

Community Development Block Grants - OCRA

Through the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs, Indiana requests federal funds to help rural communities with a variety of projects such as wastewater and water systems, community centers, health and safety programs, and many others.

There are a number of funding options for water/wastewater utilities under this program, which are listed below.

1. Community Focus Funds (CFF)

CFF Grants are funded with federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The goal of the CFF program is to encourage communities with eligible populations to focus on long-term community development. Eligibility for Community Focus Fund dollars is based on the following criteria:

- The area to be served has a substantial low and moderate income population (51% or greater) or is designated a slum or blighted area by local resolution.
- The project addresses the long-term planning and development efforts for the community.
- The funds granted will have a significant impact on the proposed project.
- Project readiness and will be completed within 18 months after being awarded.

Eligible CFF projects include, but are not limited to water projects, sewer projects or storm drainage projects. Grant awards can be up to \$700,000. Non-profit utilities can be a sub-recipient through an application filing from an incorporated county (excluding Lake Co. and most of Hamilton Co.), a small (non-entitlement) city or incorporated town. Approximately \$20 million in grant funds is available annually.

2. Planning Grant

Planning Grants are funded with Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The goal of the program is to encourage communities to plan for long-term community development. Community leaders

can apply for projects relating to such issues as utility infrastructure, downtown revitalization and community facilities. To be competitive, projects must demonstrate:

- They meet a goal of the Federal Act;
- The particular planning initiative addresses established long-term community priorities;
- The funds granted will have a significant impact on the overall project;
- The community has a strong commitment to the project; and
- The project is ready to proceed upon the grant being awarded and will be completed within 14 months.

Planning grants can be awarded up to \$60,000 for a study on two utilities. A master utility study (water, wastewater, and storm water) can be awarded up to \$90,000. Types of plans that can be funded include asset management plans, feasibility studies, preliminary engineering and master utility plans.

Program Application

All of the programs listed above have application forms that need to be completed. If you have any questions on the CDBG programs or would like an application, please contact your Community Liaison (a link to the district map and Community Liaison is shown below):

<http://www.in.gov/ocra/2330.htm>