



**Fiscal Year 2021
Community Development Block Grant Program
Funding Request**

Department/Division	Department of Planning & Development Division of Building & Housing
Organization Type	Municipal Government
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FY21 CDBG Request	\$80,000

CDBG Eligibility Criteria Project Pride Code Enforcement Program

The Lakewood Division of Building & Housing's *Project Pride Code Enforcement Program* satisfies the following eligibility criteria and is therefore suitable for CDBG funding consideration.

CDBG National Objectives

- *Low-Moderate Income Area Benefit (LMA)*: An activity that is available to and benefits all residents in a defined residential area where at least 51% of the residents are low-moderate income persons.
- *Slum Blight Area Basis (SBA)*: Activities that aid in the prevention or elimination of slums, blight, or physical decay in a HUD-designated slum/blight area.

CDBG-Eligible Activity Category

- *Code Enforcement*: Code enforcement in deteriorated/deteriorating and low-moderate income areas where such enforcement together with public/private improvements and services arrest the decline of the area. Eligible expenses include payment of salaries and overhead costs directly related to the enforcement of state and/or local building codes.

HUD-Designated Performance Objectives

- Create Suitable Living Environments
- Develop Decent Affordable Housing

HUD-Designated Performance Outcome

- Sustainability

Project Narrative

Introduction

The Project Pride Code Enforcement Program utilizes CDBG funds to support Division of Building & Housing staff dedicated to enforcing building codes in Lakewood's HUD-designated low-moderate income and slum-blight areas.

Project Pride works hand in hand with a broad array of complementary public and private improvements, investments, and services, to prevent the deterioration of Lakewood's aging housing stock (the City's primary economic engine); enhance quality of life; arrest blight and eliminate deteriorating conditions; stimulate revitalization, strengthen property values, and facilitate safer, more sanitary dwelling units.

Lakewood's proactive approach to code enforcement emphasizes both correcting current violations and working with residents and business owners to address emerging issues before they become violations.

Statement of Need

Project Pride is critical to creating and maintaining safe, healthy, stable, vibrant, sustainable neighborhoods and strong commercial corridors capable of withstanding and overcoming the challenges posed by foreclosure, blight, and deterioration. Consistent, diligent residential and commercial building code inspection and enforcement are particularly important in Lakewood because the majority of city's housing was built prior to 1939 and the average age of its more than 750 retail storefronts exceeds 75 years.

Responsible property ownership and maintenance are at the heart of neighborhood stability. While owning property bestows important rights, it confers equally important responsibilities. While most owners meet their obligations – maintaining properties, complying with codes, and not causing harm to their occupants, neighbors and communities – some do not. When landlords fail to maintain their buildings, lower-income tenants lacking other options must remain in substandard housing.

Law enforcement officials and social scientists understand the important relationship between crime, blight, and code enforcement. Under the rubric of the "broken window theory," social scientists have documented the opportunistic nature of crime, showing that vacant properties and dilapidated buildings become magnets for this activity. Code enforcement is a valuable place-based approach to addressing neighborhood hot spots.

Finally, Project Pride is critical to the ongoing success of *Housing Forward*, the city's comprehensive, long-term strategic housing maintenance and improvement initiative, which entails the visual inspection, condition rating, and bi-annual re-inspection of city's one-, two- and three-family structures.

Goals & Objectives

- Conduct ongoing, diligent, comprehensive residential and commercial code enforcement in Lakewood’s HUD-designated low-moderate income and slum-blight geographies;
- Maintain the character and appearance of Lakewood’s CDBG-eligible areas and the community as a whole;
- Promote strong, stable, healthy neighborhoods and commercial districts that support, retain, and attract businesses and create jobs;
- Maintain property values and decreases criminal justice costs;
- Identify and arrest early signs of blight and deterioration before they become nuisances;
- Reverses the negative impact of vacant, abandoned and problem properties and help restore distressed areas;
- Connects residents to home maintenance and improvement resources;
- Complement and strengthen long-term community revitalization initiatives;
- Ensure safer, more sanitary dwelling units for the city’s property owners and renters;
- Engage property owners in problem-solving and ongoing maintenance;

Geographic Service Areas

Each year, Project Pride-funded Division of Building & Housing staff inspect thousands of residences and commercial structures located in the following CDBG-eligible geographies.

CDBG-Eligible Low-Moderate Income Areas

CDBG-Eligible Geographies-Lakewood, OH				
Census Tract	Block Group	Low-Mod Pop	Total Pop	LM %
161800	1	1,000	1,160	86.21%
160602	2	740	950	77.89%
160602	4	295	380	77.63%
160602	3	500	680	73.53%
161700	2	465	650	71.54%
160601	2	1,005	1,410	71.28%
161500	4	765	1,200	63.75%
161400	3	395	645	61.24%
161700	1	945	1,550	60.97%
160700	1	1,005	1,655	60.73%
161600	1	1,230	2,050	60.00%
160500	3	685	1,200	57.08%
160602	1	470	840	55.95%
160400	3	425	805	52.80%
160601	1	1,230	2,360	52.12%
Total		11,155	17,535	63.62%

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Residential Improvement Target Areas (RITA)

Approximately twenty-five (25) distressed, “slum-blight certified” residential street sections located throughout the city.

Commercial Improvement Target Area (CITA)

Includes the City’s (4) “slum-blight certified” commercial corridors which encompass the entire length of the Lakewood portion of the following streets: Detroit Avenue, Madison Avenue, Berea Road, and West 117th Street.

Target Population

While Project Pride benefits all Lakewood residents by helping to maintain the character, appearance, health, and safety of the community as a whole, it directly and profoundly impacts the more than 17,000 residents living in Lakewood’s CDBG-eligible low-moderate income block groups; households residing on the (25) street sections that comprise the City’s Residential Improvement Target Area (RITA); and businesses located along Detroit Avenue, Madison Avenue, West 117th Street and Berea Road in the city’s Commercial Improvement Target Area (CITA).

Staffing

Code Inspectors serve as the City’s critical first line of defense against blight by ensuring violations are cited, responsibly addressed, and effectively managed. They play a variety of important roles in the community. On any given day, they function as problem solvers, communicators, mediators, researchers, and teachers educating the community about code requirements and standards to prevent violations from occurring, re-occurring, or worsening.

When violations are cited, Project Pride inspectors refer home and business owners to the Division of Community Development, LakewoodAlive, and other partners to ensure they have access to the resources, guidance, and information they need to correct violations and comply with the City’s building codes.

Project Pride supports a pro-rated share (equivalent to 1.10 full-time employees) of the annual salary, benefits, overhead, and supervisory costs associated with conducting residential and commercial code inspections in the city’s low-moderate income and slum-blight designated areas.