



**Fiscal Year (FY) 2024
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 (CDG), 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 2024) 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 (EDGrants); 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, including programmatic performance, fiscal performance, and leveraged funding.
3. EDGrants Registration and User Guides for Reviewers: Step-by-step guides to navigate through EDGrants.

4. Scoring Criteria for all categories
5. Tentative Budgets for each category (*as of January 2023*)
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 2024 Scoring Criteria;
4. Refer all applicants to CDD staff if reviewer is contacted by applicant; and
5. Complete their review in EDGrants on or before the **March 03, 2023** 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 8, 2023** CPAB meeting; and
5. Present CPAB's recommendation to the City Council for review and approval in April 2023 (time and date to be determined) in conjunction with the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 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.

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 EDGrants (as described below).

V. REVIEWER REFERENCE MATERIALS

Each Board member participating in the review of the FY 2024 CDBG applications will have access to relevant reference materials on or before January 31, 2023. Some materials will be made available only after successful registration in EDGrants.

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 EDGrants scoring review form for each individual applicant organization submittal.
5. **Subrecipient Past Performance:** The CPAB will be able to view applicant’s past performance if the organization was previously awarded CDBG funds from the City. The performance indicators include fiscal performance, programmatic performance, and leveraged funding.
6. **Tentative Budgets for each category.** Budgets are established as of January 2023, 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.

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 EDGrants system at: 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 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 2024 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 2024 Scoring Criteria

At the [October 27, 2022 Virtual CPAB meeting](#), the CPAB unanimously approved the updates to the FY 2024 Scoring Criteria. The following updates/revisions were made to the Scoring Criteria:

1. Updated language in question 1.d to ask about organizational resiliency, or the organization's ability to anticipate, prepare for, respond, and adapt to unexpected changes or sudden disruptions in order to continue to serve their clients.
2. Updated language in question 4.d. to ask applicants to describe how the proposed project addresses the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 03, 2023***. 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 2024 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

EDGrants 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 2024 Annual Action Plan and will be released for a 30-day public review in April 2023. The FY 2024 CDBG allocations and the Annual Action Plan, will be presented to City Council for review and approval in April or May of 2023. 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 2024 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, 2023.

X. APPENDICES

Appendix A: FY 2024 Applicant Organization Board Rosters (*finalized after January 28, 2023*)

Appendix B: FY 2024 Applicant Organizations and Project Names (*finalized after January 28, 2023*)

Appendix C: Past Performance (*finalized after January 28, 2023*)

Appendix D: EDGrants 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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