



**Fiscal Year (FY) 2023  
CDBG Request for  
Proposals (RFP)  
Scoring Evaluation  
Handbook**

**Economic Development Department  
Community Development Division**

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## **CITY OF SAN DIEGO – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION**

The City of San Diego’s Community Development Division (CDD) (within the Economic Development Department) oversees federally funded entitlement grant programs including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), and the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME).

## **THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides funds to local jurisdictions on an annual basis through the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) for local community development, housing activities, and public services. The primary objective of the CDBG Program is the development of viable communities through the provision of decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities. In accordance with CDBG standards, these resources are intended to primarily benefit low- and moderate-income persons and neighborhoods.

## **CITY OF SAN DIEGO – CONSOLIDATED PLAN ADVISORY BOARD**

The Consolidated Plan Advisory Board (CPAB) was established by the City Council via Ordinance No. O-19963 (Sections 26.2101–26.2113 of the Municipal Code) to provide advice and recommendations on certain policy issues related to the City of San Diego HUD grant entitlements inclusive of the CDBG program. Specifically, per [§26.2113](#), the CPAB is charged with performing an open and impartial evaluation of the applications for CDBG funds and provide funding recommendations to the City Council.

## **PURPOSE OF THE CPAB SCORING EVALUATION HANDBOOK**

This *CPAB Scoring Evaluation Handbook* outlines the process and procedures the CPAB will follow in reviewing and scoring applications submitted for the Fiscal Year (FY 2023) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Request for Proposals (RFP) funding cycle.

The Handbook identifies:

- The roles and responsibilities of the CPAB (reviewers);
- Procedures to follow in conducting the review;
- Reference materials that may be used in evaluating the applications;
- Guidance for using the Economic Development Grants Management System (ED Grants); and
- Conflict of interest guidelines for panel members.

Appendices of this handbook include the following:

1. RFP applicant names, project names, and board of directors.
2. Subrecipient Past Performance: No deductions will be made to applications, but the CPAB may review applicant’s past performance in their overall evaluation of the proposal.

3. ED Grants Registration and User Guides for Reviewers: Step-by-step guides to navigate through ED Grants.
4. Scoring Criteria for all categories
5. Tentative Budgets for each category (*as of January 2022*)
6. FY 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan Goals

The review of CDBG applications, as outlined in [Council Policy 700-02](#), is a competitive process to ensure funds are invested in the highest scoring projects.

## I. REVIEW PANEL: RESPONSIBILITIES

Reviewers are responsible for conducting an independent and objective review of the CDBG applications and must be able to fulfill the following responsibilities:

1. Read and become familiar with supplementary materials provided (inclusive of this Handbook) prior to the commencement of their review;
2. Recuse themselves from the review of applications where an actual or apparent conflict of interest may be present;
3. Consider, review, and score each application in relation to the applicable FY 2023 Scoring Criteria;
4. Refer applicants to CDD staff if reviewer is contacted directly by applicant; and
5. Complete their review in ED Grants on or before the **March 04, 2022** deadline. If a reviewer is unable to meet this deadline, they are asked to contact City staff as soon as possible in the review process.

## II. CITY STAFF: RESPONSIBILITIES

The City of San Diego CDD staff (City staff), charged with the responsibility of ensuring the CDBG allocation process is impartial and consistent with all applicable standards, will:

1. Ensure reviewers are comfortable navigating through ED Grants. If necessary, deliver hard copies of requested and necessary information to reviewers in a timely manner;
2. Respond to all inquiries from the reviewers by the next business day;
3. Provide staff and facilitate the virtual Ad-Hoc Committee meetings;

4. Create a ranking of the applications by project-type based on their average scores in descending order and present the scoring recommendation to the CPAB for its ratification at the **March 16, 2022**, CPAB meeting (please note the CPAB meeting for March will be the third Wednesday); and
5. Present CPAB's recommendation to the City Council for review and approval in April 2022 (time and date to be determined) in conjunction with the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Annual Action Plan.

### III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

In order to ensure compliance with applicable HUD requirements and other applicable standards, as well as to ensure a fair and transparent scoring process, CPAB reviewers are required to follow certain conflict of interest guidelines. A conflict of interest generally describes a situation in which financial or other personal considerations may compromise or bias professional judgment and objectivity.

The CDBG conflict of interest provisions at the federal level are based on the regulations found at [24 CFR 570.611](#), which can be summarized as follows:

*No person who is an employee, agent, consultant, officer, or elected or appointed official of the recipient (City of San Diego in this instance), or any designated public agencies, or any sub-recipient which is receiving CDBG funds and who exercises or has exercised any functions or responsibilities with respect to CDBG activities or who is in a position to participate in a decision-making process or gain inside information with regard to such activities, may obtain a financial interest or benefit from the activity, or have an interest in any contract, subcontract or agreement with respect thereto, or in any of its proceeds, either for themselves or those with whom they have family or business ties, during their tenure and for one year thereafter.*

The CDBG RFP review process is also subject to a variety of federal conflict of interest regulations and standards. Said standards prohibit City employees, as well as its officers and agents, from participating in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by federal funds if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, is involved. Note that even *apparent* conflicts of interest are prohibited.

The City of San Diego Municipal Code also governs the actions of the CPAB in relation to conflicts of interests and requires CPAB members to recuse themselves from participating “in any decision in which she or he has any personal or financial interest” (see [§ 26.2109](#)).

The City Council has also adopted [Policy No. 000-04](#), which is the Code of Ethics for all city employees and board/commission members.

Within the general context of the conflict of interest guidelines, a *financial interest* includes:

- Receipt of gifts of \$250 or more in value in the previous twelve months from an applicant organization;

- Receipt or promise of income (e.g., salary) from an applicant organization in the previous 12 months;
- Having an investment of \$2,000 or more in an applicant organization;
- Holding a position of management or serving on the board of an applicant organization, whether in a paid or unpaid position, within the previous twelve months; and,
- Ownership of real estate with a value of \$2,000 or more with an applicant organization.

As noted, federal standards also prohibit apparent conflicts of interests. An apparent conflict of interest is generally considered to occur when the circumstances are such that a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts would question the impartiality of the reviewer in his/her evaluation of an application.

Review panel members are obligated to report any conflicts of interest to City staff immediately. Reviewers can declare the presence of such conflicts via ED Grants at the time of registration, via email or via a phone call. Declaring such conflicts does not mean the reviewer is unable to serve; it simply means the reviewer may not review those applications or participate in the Ad-Hoc Committee meeting discussions regarding those applications where the conflict exists. It is important to note that a conflict of interest exists whether or not decisions are affected by a personal interest—conflicts of interest only imply the potential for bias is present. When in doubt, a reviewer may contact City staff for guidance.

Reviewers must keep in mind the conflict-of-interest provisions during the process as potential conflicts may exist in relation to the applicant organization, its board members, its staff, the proposed project itself, its intended beneficiaries, and/or other parties that may be affected by the proposed project. If the reviewer identifies the presence of a conflict of interest at any point during the review process, the reviewer is also obligated to report such conflict immediately to City staff.

#### **IV. CONFIDENTIALITY**

CPAB reviewers are also asked to respect the confidentiality of the RFP applications and supporting materials. The contents on the website system are only for the CPAB reviewers and should not be shown or distributed to other parties.

Furthermore, reviewers may only discuss the applications, their contents, and the reviewers own assessments of the applications or similar related matters during the Ad-Hoc Committee meetings and/or with City staff as part of related inquiries.

Completion of a Confidentiality Agreement is required of all reviewers prior to their registration in ED Grants (as described below).

## V. REVIEWER REFERENCE MATERIALS

Each Board member participating in the review of the FY 2023 CDBG applications will have access to relevant reference materials on or before January 31, 2022. Some materials will be made available only after successful registration in ED Grants.

Information available to the reviewers includes the following:

1. Applicant Organization Submittals: This material includes the portion of the applications subject to CPAB review, including supporting documents.
2. Board of Directors Rosters: To assist with identifying potential conflicts of interest, the Board Roster for applicant organizations is included as Appendix A.
3. List of Applicants and Projects: A listing of all applications submitted, sorted by RFP category: Public Services (PS), Community & Economic Development (CED), and Nonprofit Facility Improvements (NCIP-F). The information provided will include the name of the applicant organization and the name of the proposed project, as identified by the applicant in the application.
4. Scoring Criteria Templates: Scores will be entered directly into the ED
5. Grants scoring review form for each individual applicant organization submittal.
6. Tentative Budgets for each category. Budgets are established as of January 2022, but as the Annual Action Plan approaches, budgets may increase or decrease depending on a number of outside factors. Any changes to the budget are communicated using the email distribution list of applicant organizations.
7. Fiscal Years 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan Goals. In accordance with the City's most current Consolidated Plan, funds allocated toward eligible activities must meet one of the established Consolidated Plan Goals.

### **Subrecipient Past Performance:**

The CPAB will be able to view applicant's performance over the last fiscal year on two components:

- Whether the outcome goals were met
- How much of their award was expended;

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CPAB understands the potential impact to subrecipient performance. Any evaluation of past performance in general is to ensure the organization has the capacity to perform on a future contract, if awarded.

## VI. REVIEWING & SCORING APPLICATIONS

The following sections provide details regarding the six primary elements of the review process for the CPAB members:



## Preparation: Prior to the Review

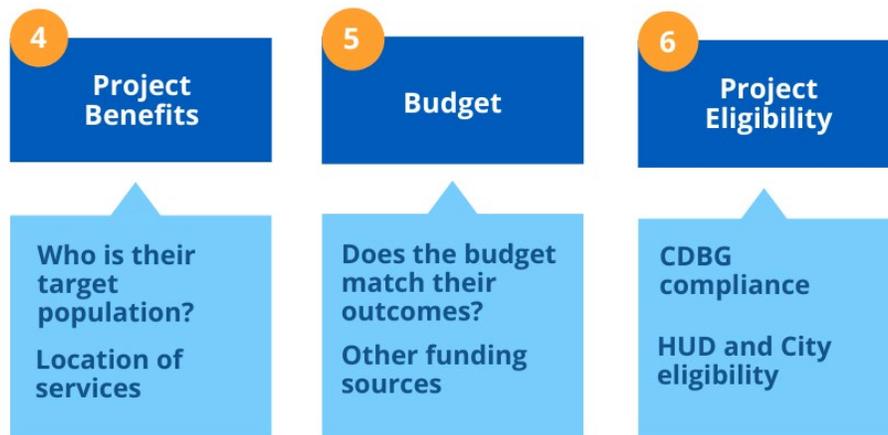
To reiterate, prior to the release of the relevant information as described above, reviewers are required to complete the following for registration purposes:

1. Register as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) in the ED Grants system at: [edgrants.force.com](https://edgrants.force.com) . If a CPAB member has scored applications in the past and has an existing account in ED Grants, the previously used password will need to be reset. Please email [CDBG@sandiego.gov](mailto:CDBG@sandiego.gov) if you encounter difficulties in resetting your password.
2. Examine the *Board Member Rosters* (Appendix A) and *List of Applicants and Projects* (Appendix B) and identify any proposal and/or applicant organization where a conflict of interest may exist and inform City staff of any such conflict.

## READING AND ANALYZING APPLICATIONS

Reviewers are instructed to evaluate applications based on the FY 2023 CDBG RFP Scoring Criteria. Reviewers should consider how well the applicant fully describes the proposed project in relation to the questions asked. The graphic below describes how City staff recommended applicants approach writing their application.





Each section in the Scoring Criteria will be accompanied by an annotation icon to assist reviewers in evaluating the applicants’ responses in ED Grants.

1. CPAB approved the establishment of a tiebreaker as part of the FY 2020 Scoring Criteria at the [September 12, 2018, CPAB meeting](#). The tiebreaker will require CPAB members to indicate whether the overall project is of high, medium, or low priority to fund in the event of a tie within the Comment Box field on the scoring form within ED Grants. If a tie is remaining after the CPAB ranking of priorities, City staff will use the highest score in the Organizational Capacity section.
2. [Council Policy 700-02](#), Item 13: In December of 2016, City Staff updated Council Policy 700-02 to ensure agencies applying for capital improvement projects do not have an open capital improvement project at the same location.

Reviewers should not:

- Use prior or outside knowledge of an applicant organization. Comments and scores are based only on the information submitted in the application.
- Impose their own evaluation standards. Applications should be reviewed in relation to the Scoring Criteria.
- Make sarcastic or derogatory remarks in the comments section of the scoring template or in public meetings.

## New to Fiscal Year 2023 Scoring Criteria

At the [October 21, 2021, Virtual CPAB meeting](#), the CPAB unanimously approved the updates to the FY 2023 Scoring Criteria. The following updates/revisions were made to the Scoring Criteria:

Public Services & Community/Economic Development

1. Added a question 1.d in relation to how COVID-19 has impacted the organization internally. 1 point allocated
2. Added a question to 4.d. in relation to how COVID-19 has impacted the organization externally. 1 point allocated
3. To account for the two questions, question 4.a. was reduced two points from 12 points to 10 points.

### Nonprofit Facility Improvements

In addition to the COVID-19 related questions above, the following language was added to the RFP:

1. 1.a.i: Previous City of San Diego CDBG Projects: Applicants should identify previous construction CDBG awards and when the organization was awarded.
2. 3.a.i: Professional consultation with architect: City staff recommends applicants consult with an architect or other type of professional when assessing how “shovel ready” the project may be.
3. 3.a.ii: Proof of Facility Needs Assessment: Applicants should demonstrate an overall Needs Assessment for the entire facility
4. 3.b.: Detailed Project Schedule: Applicants should be aware of the time it will take to acquire the proper permits and take that into account for their project schedule
5. 5.a.: 5-year maintenance plan: The maintenance plan will identify any possible costs that may arise in the future and how they plan to manage those costs outside of CDBG funding
6. 5.d: Increase leveraged funding: Applicants that demonstrate above 81% leveraged funding to the project can receive 7 points, an increase of 2 points from previous years.

### AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETINGS

CPAB is scheduled to have the opportunity to convene virtual Ad Hoc Committee meetings in the month of February to discuss applications, exchange considerations, and ask technical questions of staff.

Each reviewer is responsible for scoring **each** application independently and not sharing scores with other CPAB reviewers.

### SCORING APPLICATIONS

Reviewers must identify the most significant strengths and weaknesses of the application when assigning scores. Reviewers must use **whole** numbers in assigning scores to the individual sections within ED Grants. The CPAB will score only those applications deemed eligible by City staff.

### FINALIZED SCORES

Upon completion of the review and scoring process, the review panel members will submit their scores via ED Grants *no later than March 04, 2022*. Reviewers have not completed the review process until their scores have been submitted in the system.

The scores and comments will be made available to the applicants (upon their request) following the ratification of the FY 2023 Annual Action Plan by the City Council and submittal to HUD. The names of the individual reviewers will be redacted from the information prior to its distribution to the applicant organizations.

## VII. REVIEWERS' WRITTEN COMMENTS

A thorough evaluation of applications is critical in the CDBG funding allocation process. Reviewers provide applicants key insights into the evaluative process with comments on the scoring form that identify the strengths and weaknesses of proposals. This insight allows organizations the opportunity to incorporate feedback into future applications and improve their ability to secure funding. There is one comment box in the review form to provide a general comment on the application. Comments are not required but recommended. Comments should be as specific as possible, both positive and negative.

## VIII. CPAB RATIFICATION OF SCORES

ED Grants will tabulate and average the scores of all reviewers. The applications are then ranked based on their average scores—in descending order—according to the RFP categories below:

1. Nonprofit Capital Improvement Projects-Facilities
2. Community/Economic Development
3. Public Services

Once compiled, average scores and resulting rankings are posted on the City's CDBG Program website, and notification of their availability is given to all applicants and subscribers to the City's email distribution list. Average scores and resulting rankings will subsequently be presented to the CPAB for their ratification during the March CPAB meeting.

## IX. NEXT STEPS

Following the CPAB March meeting, the CDBG funding recommendations will be incorporated into the FY 2023 Annual Action Plan and will be released for a 30-day public review in April 2022. The FY 2023 CDBG allocations and the Annual Action Plan, will be presented to City Council for review and approval in April or May of 2022. The Annual Action Plan describes how CDBG resources will be allocated and, in fact, constitutes the application to HUD for receipt of the City's FY 2023 CDBG entitlement. Previous Annual Action Plans can be found on the CDBG [webpage](#) at the following link. The Annual Action Plan must be submitted to HUD on or before May 15, 2021.

## X. APPENDICES

Appendix A: FY 2023 Applicant Organization Board Rosters (*finalized after January 28, 2022*)

Appendix B: FY 2023 Applicant Organizations and Project Names (*finalized after January 28, 2022*)

Appendix C: Past Performance (*finalized after January 28, 2022*)

[Appendix D: ED Grants User Guides for Reviewers](#)

[Appendix E: Scoring Criteria](#)

[Appendix F: Categories with Budget](#)

[Appendix G: FY 2020 – 2024 Consolidated Plan Goals](#)

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