



## **Housing & Neighborhood Programs**

### **Community Development Block Grant Policy**

Clay County receives a yearly Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) as an Entitlement Community Grantee from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). To continue participation in the CDBG program, the County must implement the program in accordance with Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended (42 U.S.C. 5301 *et seq.*) (Act), and the related CDBG program regulations in 24 CFR 570.

#### **CDBG National Objectives**

The primary objective of the Act and of the CDBG program of each entitlement community grantee is the development of viable urban communities, by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low- and moderate- income.

Each CDBG-funded activity, except for program administration and planning activities, must meet one of the following three national objectives for the CDBG program:

- benefit low- and moderate- income persons.
- aid in the prevention of elimination of slums or blight.
- meet an urgent need because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community, and other financial resources are not available to meet such needs.

#### **CDBG Eligible Activities**

Entitlement communities such as Clay County develop their own programs and funding priorities. Such programs must be in alignment with the national objectives and be outlined in a detailed plan, which provides for, and encourages citizen participation. The County's Consolidated Plan, along with its supporting plans, provides a guiding framework for the County's management of programs and funds related to the CDBG program. Each fiscal year of the County's then current Consolidated Plan, the County submits to HUD its approved Annual Action Plan outlining the CDBG program goals and objectives, proposed activities/projects, and funding allocations for such activities/projects during the relevant fiscal year. The Annual Action Plan is made available for public review and comment and public meetings and hearings are held in accordance with the County's Citizen Participation Plan.

While each CDBG-funded activity must meet one of the three national objectives, the CDBG program provides flexibility to empower people and communities to design and implement strategies tailored to their own needs and priorities. A list of CDBG eligible activities can be found at [HUDExchange.info](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/cdbg) and [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/comm\\_planning/cdbg](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/cdbg).

## **Eligibility Requirements**

Qualification of applicants is determined by Clay County Community & Social Services (Community & Social Services) or the implementing agency according to the following guidelines:

- Applicants for rehabilitation assistance must reside within the county limits of Clay County, Florida and must have occupied the dwelling for at least one (1) year. Applicants must certify that the home is not being offered for sale and is their primary residence/homestead, as indicated per the Clay County tax records.
- Applicants must have gross annual incomes at or below the applicable low-income limits established by HUD for the jurisdiction of Clay County, Florida.
- In order to be determined eligible for participation in the CDBG Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Program, the subject property taxes must be current.
- The County requires that standard property insurance be maintained on the property. If a property is located in a flood plain, flood insurance must also be maintained.
- Title searches will be obtained on all properties. Evidence of ownership of the property will be confirmed through the Clay County tax records.
- Households receiving reverse mortgages will be disqualified from receiving assistance through the CDBG program.
- Homes whose market value as determined by the Clay County Property Appraiser exceeds the current annual FHA 203(b) (single family, one-unit residence) limit for this area are excluded from the CDBG program.
- The homeowner must be current with his/her mortgage (the payments due and payable to the mortgage company may not be more than 30 days past due) in order to receive assistance under the CDBG program.

## **Application Process**

All applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis contingent on funding availability and determination of eligibility for program participation. The CDBG program waiting list of eligible applicants will be ordered on the waiting list based on date and time of the receipt of their application and established preferences. Applicants that have been accepted into the CDBG program will have ten (10) days to produce all of the required documentation to proceed in the program. If the required documentation cannot be produced, the household applicant will be disqualified from the CDBG program. If an applicant cannot be reached after being called multiple times, the applicant will be sent a letter providing the applicant ten (10) days to respond. Upon expiration of the ten (10) day period, the next eligible applicant will be processed. If the applicant responds within the ten (10) day period, then his or her application will be processed.

In order to optimize the number of individuals served with CDBG Entitlement funds awarded by HUD, Community & Social Services will set an award threshold per applicant. If unforeseen circumstances arise in which the household award threshold is exceeded, the County will take appropriate actions to ensure that the home is returned to safe and livable conditions within HUD guidelines by either allocating additional CDBG funds to complete the project or identifying alternate funding for the project. This funding may be used to complete the pre-determined home

rehabilitation projects, provide temporary housing during construction, or provide temporary storage for household belongings while home rehabilitation work is being completed.

### **Complaint and Appeals Process**

The County will institute a complaint and appeals process to address citizen concerns and applicant grievances. The purpose of these procedures is to set forth guidelines for processing complaints and appeals to address concerns or grievances by applicants and/or participants in relation to the County's CDBG program.

#### 1. Informal Complaint Process

Complaints that are brought forward in an informal manner, either orally or revealed in the process of addressing another issue, will be addressed where possible regardless of the source of the complaint. Informal complaints can be made by phone at (904) 529-4256. When responding to an informal complaint, County staff or designee will obtain all pertinent information from the individual, including, the name and contact information of the individual submitting the complaint, the nature of the complaint and/or issue being raised, and any other information regarding the complaint. County staff or designee will determine whether the issue can be addressed through verbal discussion without necessitating a formal complaint process. County staff or designee will also inform the individual of the formal complaint process, and as applicable, will indicate in the file that the applicant was informed of how to file a formal complaint. If a resolution cannot be met through the informal complaint process, the individual may proceed with the formal complaint process if applicable.

#### 2. Formal Complaint Process

The County will review and consider formal complaints related to the administration or operation of the CDBG program. Formal complaints must originate from the individual seeking assistance from the CDBG program as an applicant, contractor, or other direct party. Such formal complaints should be communicated to the Community & Social Services Housing Program Manager by phone or through a letter submitted through email or mail as follows:

Phone: (904) 529-4256

Mail: 420 College Drive, Suite 107  
Middleburg, FL 32068  
Attention: Community & Social Services Housing Program Manager

Email: [cdbg@claycountygov.com](mailto:cdbg@claycountygov.com)  
Subject Line: Complaint - Attention Housing Program Manager

The formal complaint should include the name and contact information of the individual submitting the complaint, the nature of the complaint and/or issue being raised, and any

other information regarding the complaint, including, but not limited to, supporting documentation. If no name or contact information is provided, then that will be noted and placed in a complaint file.

After receiving a formal complaint, every effort will be made by the Housing Program Manager to address such complaint. The Housing Program Manager will review all concerns, suggestions, and requests, and will address the issue. The Housing Program Manager will provide a written or email response within approximately fifteen (15) business days of receipt of a formal complaint by issuing a Housing Program Manager's Decision regarding the formal complaint. If additional time is needed, notice shall be provided to the complainant of the review status.

Decisions rendered by the Housing Program Manager for complaints that are not subject to appeal as described below are final. Any formal complaints that are subject to appeal as described below can be escalated to an appeal, and the complainant will be required to submit a written appeal.

### 3. Appeals Process

The appeals process is available to a complainant under the following grounds:

- a. Eligibility Determination; and/or
- b. Program assistance award calculation or determination; and/or
- c. Scope of Work; and/or
- d. Quality of Construction.

A contractor may only appeal the issues related to one or more of the following:

- a. Draw payment; and/or
- b. Failure to meet benchmark construction deadlines.

A complainant must submit a written appeal within fifteen (15) business days from the date of the Housing Program Manager's Decision or other qualifying determination.

An appeal must originate from the individual seeking assistance from the CDBG program as an applicant, contractor, or other direct party. Any appeal that does not include the complainant's name and associated contact information will not be treated as a written appeal.

Written appeals should be submitted to the Community & Social Services Director through email or mail as follows:

Mail: 420 College Drive, Suite 107  
Middleburg, FL 32068  
Attention: Community & Social Services Director

Email: [cdbg@claycountygov.com](mailto:cdbg@claycountygov.com)  
Subject Line: Appeal - Attention Community & Social Services Director

The written appeal should include a copy of the Housing Program Manager’s Decision (as applicable), the complaint and/or issue being raised to include information related to the challenge of the Housing Program Manager’s Decision, and any other information regarding the complaint, including, but not limited to, supporting documentation.

The Community & Social Services Director will review all concerns, suggestions, and requests, and will make every effort to address the issue. The Community & Social Services Director will provide a written or email response within approximately ten (10) business days of receipt of the written appeal by issuing a Director Decision regarding the appeal. If additional time is needed, notice shall be provided to the complainant of the review status. The Director Decision represents the final level of appeal at the local level.

The Community & Social Services Director or his/her designee is authorized to make reasonable accommodations, as necessary, to resolve complaints within HUD guidelines and in accordance with CDBG program goals of efficiency, effectiveness, and customer satisfaction.

### **Procurement Policies and Procedures**

The County has developed policies and procedures for procurement that comply with and are consistent with 24 CFR Part 85 and the County’s local policies and procedures as reflected in the County’s then current Purchasing Policy, as it may be amended from time to time. The County’s local policies and procedures provide for stricter standards than those reflected in the CFR.

### **Non-Discrimination in Housing & Community Development Programs**

Federal laws prohibit discrimination in housing and community development programs and activities because of race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), national origin, familial status, and disability. These obligations extend to recipients of HUD financial assistance, including subrecipients, as well as the operations of state and local governments and their agencies, and certain private organizations operating housing and community development services, programs, or activities.

### **Fraud, Waste, or Abuse**

Complaints regarding fraud, waste, or abuse of government funds should be forwarded to HUD by phone at 1-800-347-3735 TDD: 202-708-2451, or 1-800-304-9597 or via email at [hotline@hudoig.gov](mailto:hotline@hudoig.gov).

### **Fraud Statement**

Any person who knowingly makes a false claim or statement to HUD may be subject to civil or criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. 287, 1001 and 31 U.S.C. 3729.