

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda date: March 2, 2009
Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: 2009-2010 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) City-County Agreement

FROM: Ann Chaney, Community Development Director

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council approve the use of FY 2009-10 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, projected to be in the amount of \$87,257 (\$80,657 jurisdictional improvements + \$6,600 general administration), for the following projects:

- Meals on Wheels program - \$15,000
- Alameda County HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) - \$1,473
- 2-1-1 Program - \$5,000
- Senior Center expansion (property acquisition) - \$65,784
 - Or Curb Ramps in the event the property is not acquired.

DISCUSSION

The Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department is the lead agency in administering federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The City of Albany is eligible to use these funds within census tracts that meet specified income levels and for specific projects that will benefit low and moderate-income households.

According to County officials, the amount of CDBG funding allocated through this federal program to Alameda County is estimated to be about 10% less than last year. Funding has progressively been decreasing. For Albany's jurisdictional improvements, funding was \$89,154 in 2006-07, \$87,717 in 2007-08, \$85,302 in 2008-09, and \$80,657 in 2009-10.

In the past, examples of CDBG funded projects in Albany include:

- continuing support to the Meals on Wheels program for seniors
- continuing support to 2-1-1 Program
- continuing support to Alameda County HMIS (Homeless Management Information System)
- Ocean View Park restrooms
- Accessible curb ramps – citywide
- Teen Center upgrade

As noted on the attached 2009/10 CDBG Program Allocation, Albany's total CDBG allocation is projected to be \$114,142.

Of this \$114,142 amount:

\$80,657 (71%) is assigned to "Jurisdictional Improvements" (i.e., eligible locally-designated projects);

\$26,886 (23%) is assigned to the Housing Rehabilitation program, managed by Alameda County (Minor Home Repair and Rehabilitation); and

\$6,600 (6 %) is designated for general administration.

For the past several years, Albany used its general administration funds toward the City's share of the Countywide HMIS program and the Dial 2-1-1 program. It is recommended that these administrative funds, totaling \$6,000, again be used for such programs.

By doing administrative funds, a total of \$87,257 would be available for projects and programs directly or indirectly benefiting Albany's eligible residents.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

A requirement for using CDBG funds, with very few exceptions, is that at least 51% of the recipients must have an income that meets the definition of very low or low (50% to 80% of the countywide median income). In Albany, as the median income for the community continues to rise, meeting this requirement has become increasingly difficult. Programs that benefit disabled persons or seniors usually have no difficulty meeting these income limits.

Staff is proposing that the funding available for FY 2009-10 be allocated to four programs:

1. **Meals on Wheels - \$15,000**
Ongoing program that helps pay staff costs for Meals on Wheels program coordination; program provides hot meals to eligible homebound seniors.
2. **Alameda County HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) - \$1,473**
Program provides services and collects information on Alameda County's homeless persons in order to better serve this population.
3. **2-1-1 Program - \$5,000**
Program provides a free, accessible, three digit telephone number enabling anyone to access the vital community services that they need. Targets the most at-risk populations including older adults, people with disabilities, caregivers, and non-English speakers.

4. **Senior Center (property acquisition) - \$65,784**

Property immediately adjacent to the Albany Senior Center is available for purchase (842 Masonic Avenue). An objective identified in the Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, identifies a need for additional indoor recreation space. Therefore, the City is exploring acquiring the property for expansion of the Senior Center to be used by seniors and auxiliary use by non-seniors for indoor recreation purposes. Given the proximity of the property to the Senior Center and use by seniors, income levels as required by HUD would be easily met.

Another option for financing the Senior Center expansion would be for the City to apply the 2009-10 Housing Rehabilitation funds (\$26,886) toward the purchase price of this property. However, these monies are currently used to assist low and very low-income residents that need financial help with minor home repairs and housing rehabilitation. Therefore, staff does not recommend transferring these funds at this time. However, staff is pursuing the possibility of “banking” additional CDBG funds for this purpose. In essence, the City could “bank” future CDBG funds over a number of years. In order to do this, the Urban County would need to spend down their projects so that each May 1 there is no more than 1 1/2 of the current year's allocation unspent. At the present time, that condition does not exist, but could change.

In the event the City decides not to purchase the property at 842 Masonic Avenue, it recommended that this money be used toward completing the city-wide curb ramp program. There are about 59 street corners in Albany without a curb ramp. About 39 of those ramps will be installed this Spring using prior CDBG funding allocations. The 2009-10 funding could complete that program.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

Albany’s use of CDBG funds assist low and very low income persons in a variety of ways. They are used to provide hot meals to homebound persons, provide access ramps for the disables, support systems that provide information (2-1-1) to lower income persons and collect data on the homeless to better serve this at-risk population. This program is compatible with values of sustainability.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The proposed use of CDBG funds will result in a direct savings to the General Fund of \$15,000 in FY 2009-10, by offsetting the City’s cost of the Meals on Wheels program. Funds for the HMIS and 2-1-1 programs further Albany’s goals to assist homeless and at-risk populations. Lastly, the use of CDBG for expansion of the Senior Center would provide additional services and opportunities for Albany’s senior population.

Attachments

2009-10 Community Development Block Grant Program Allocation (Projection)