laws. The Division is staffed with 2.5 employees and funded-partially with CDBG funds.



154-156 Boylston Street - In 2004, the Brookline Improvement Coalition (BIC) purchased a 6-unit rental property at 154-156 Boylston Street for \$1,260,000. BIC undertook \$250,000 in renovations to create this two 2-bedroom and four 3-bedroom rental property. Funding for this project included a Massachusetts Housing Partnership permanent plus program loan, MHP de-leading grant and Town of Brookline CDBG funds (\$593,000).

FISCAL RESOURCES
- FEDERAL: CDBG AND HOME
- STATE: POOL OF PROGRAMS OFFERED TO DEVELOPERS
- LOCAL: AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

INSTITUTIONAL
- BROOKLINE PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - STAFF
- PLANNING BOARD AND ZBA
- HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD
- SELECTBOARD
- TOWN MEETING MEMBERS
- STAKEHOLDERS – HOUSING DEVELOPERS

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK
- INCLUSIONARY ZONING ORDINANCE
- LOCAL INITIATIVE PROGRAM
- CHAPTER 40B – PRODUCITON OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- ZONING BY-LAW
- FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL PROGRAM

Guiding Principles
- Housing Production Plan
- CDBG 5 Year Consolidated Plan
- Annual Action Plans
- Brookline By-Law

HOUSING

Examples of Past Projects



The Brown Family House in Coolidge Corner (370 Harvard St)

The Harold and Ronald Brown Family House is located in the Coolidge Corner neighborhood of Brookline, MA, and it is a new construction affordable housing project comprised of a building with 62 rental units for households at a range of incomes along with supportive services above a ground floor of less than 5,000 gross square feet of retail space. Still in construction and to be completed by summer 2020, the units will range in size from 600 square feet 1-bedroom units to 852 square feet 2-bedroom units. 60 units will be available to households qualifying under the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and the Chapter 40B guidelines as low or moderate income.

The Brookline Board of Selectmen made a commitment of up to \$3 million to 2 Life Communities for this project. The commitment was fulfilled by a combination of Brookline Housing Trust (\$1,466,819), HOME program (\$807,028) and CDBG (\$726,153). At a cost of \$30 million, the project was financed with federal, state, local, tax credits and private equity. Brookline funds are leveraging almost \$27 million in invested funds.

2 Life Communities is a long-standing provider of quality, affordable senior housing and services in the Greater Boston area. This project represents an excellent opportunity to expand Brookline's supply of much-needed affordable senior housing and will be located in an ideal location given the site's access to public transportation, retail opportunities, and services.

For more information about the application process, please visit: <https://www.2lifecommunities.org/brown-family-house> or contact Valeria Lendel, Leasing Coordinator at (617) 912-8491 or leasing@2lifecommunities.org. Applications are available at the information table.

Brookline Housing Authority Capital Projects Program

The Brookline Housing Authority is a significant source of affordable housing in Brookline. With more than 920 public housing units at twelve sites of low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities, the capital needs are significant. Though BHA apartments today are safe and well-maintained, Brookline public housing is at serious risk. Traditional state and federal public housing funding has fallen far short of capital needs. Most properties face multi-million dollar capital repair deficits. Plumbing and mechanical systems are well beyond their typical useful life, energy use is inefficient, and kitchens and bathrooms are old and tired.

The CDBG Program makes a critical difference in allowing the BHA to continue providing safe, attractive, well-maintained housing. It has allowed the Brookline Housing Authority to continue investing in annual capital funds – approximately with allocations of \$300,000 per year. The CDBG program leverages state and BHA's resources to design and build playgrounds, improve resident security, create accessible apartments and community spaces, refurbish landscaping and roadways, install energy efficient windows, boilers and water tanks, replace deteriorating masonry, and replace emergency generators. Town funding is a major reason that Brookline public housing is far more attractive than public housing in many other communities.

During the previous 5-year consolidated period, The Brookline Board of Selectmen made a commitment of up to \$1.6 million to the Brookline Housing Authority for projects with urgent need and impact. Those projects are: FY20 (\$435,850) Resident Security, Doors and Locks; FY19 (\$79,921) High Street and Col Floyd's Resident Security, Playgrounds and Capital Improvements; FY18 (\$368,949) Resident Security, Outdoor Spaces and Capital Improvements; FY17 (\$417,631) Resident Security, Playgrounds and Capital Improvements; (FY16 and FY15) Energy Efficiency, Resident Security and Capital Projects (\$368,036).



51-53 and 55-57 Beals Street, Brookline MA (Pine Street Inn)

The Beals Street project involved the substantial renovation and long-term preservation of two existing three-story lodging houses built around 1900 and converted to their current use in 1931. In 2013, The Town's Planning Department facilitated the acquisition and rehabilitation of the two properties by Pine Street Inn, with an investment of CDBG Funds in the amount of \$1,288,920, and additional Town's resources. CDBG funds allowed the rehabilitation of 30 single room occupancy units targeted to individuals at or below 30% of area median income, and one single room to be occupied by a staff member at 60% of area median income. Supportive services are available to residents.



What are the key housing needs in Brookline?

COMMUNITY FACILITIES / PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Examples of Past Community Facility and Public Infrastructure Projects

The CDBG program may fund publicly-owned facilities and infrastructure such as, streets, playgrounds, and underground utilities, and buildings owned by non-profits that are open to the general public.

What are the key community facilities / public infrastructure needs in Brookline?

Parks and Playgrounds



Public Infrastructure



Public Facilities



PUBLIC SERVICES

Examples of Public Services CDBG Funds

CDBG provides funding to a variety of service agencies such as programs through the Brookline Housing Authority, the Brookline Mental Health Center, The Public Schools of Brookline, the Brookline Senior Center, and Steps to Success, Inc. By serving both children and adults, public service programs supported by CDBG in Brookline work directly with the Town's most vulnerable populations by providing necessary social services to help these residents successfully incorporate themselves into the workforce, schools, and the community as a whole. See some examples of programs below.



Work Connections Program at Steps to Success, Inc.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Each year, the Department of Planning and Community Development uses CDBG funding to support programs that serve youth in the Town of Brookline. These programs provide after school programs, family development, and career exploration and readiness.

Recently funded youth programs include:

- 1) Steps to Success, Inc.
- 2) Parent Child Home Program (Public Schools of Brookline)

SENIOR and ADULT PROGRAMS

Federal CDBG funding is used to support programs that serve both adult and senior populations in Brookline. This funding is used by different agencies to provide transportation, social and language programming, and career exploration and guidance services.

Recently funded senior and adult programs include:

- 1) Next Steps Program - Brookline Housing Authority
- 2) Brookline ESOL Program - Brookline Housing Authority
- 3) Brookline Elder Taxi Program - Brookline Senior Center



The Brookline ESOL Program Graduation

HEALTH SERVICES

The Town of Brookline, through its use of CDBG funding, has supported the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health's services to both adults and adolescents. These services include mental and behavioral services, and assistance to families experiencing an assortment of problems.



Police Exam Information Session through the Next Steps Program

What are the key public service needs in Brookline?

Examples of different types of Public Service needs

1. Employment services (e.g., job training)
2. Crime prevention and public safety
3. Child care Services
4. Health services (e.g. Mental Health)
5. Substance abuse services
6. Fair housing counseling
7. Education programs
8. Energy conservation;
9. Services for senior citizens (e.g. Transportation);
10. Services for homeless persons;
11. Welfare services (excluding income payments);
12. Down payment assistance
13. Services for the disabled
14. Management of tenant-based rental assistance (TBRA) programs

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / SMALL BUSINESSES

Examples of Economic Development / Small Business Projects CDBG funds can support:

1. MicroEnterprise development assistance (eg. job creation and business creation)

These are activities designed to foster the development, support, and expansion of microenterprise businesses. A microenterprise is defined as a commercial enterprise that has five or fewer employees one or more of whom owns the enterprise.

2. Technical assistance to businesses

This activity involves providing technical assistance and training directly to businesses on topics such as business planning or accounting.

3. Commercial rehabilitation (eg. Activities which are designed to bring commercial structures up to code or improve their facades.)

These are activities that are designed to bring commercial structures up to code or improve their facades.

4. Special economic development activities

CDBG funds may be used to undertake certain economic development activities. These activities include: Acquiring constructing, reconstructing, rehabilitating, or installing commercial or industrial buildings, structures, and other real property equipment and improvements, including railroad spurs or similar extensions. These are economic development projects undertaken by nonprofit entities and grantees (public entities). Assisting a private, for-profit business. Assistance may include grants, loans, loan guarantees, and technical assistance; and providing economic development services in connection with otherwise eligible CDBG economic development activities.

5. Job training that involves skill building class to employees or potential employees)

Job training involves providing skill building classes to employees or potential employees and can be an important part of an economic program.

6. Economic development undertaken by a Community Based Development Organization (CBDO)

These are activities designed to assist in neighborhood revitalization or community economic development and are carried out by an organization that qualifies as a CBDO.

What are the key economic development / small business needs in Brookline?