



**National Community Development Association (NCDA)
2017 JOHN A. SASSO NATIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WEEK AWARD
CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE - SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

1. Describe your National Community Development Week planning and outreach process.

Prior to National Community Development Week, City of Portland staff met to review past CD week activities and discuss ideas for 2017. We decided the best way to highlight the impact of CDBG and HOME funds in our community was to invite the community, public officials and stakeholders to engage directly with the organizations that receive funding. We contacted some of our subrecipients and asked if they would be willing to open up their programs and facilities to the public. We reached out to 10 organizations that have received funding over multiple years or large investments of CDBG or HOME funding. Ten organizations were extremely excited to host a tour and participate in CD Week.

Once the organizations were on board, staff then worked with City officials and the City's Director of Communications to discuss additional activities and how the CD week activities would be promoted. We settled on 10 tours, 1 community dinner, 1 press conference, daily "did you know..." tweets from the City's twitter account @CityPortland and the Planning department's account @PortlandPlan, as well as several Facebook posts, City 'News Flashes', and a media release.

In addition, staff reached out to the offices of Senator Susan Collins, Senator Angus King, and Congresswoman Chellie Pingree to invite them to attend the CD Week activities and speak about their support of the CDBG and HOME programs. Staff also invited City Councilors, the Mayor, City Officials and the CDBG Allocation Committee to attend the events. As a way to involve the entire community, staff opened the tours to the general public. An email was sent out to over 300 community stakeholders, neighborhood associations, and neighborhood groups. The information was posted on the City's CDBG webpage and a tweet with a link to the information and tour registration was sent out to the City's 10,000+ twitter followers.



2. Please list *all* of the local partners involved in your National CD Week Activities. Please describe their participation.

The following organizations participated by hosting a tour during CD Week: Wayside Foods, Milestone Foundation, Portland Housing Authority & Avesta Housing, Salvation Army (Community Dinner), Youth and Family Outreach, Amistad Inc, Economic Development Façade Improvement program, LearningWorks, Community Policing, Preble Street, Catherine Morrill Day Nursery.

The following organizations helped by promoting the events to their students, faculty, or members: University of Southern Maine- Muskie School of Public Service, USM- Data Innovation Center, Southern Maine Community College, Greater Portland Council on Government, Bayside Neighborhood Association. Two community members also contacted us to say they would like to hang up a flyer in their church and women's group.

3. National Community Development Week is purposely held during a Congressional recess period so that communities can invite Congressional Members to participate in their CD Week activities. Please describe the participation of your Congressional Members in your CD Week activities.

We invited Senator Susan Collins, Senator Angus King, and Congresswomen Chellie Pingree to attend our events.

Unfortunately, CD Week tends to also fall on school vacation week in Maine, so many staffers from Senator Collins' office took the week off to care for their children. No one from her office was available to attend.

Travis Kennedy from Senator King's Maine Office, attended the tour of Amistad Inc and the Façade Improvement Program walking tour.

Evan Johnston from the Congresswoman Pingree's DC office attended the Milestone tour. Leslie Merrill from the Congresswoman's State Office attended the Façade Improvement Program walking tour. Several other staff people from Congresswoman Pingree's office were also scheduled to attend a tour, but were unable to do so because of illness.

4. Discuss how you raised awareness in the community about the importance of CDBG and HOME. Did your events provide a tangible link between the work funded through CDBG and HOME and improvements to your community? Please describe.

A flyer was created that gave information about each organization hosting or participating in a CD Week activity, the programs they run, the amount of CDBG and HOME funds received in the past five years and program accomplishments. The flyer provided contact



Planning & Urban Development Department

information about the organization as well as the tour time, date and a link to register to attend the tour. A series of tweets were sent out to the 10,000+ City of Portland Twitter followers each day. The tweets included information about the following day tours, fun facts about CDBG, HOME and our Lead program and information such as the number of meals served, houses repaired, shelter bed nights created, etc.

We also received news coverage. Channel 6 filmed the press conference which included a Proclamation for CD Week by the Mayor. A story was later posted online focusing on a CDBG funded microenterprise business and her New-American employee. The American Planning Association wrote an op-ed for the local Portland Press Herald newspaper about the importance of CDBG and HOME in our Community. The Monday after CD Week, an editor from the Portland Press Herald wrote an article about the impacts of CDBG funds across Maine and focused on the impact of the Amistad Peer Coaching Program- a Portland based CDBG subrecipient.

5. What types of events/activities were conducted in conjunction with your National CD Week campaign? Please check all that apply.

- ✓ Issued a press release and/or proclamation announcing National Community Development Week.
- ✓ Sent a letter to my Congressional Members outlining the importance of CDBG and/or HOME to my community.
- ✓ Met with my Congressional Members and/or their staff to discuss the importance of CDBG and HOME in my community.
- ✓ Conducted a tour of local CDBG and/or HOME funded projects. Please describe the projects visited.
- Held a ground breaking or ribbon-cutting of a CDBG and/or HOME funded project. Please describe the project.
- Developed a short CDBG/HOME projects video. Was the video sent to your Congressional Members? – *No, but we are in the planning stages of working the an intern from either USM or the MECA salt institute to create a picture/video documentary about the connections and partnerships formed between the organizations funded by CDBG and HOME*
- ✓ Participated in social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn). Tweeted and posted on Facebook about National CD Week. Please describe your social media outreach. Did you use any of the following hashtags? #CDWeek2017, #CDBGImpact, #Fight4CDBG, #HOMEImpact, #Fight4HOME
- ✓ Submitted an op-ed to my local newspaper emphasizing the importance of CDBG and HOME in my community. – *we worked the Emily Pasi from the American Planning Association who submitted one to our local paper, the Portland Press Herald*
- ✓ Worked with local media to do a story CDBG and/or HOME.



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- Held a local rally to protest the cuts to CDBG and HOME.
- CDBG and/or HOME beneficiaries signed a letter and/or petition supporting CDBG and/or HOME and opposing program cuts.
- Held a press event
- Participated in a local service project (e.g., Habitat for Humanity build, served lunch at a local homeless shelter, etc.) – *we did not serve a meal at a local homeless shelter, but it did invite members of the public to attend the Wayside Foods/Salvation Army community Dinner and eat with families currently staying in our local family shelter.*

6. Discuss the outcomes of your National CD Week campaign and events. How did the campaign and events garner support for CDBG and/or HOME?

Overall we had a very positive response to our events from CD Week. This was our first year hosting such a large set of activities, and it was also school vacation week, so a lot of people who showed interest in an event were not able to attend. Of the people who did attend, we heard several comments like “wow, I had no idea how much this organization does” or “I go past this place all the time, it’s so nice to see inside” or “I know we had a need for (xyz) but I had no idea how many people”

7. Discuss any unique aspects of your National CD Week activities and process, if any.

One unique aspect of our CD Week was every tour not only discussed how their program benefits from CDBG or HOME funds, but also how they are connected and benefiting from another program that are funded by CDBG or HOME. For example, during the tour of the Bayside Anchor HOME funded affordable housing development, the developers discussed why they created space inside the new building for the CDBG funded Community Policing program. Another example is how the CDBG funded Wayside Foods program also partners with other CDBG funded programs such as the Preble Street programs, Milestone Foundation, and Amistad Inc. When the organizations discussed their collaboration with other CDBG/HOME funded organizations it meant that even if a person only attended one tour, they still learned about other CDBG and HOME funded programs.

8. Did you use any of the following items provided by NCDA to help you in your National CD Week outreach/celebration? Please check all that apply.

- Sample invitation letter to Congressional Members
- Guidance on inviting Congressional Members to your CD Week events
- Guidance/Talking Points on meeting with Congressional Members
- Congressional Member contact list



Planning & Urban Development Department

- ✓ CD Week Social Media Guide
- ✓ List of suggested National CD Week activities
- Sample proclamation/resolution
- Sample press release
- Sample local CDBG fact sheet
- Sample local HOME fact sheet
- Sample petition
- Sample beneficiary/subrecipient letter to Congress
- Tips on calling your Congressional Members
- ✓ National CDBG fact sheet

Attachments:

1. Portland CD Week Flyer
2. Sample flyer for individual tours
3. News Release distributed by the City of Portland
4. Snapshot of the City's CDBG page with CD Week information
5. City Mayor's Press conference agenda
6. Proclamation by the City Mayor
7. American Planning Association- blurb on Portland's CD Week
8. Channel 6 – Report on CD Week (unable to get the video coverage from the press conference)
9. Conference of Mayor's – blurb of Portland's CD Week activities
10. Portland Press Herald- News Story on CDBG in Maine and Portland's CDBG funded Amistad Program
11. Twitter screenshots
12. Photos from Mayor's press conference and City Hall display.

Contact Information:	
Mary Davis, Division Director	Kristin Styles, HCD Program Manager
Housing & Community Development Division Planning & Urban Development Department	Housing & Community Development Division Planning & Urban Development Department
City of Portland, Maine 389 Congress St., Rm 312, Portland ME 04101	City of Portland, Maine 389 Congress St., Rm 313, Portland ME 04101
(207) 874-8711	(207) 874-8731
mpd@portlandmaine.gov	kms@portlandmaine.gov

Portland Community Development Week

April 17-21, 2017

As part of National Community Development Week, the City of Portland and our partner organizations invite you to attend a series of site tours around Portland. These tours will offer you an inside look into our partner organizations and show you the positive impacts of CDBG and HOME funds in our community. We hope you join us for this exciting week of events.



Who can attend? **Anyone!**

How much does it cost? **It's Free!**

Where do I find more information? www.portlandmaine.gov/cdbg

Monday 4/17	Tuesday 4/18	Wednesday 4/19	Thursday 4/20	Friday 4/21
9:00am Wayside Foods Facility Tour 135 Walton Street	9:00am Milestone Foundation 65 India Street	9:00am Youth & Family Outreach 331 Cumberland Ave	9:00am Learning Works 181 Brackett Street	9:00am Catherine Morrill Day Nursery 96 Danforth St
	11:00am Press conference City Hall 389 Congress Street	11:30am Amistad 66 State Street # 2	11:00am Community Policing 109 Middle Street	
	2:00pm Bayside Anchor Tour 81 East Oxford Street		1:30pm Preble Street 252 Oxford Street (Volunteer Entrance)	
	5:00pm Wayside Community Dinner at Salvation Army 297 Cumberland Ave	4:00pm Walking Tour of Façade Improvement projects 28 Monument Way		

Please contact Kristin Styles for any questions: 207-874-8731



TOUR INFORMATION

Facility Tour

9:00 am
Monday, April 17
135 Walton Street

Community Dinner

5:00pm
Tuesday, April 18
297 Cumberland Ave

[Register HERE](#)

PAST 5 YEARS

Wayside Food Programs:

\$99,012 from CDBG
417,033 meals served

www.waysidemaine.org

WAYSIDE FOOD PROGRAM

Wayside has been bringing community members together to share meals for 30 years. Wayside uses sharing food to build community. All our work is rooted in partnerships, taking multifaceted approaches that reinforce social connection, cultural heritage, and individual dignity. Wayside makes data-driven decisions and is committed to offering programs that are effective and adaptable to the evolving needs of our community.

FOOD RESCUE: In 1999, the Food Rescue program was created to share surplus food donations with other agencies supporting economically vulnerable community members. Wayside operates as single point of contact for food donors and a hub for a network of smaller service agencies with limited storage and staffing capacity. Wayside salvages edible food that previously would go to our landfills. When donated to Wayside, the food is redistributed to 40+ programs across Cumberland County.

COMMUNITY MEALS: Although Wayside's primary objective is to increase access to nutritious food, Community Meals are distinct because they're intentionally designed to use sharing meals as opportunities for improving social support networks. Since 2010, our Community Meals program has worked in partnership with places of worship, community centers, schools, and service agencies providing welcoming environments to decrease social exclusion and high stress levels often associated with economic vulnerability. The effectiveness is demonstrated by 72% of guests reporting that Community Meals has improved our community. Further, 88% of guest report attending Community Meals has helped them to create new friendships. Each week, Wayside and our 11 partner host sites share 600 meals at 14 lunches and dinners.

In 2016, more than 2,000 different individuals participated as guests and 600 as volunteers. Of the 31,000 meals served through this program last year, 40% were served to seniors and 25% were served to children.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WEEK CHECK OUT WWW.PORTLANDMAINE.GOV/CDBG

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 14, 2017

MEDIA CONTACT

Jessica Grondin

[207-756-8173](tel:207-756-8173)

Portland Celebrates Community Development Week April 17-22 with Series of Site Tours

Federal CDBG & HOME Funds Have Big Impact on Local Community

PORTLAND, Maine -- In celebration of National Community Development Week April 17 - 22, 2017, the City of Portland and its partner organizations invite the media and public to attend a series of site tours around Portland. The tours will offer an inside look into the partner organization's operations, highlighting the positive impacts of federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME funds in the Portland community.

Who can attend? **Anyone!**

How much does it cost? **It's Free!**

Where do I sign up? [Click Here!](#) – it only takes a minute.

Where do I find more information? www.portlandmaine.gov/cdbg

Who do I contact if I have a question? kms@portlandmaine.gov

Below is the current schedule of tours:

Monday, April 17

9:00 AM - Wayside Foods Facility Tour, 135 Walton Street

Tuesday, April 18

9:00 AM - Milestone Foundation, 65 India Street

11:00 AM - Press Conference featuring Mayor Ethan Strimling and reps from partner organizations, City Hall, 1st floor rotunda, 389 Congress Street

2:00 PM - Bayside Anchor Tour, 81 East Oxford Street

5:00 PM - Wayside Community Dinner at Salvation Army, 297 Cumberland Avenue

Wednesday, April 19

9:00 AM - Youth and Family Outreach, 331 Cumberland Avenue

11:30 AM - Amistad, 66 State Street, #2

4:00 PM - Walking tour of Facade Improvement Projects

Thursday, April 20

9:00 AM - LearningWorks, 181 Brackett Street

11:00 AM - Portland Police Department, Community Policing Overview, 109 Middle Street

Friday, April 21

9:00 AM - Catherine Morrill Day Nursery, 96 Danforth Street

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- BOARDS, COMMITTEES & AGENDAS +
- CITY CODES, ORDINANCES, REGULATIONS & MAPS
- COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
- HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT +
- PLANNING, HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND TRANSPORTATION +
- PUBLICATIONS & RESOURCES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

PORTLAND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WEEK APRIL 17-21, 2017



Curious about CDBG and HOME funded projects? Join us on a free site visit tour during Community Development Week, April 17-21.

[Click here to sign up for a tour, it only takes 1 minute!](#)

Kristin Styles
HCD Program Manager
kms@portlandmaine.gov
Phone: 207-874-8731

Office Hours
Monday-Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m

QUICK LINKS

- [Apply for CDBG](#)
- [CDBG Eligible Areas](#)
- [Bayside Neighborhoods Map](#)
- [CDBG Eligible Activities](#)
- [CDBG Annual Allocation](#)
- [Committ...](#)

Select Language

ONLINE PAYMENTS

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FIX IT PORTLAND

PERMITS

Monday 4/17	Tuesday 4/18	Wednesday 4/19	Thursday 4/20	Friday 4/21
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[CDBG Priority Task Force](#)

Select Language

Mayor Proclaims April 17-21 Community Development Week in Portland

Celebrates positive impact of federal CDBG & HOME funds in the community with partner organizations first-hand stories

PORTLAND, Maine -- Mayor Ethan Strimling will hold a press conference on Tuesday, April 18 at 11:00 AM to proclaim the week of April 17 - 22 Community Development Week in Portland. Mayor Strimling will join City officials and local organizations who are CDBG and HOME fund recipients to celebrate the impact that these funds have on the local community and share stories of the important work they do.

WHEN: Tuesday, April 18 at 11:00 AM

WHERE: Portland City Hall, 1st floor, Rotunda

SPEAKERS:

- Mayor Ethan Strimling
- Jeff Levine, Portland's Planning & Urban Development Director
- Mini Mogadishu - a Startsmart client
- Sharon Herrick and Naaba Al Obaidi - Illuminate Me
- Dory Waxman – Old Port Wool and Textile
- Andrew Rosenstein – Tech Port
- Joseph Hatungimana – Autocare LLC
-

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Thursday, April 20

9:00 AM - LearningWorks, 181 Brackett Street

11:00 AM - Portland Police Department, Community Policing Overview, 109 Middle Street

1:30 PM - Preble Street Resource Center and Soup Kitchen 252 Oxford Street

Friday, April 21

9:00 AM - Catherine Morrill Day Nursery, 96 Danforth Street

P R O C L A M A T I O N
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WEEK

APRIL 17-22, 2017

WHEREAS: Community Development Week is the time of year where we highlight the impact the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the HOME Investment Partnership Program have in our communities; and

WHEREAS: The CDBG program ensures decent affordable housing, provides services to the most vulnerable in our communities, and creates jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses;

WHEREAS: HOME is the largest Federal block grant to State and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households, its flexibility empowers people and communities to design and implement strategies tailored to their own needs and priorities; and

WHEREAS: These programs have made a difference in the lives of millions of people and their communities especially here in Portland.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT I, Ethan K. Strimling, Mayor of the City of Portland, Maine, and the members of the Portland City Council do hereby proclaim that April 17-22 is Community Development Week and the activities scheduled this week will highlight the importance and the positive impacts both the Community Development Block Grant and the HOME Investment Partnership Program have in the City of Portland.

Signed and sealed this 18th day of April, 2017



**Ethan K. Strimling, Mayor
City of Portland, Maine**



[Home \(/\)](#) > [Knowledge Center \(/knowledgecenter/\)](#) > [Blog \(/blog/\)](#) >

Celebrating the Success of CDBG and HOME



The recent proposed elimination of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) in the Trump administration’s [“skinny budget \(/policy/statements/2017/mar16/\)](#)” proposal for FY 2018 — coupled with Congress’s inability to finalize a Transportation Housing and Urban Development (THUD) spending bill for the current fiscal year — has proved that there is a real need to show our top lawmakers just how crucial community development programs are to our communities.

The time to capitalize on that opportunity is right now, and that is what makes [National Community Development Week \(https://app.bitly.com/Bh2n13xE0gv/bitlinks/2o20iGI\)](#) even more important this year.

National Community Development Week celebrates the work accomplished in part by CDBG and HOME dollars. Last week, APA joined with the [National Community Development Association \(http://ncdaonline.org/\)](#) (NCDA) to showcase the outcomes of federal investments in community development. With the help of planning advocates, APA made the case for why CDBG and HOME must be fully funded in the current fiscal year and beyond.

In the lead-up to National Community Development Week, planning advocates from every corner of the country came forward to share their communities’ CDBG and HOME impact stories. Below are examples of the ways in which communities are growing stronger with the help of critical federal funding.

ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS

CDBG is a critical funding source for the Town of Arlington, Massachusetts. Last week, local leaders and state representatives gathered to recognize the ways in which CDBG dollars have strengthened the community.

Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine and State Representatives Sean Garballey and David Rogers were on hand to honor projects made possible with CDBG funds. The Town of Arlington uses its CDBG funds for rehab and affordable housing, public facilities and accessibility improvements, and senior transportation, youth sports and camp scholarships, food recovery, and other services that meet the needs of Arlington residents.

ST. LOUIS

St. Louis's North Sarah Project was an effort made possible in part by HOME and CDBG funding. In a St. Louis community nestled between Midtown and Central West End where abandoned lots once reigned, 120 families now have affordable, safe places to call home. Completed in 2013, phase I of the North Sarah Project includes 59 public housing units. It houses small business owners, a green grocer, and a community center designed to help families get back on their feet.

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

West Church Project, an effort led by the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority, used HOME funds to redevelop a once blighted region into a space featuring 31 charming mixed income homes. The change helped turn the tide of crime and violence that afflicted the area.

These first-time home buyers not only received a roof over their heads, and a safe neighborhood thanks to HOME funds, but they were also granted homebuyer counseling and progress inspections to acquaint them with their newly established community.

VENTURA, CALIFORNIA

Habitat Home Repairs, in Ventura, California, also used CDBG funds to address health concerns for seniors and other vulnerable members of society. By making critical maintenance updates to homes, Habitat Home Repairs made it possible for veterans, seniors and people living with disabilities to continue living independently.

To date, *Habitat Home Repairs* has completed 100 projects, all of which make homes safer and more accessible. The cost of retrofitting one of these homes is less than the cost of one hospital stay.

PORTLAND, MAINE

Empire Chinese Kitchen, a local favorite in Portland, was also the benefactor of CDBG dollars. Funding allowed the business owner to address structural concerns at the site of her future restaurant through a rehab of the existing facade, a move that ultimately resulted in 10 jobs. This investment brought Chinese food back to Congress street, benefited the local economy with job growth, and addressed community safety challenges in a distinctive way.

During National Community Development Week, the City of Portland held daily events that highlighted all of the ways in which CDBG and HOME make Portland stronger. The planning department did its part by hosting multiple community tours, a community dinner, and a press conference with Portland Mayor Ethan Strimling, where the public learned about the positive impact CDBG has had on local small business. All of these events helped showcase how the revitalization efforts of CDBG, equates to money well spent.



City of Portland, ME
@CityPortland

Follow

Did you know that #CDBG awardees served 2,131,529 meals & 63,560 bed nights to homeless individuals over past 3 yrs?
[#CDWeek2017](#) [#PortlandME](#)

4:08 PM - 19 Apr 2017

5 13

KETTERING, OHIO

Dozens of families living in Kettering, Ohio, have benefited from local housing rehab programs funded in part by CDBG and HOME. With the help of critical funding, the city has been able to address the diverse challenges that low- to moderate-income residents face. Today, seniors, people living with disabilities, and big families with limited budgets are able to enjoy quality, affordable housing thanks to investments in local community solutions.

SHOW SUPPORT FOR CDGB AND HOME

Recognition of the value of CDGB and HOME by representatives on both sides of the aisle has led to the completion of the projects featured here and many others in localities nationwide. APA will continue to work with partners in Washington to ensure that programs aimed at creating stronger communities — like CDBG and HOME — remain a viable option.

We challenge planners to continue showing their support for critical community development programs long after National Community Development Week ends.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Have a CDBG or HOME impact story you want to share? Send it to govtaffairs@planning.org (<mailto:govtaffairs@planning.org>). APA's Policy and Advocacy team will work with you to highlight stories that tell the value of these programs, and its impact on local planning decisions.

***Top image:** CDBG recipients, elected officials, and community development staff gather to celebrate community development and the CDBG program in Arlington, Massachusetts. Photo by Ali Carter.*

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Trevor Grady is APA's government affairs associate. Emily Pasi is outreach and communications manager at APA.

APRIL 24, 2017

By Trevor Grady, Emily Pasi

Tags: Policy, (</blog/?tags=1336>) Finance, (</blog/?tags=109>) Residential Land Use, (</blog/?tags=1228>) Social Justice and Equity, (</blog/?tags=1229>) Housing Policy (</blog/?tags=88>)

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Portland celebrates the success of block grants

John Blunda, WCSH 2:17 PM. EDT April 18, 2017



(Photo: Alex Wong, 2004 Getty Images)

PORTLAND, ME (NEWS CENTER) -- The mayor of Portland invited several non-profit ventures to celebrate National Community Development Week.

Mayor Strimling mentioned in his speech at city hall the benefits of the federal funding. Such were included as affordable housing, funding programs for Portland's neediest, and creates jobs by retaining local businesses.

One success story was on hand to thank the city. Nabaa Al Obaidi is an immigrant from Iraq. She came to the United States for a new life, and found one with a local jewelry maker.

President Trump's proposed budget would seek to remove the block grant program entirely. For more information, click on Chris Facchini's report below:

[RELATED: Impact of President Trump's proposed budget in Maine \(http://www.wcsh6.com/news/politics/impact-of-president-trumps-proposed-budget-in-maine/423479320\)](http://www.wcsh6.com/news/politics/impact-of-president-trumps-proposed-budget-in-maine/423479320)

[Read more on Nabaa's background in jewelry-making \(https://www.illuminatedme.com/pages/about-us\)](https://www.illuminatedme.com/pages/about-us)

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[LEAVE A COMMENT \(\)](#)



National Community Development Week 2107 begins today with cities, counties, and states sponsoring activities that will highlight both the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and the HOME Investment Partnerships program. This year's celebration is more important than ever as it will be a significant response to the Administration's proposed elimination of both programs in FY2018.

Here are a few of the planned activities from around the country for National Community Development Week, April 17-22, collected by the National Community Development Association (NCDA).

- Bridgeport (CT) will hold a rally to protest the proposed elimination of CDBG and HOME. Mayor Joseph P. Ganim, Senators Chris Murphy and Richard Blumenthal, Representative Jim Himes, city council members, Citizen's Union Members, local non-profit organizations, beneficiaries (including Veterans), other city officials, and other citizens will rally together on April 18 to voice their opposition to the elimination of CDBG and HOME. Participants will sign a letter to the congressional appropriators opposing the elimination of the programs.
- Senator Al Franken (MN) will be in Duluth on April 20 for a tour of a CDBG funded housing project, followed by a press event.
- Killeen (TX) will host Representative John Carter, a member of the House Transportation –HUD subcommittee, at a tour of a CDBG-funded neighborhood revitalization project.
- Longmont (CO) produced a video for National CD Week. The video is led and narrated by children and pre-teens and tells the story of how CDBG is used in Longmont.
- Portland (ME) will conduct an all-encompassing National CD Week campaign which will include a projects tour, meeting with congressional members, story or op-ed in the local newspaper, press release, proclamation, and social media messaging.

Learn more about our fight to CDBG at our CDBG Action Center at usmayors.org/cdbg.

Fight For CDBG

NEWS

Posted April 24

Updated April 24

INCREASE FONT SIZE **AA+**

Maine officials unsettled by threat to block grants that help so many

President Trump wants to eliminate a federal program that provides more than \$16 million annually for initiatives in communities all over the state.

BY **RANDY BILLINGS** STAFF WRITER



Share      Comment



Social services: Mark Perry, a peer coach at Amistad, right, speaks with Billy, left, on Friday in Portland as he walks around downtown as part of his community outreach. Staff photo by Joel Page

Mark Perry can relate to people struggling with addiction, depression and homelessness. He's been there.

After 30 years of addiction to alcohol and drugs, the 46-year-old is approaching five years of sobriety. And now he is trying to help other addicts get their lives back together through a peer coaching initiative at Amistad, a Portland nonprofit that helps people struggling with substance abuse, homelessness or mental health issues.

WHAT IS CDBG?

The Community Development Block Grant program is run by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

WHY WAS IT CREATED?

“I’ve been through it,” Perry says. “I can look them in the eye and say, ‘I know what you’re thinking and you’re (expletive) wrong.’”

Amistad is just one of the social service agencies around Portland and the state that rely on a flow of federal funding known as Community Development Block Grants. The federal funds reach virtually every

President Gerald Ford in 1974, consolidated eight separate competitive grant programs dealing with community development into one program. It aims to provide a flexible source of funding for states and municipalities for housing rehabilitation, social services and public infrastructure.

WHO DOES IT HELP?

Most funding – 95 percent – helps low- to moderate-income residents and neighborhood, according to HUD.

NOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE NATIONALLY?

In fiscal year 2014, the most recent available, HUD spent \$3 billion on the CDBG program.

HOW ARE ALLOCATIONS DECIDED?

HUD allocates funding to states, counties and urban municipalities through a formula based on population, poverty and other housing variables.

HOW MUCH DOES MAINE RECEIVE?

More than \$16 million a year flows into Maine communities in CDBG grants.

HOW ARE FUNDS DISTRIBUTED?

Groups, including municipalities and nonprofits, apply for CDBG funding to administrative agencies, which can be the state, county or city. The applications

initiatives, from housing construction and rehab to street and sidewalk improvements to new business development.

Now, however, the funding stream may come to end.

President Trump wants to eliminate the program, which was created by President Gerald Ford in 1974 as a way to enable communities to help low- to moderate-income residents and neighborhoods.

The president’s proposal, now in the hands of Congress, says the grant program “is not well-targeted to the poorest populations and has not demonstrated results.” It also says community and economic development activities are better left to local and state governments.

Critics of the community block grants say the program is an example of excessive federal spending and lack of accountability for how the money ultimately gets spent.

But Amistad’s executive director, Brian Townsend, is among those worried about what will happen if it goes away.

Amistad received about \$50,000 in CDBG funding this year, which he said is a small but important component of the nonprofit’s \$1 million budget. “This pot of money looks small,” Townsend said, “but if we had lost it, the (peer coaching) program would have closed.”

DOZENS OF ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

During its first 40 years, the federal CDBG program has sent \$144 billion to thousands of urban and rural communities nationwide according to the U.S.

allocations are guided by priorities established by each governing body, as long as they align with national objectives.

which oversees the program.

Projects must meet a national objective of either benefiting low- to moderate-income people, aiding in the prevention and elimination of so-called slums or blight, or meeting an urgent need that poses a serious and immediate threat to the health and welfare of the community.

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Interactive Map: Where Maine's Community Development Block Grants go

There are 28 eligible activities for which CDBG funds can be used, including infrastructure projects such as sewer, drinking water or safe streets, economic development, code enforcement, housing rehabilitation and social services.

In 2014, the most recent year for which data is available, HUD distributed more than \$3 billion in CDBG funding, which has been used to improve blighted neighborhoods and bolster social service agencies. The money is distributed to states, counties and municipalities through a formula based on population, poverty and other housing variables.

More than \$16 million a year flows into Maine communities in community block grants. From 1982 to 2016, Maine received more than \$500 million in CDBG money, according to the Maine Office of Community Development.

Maine Republican Party Executive Director Jason Savage said Congress needs to scrutinize all forms of government spending, including CDBG.

“The sad truth about our current situation is that the federal government has been on a decade-long shopping spree and we currently face a \$20 trillion national debt. The Community Development Block Grant proposal is one of many programs that needs to be looked at,” Savage said in an email. “Some CDBG grants appear to be spent well, while others appear to be questionable. Should we be adding to a national debt that our children will have to pay off with interest, to plant trees for some communities or to improve the appearance of building facades for private businesses in others?”

Trump's proposal and calling the block grants an effective, bipartisan program.

“Simply put, this proposal to eliminate CDBG funds would make our cities and communities less safe, less healthy and more expensive to live in,” Setti Warren, mayor of Newton, Massachusetts, said in a written statement. “At a time when cities are continuing to struggle to make ends meet, these funds are critical and cutting them would be a disaster.”

Aaron Shapiro, Cumberland County's community development director, distributes about \$1.5 million in CDBG funding across the county each year for projects that can include housing rehabilitation, social services and public infrastructure improvements, such as sewer lines that serve Habitat for Humanity housing projects in Scarborough and Freeport. The grants amount to a small percentage of local government spending – and the funding does not go as far as it did decades ago because of cutbacks and inflation – but it would be missed, said Shapiro, who has worked with CDBG funding for more than three decades.

“It's a small number, but it does something good,” Shapiro said. “These things have always been a target (for budget cutting). This is probably the biggest threat to funding that it's faced.”

South Portland has received \$4.7 million in CDBG funds in the past decade for various projects, such as housing, infrastructure and economic development.

“Given the challenges facing cities across the country today, CDBG funds are vitally needed,” said Tex Haeuser, who has been South Portland's planning director for 27 years.

micro-enterprise loan program to downtown sidewalk improvements to a career center in a low-income neighborhood.

“We could never do these things if we were just using ... our local money,” said Mayor Alan Casavant. “When you look at all the different areas where these funds are utilized, you realize it touches a lot of people and improves the quality of life.”

SPENDING CONTROL AT LOCAL LEVEL

Portland is Maine’s largest single recipient and receives about \$1.8 million a year. From 1975 to 2014, Portland received more than \$100 million in CDBG money.

Part of the funding received by Portland, \$150,000 a year, pays for the city’s community policing program.

And every year in Portland, a long list of social service agencies that operate soup kitchens, homeless shelters, health clinics, day care for low-income parents, programs for at-risk youth and services to immigrants or the blind, submit applications and compete for a steadily shrinking allocation of funding.

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“It’s a competitive process for people who don’t compete,” said Townsend, Amistad’s director.

Portland received nearly \$3.9 million in CDBG requests this year, more than twice the city’s total CDBG allocation.

“It empowers localities, rather than the federal government, to support programs that foster local investment, create jobs, prepare people for gainful employment and spur

The fact that the president is looking to cut the program flies in the face of his longstanding logic that local control and autonomy leads to the best ultimate use of funds and resources.”

CDBG funds also help nonprofit agencies leverage other sources of funding. For the fiscal years of 2010-2012, recipients reported that every dollar of CDBG funds leveraged an additional \$4.07 of other funds, according to HUD.

Mark Swann, executive director of the Portland-based social service agency Preble Street, said block grant funding is a critically important piece of a “jigsaw puzzle” of revenue sources that allow the nonprofit to maintain its shelters, soup kitchen and other services.

This year, Preble Street was granted about \$155,000 in CDBG funds for its day shelter, women’s shelter, teen shelter and food program. The agency has a \$10.7 million budget.

“Every funding source wants to see, or actually requires, that their money is matched or supplemented in some manner with other funds,” Swann said. “We always promote our CDBG funding when applying for other funds. No funder wants to be the only one in.”

The loss of federal funding would hasten the deterioration of Maine’s social safety net, which has already been frayed with the closure of six nonprofits and seven shelters in the past 12 years or so, Swann said.

CITY RESCUES AMISTAD PROGRAM

Amistad, the nonprofit that helps people with mental illness and substance abuse, almost did not receive any block grant funding during this year’s competitive CDBG allocation process in Portland, which is decided by scoring detailed applications.

The group had requested \$60,000 for its peer coaching initiative, which helps prevent people in crisis from going to the emergency departments of local hospitals, and another \$35,000 to keep its Peer Support and Recovery Center at 66 State St. open on Saturdays.

But when Amistad was left out and the peer coaching program was jeopardized, Portland City Manager Jon Jennings diverted nearly \$52,000 from the grants to other social service agencies. Jennings cited the opioid addiction epidemic and Amistad's ability to reach people who don't engage the public health system as justification for the funding.

"The Amistad Peer Coaching Initiative was a CDBG-funded pilot program in 2014 and has shown tremendous success at collaborating with our shelters and hospitals to serve the members of our community who have severe and persistent mental illness along with substance use issues and homelessness," Jennings said in his March 10 memo to city councilors. "From a social service and a budgetary standpoint, cutting funds to a program like this is just not a decision I am willing to make."

But funding for Amistad's Peer Support and Recovery Center was not available, meaning the drop-in will likely close on Saturdays. The center serves about 120 people a day, said Townsend, the executive director.

For people like Will Frost, losing the center – even for a day – will be difficult, since it's a place where they can get two meals a day, escape the stress of an overcrowded homeless shelter system and talk with someone who has been through similar experiences.

"This place is what I consider a lifesaver," said the 54-year-old Frost, who has been visiting the center for about 30 years. "Basically, this is a house for people who live on the streets. It's fed me. It's kept me clean, and most of the time, it's kept me sober."

Kelley Bouchard and Gillian Graham contributed to this report.


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