



KANSAS
COMMERCE

COMMUNITY CENTER

COMMUNITY CENTERS: BLUEPRINT TO BUILD

The Blueprint to Build Grant Program offers Kansas communities a streamlined path to developing a new community center. Cities can choose from three pre-designed blueprint layouts, making the process simpler and more affordable.

FUNDING

\$1,500,000
<2,500 population

\$2,500,000
>2,500 population

MATCH

50%

of the CDBG
grant request

APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED

May 1 - Nov. 14, 2025

QUALIFY

- ✓ Have an acceptable use project
- ✓ Benefit low- to moderate-income persons
- ✓ At least 50% matching funds

PURPOSE

The Blueprint to Build program is designed to make it easier and more affordable for small communities to build new community centers. By offering three pre-designed, modern, and energy-efficient blueprints –already paid for with CDBG funds –cities can skip most of the costly design work and long planning timelines. This program makes it easier to bring new, vibrant community spaces to life in walkable, central locations for low- to moderate-income communities. Hutton was selected through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process conducted by the Kansas Department of Commerce to provide architectural and design services. As required by CDBG regulations, firms awarded contracts for professional services through a procurement process are not eligible to bid on any resulting construction work associated with those designs. This ensures a fair and competitive process for all construction-related activities.



SMALL
5,185 Sq. Ft



MEDIUM
16,745 Sq. Ft
Gym or Pool



LARGE
23,950 Sq. Ft
2 Gyms or Gym & Pool

ELIGIBLE USE OF FUNDS

While some flexibility exists for additional features, applicants must adhere to the following guidelines. Minor modifications to the approved design are permitted but must be funded by the applicant and approved by Commerce on a case-by-case basis. Major modifications are not allowed. Facilities can be designed to accommodate future additions, but these features cannot be included in the initial grant application. For example, a pool slide may be planned for future installation after project completion.

Eligible CDBG Activities

CDBG funds support construction of a community center using one of the three provided designs, which include:

- Site completion design activities and civil engineering
- New construction of one of the three community center designs
- Multi-purpose room with overhead doors and patio access
- Serving kitchen with fixed equipment
- Fitness center and telemedicine office
- Lobby with small gathering area and restrooms
- Storm shelter for safety
- Solar panels on roof for energy efficiency and cost savings
- Durable, customizable interior and exterior finishes

Locally Funded Items

The following items are included in the design but must be funded locally:

- Small kitchen equipment (not fixed to walls)
- Furniture for all areas
- Workout equipment for the fitness center
- Parking lot construction and improvements

Ineligible Use of Funds

- Maintenance and operation costs
- Renovations to an existing community center

AVAILABLE FUNDING: \$12,700,000	
Maximum Per Award <2,500 Population	\$1,500,000
Maximum Per Award >2,500 Population	\$2,500,000
Administration	12.5% of grant or \$35,000, whichever is less
Match	50% of the CDBG grant request

CDBG NATIONAL OBJECTIVE

All CDBG projects must meet a national objective and involve an eligible activity under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. National objectives are 1) benefiting low- and moderate-income persons (LMI), 2) aid in the prevention or elimination of slums and blight, 3) meet a need having a particular urgency (urgent need).

All activities proposed in applications for the Blueprint to Build Grant Program must meet the national objective of benefiting low- and moderate-income persons with a minimum of 51 percent LMI beneficiaries. This can be accomplished either by using HUD census data or by completing an income-based survey. Applicants must receive CDBG approval before starting a survey and follow the income-based survey methodology outlined in the CDBG Grantee Handbook.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

All incorporated cities or counties in Kansas that do not receive an annual CDBG entitlement allocation from HUD are eligible to apply to the Kansas CDBG program. The following communities receive federal entitlements and are ineligible to participate in the state CDBG program: Kansas City, Lawrence, Leavenworth, Manhattan, Overland Park, Topeka, Wichita, and all of Johnson County. A city or county will be deemed ineligible if it has an open CDBG project that received a time extension, or the open project has exceeded the original contract end date.

GRANT PROCESS

CDBG projects operate on a two-year timeline. In most CDBG programs, the first year is spent on planning and design, with construction typically starting in the second year. But with Blueprint to Build, Commerce has already covered the design work—so once the site is finalized and environmental reviews are done, applicants can move to construction much faster. Applications received by the 15th of each month will be reviewed by the 30th, with award letters issued as soon as possible.

Before Application:

- Initial public hearing
- Matching funds secured
- Submit pre-application

Application Criteria:

- Completed PER/PAR
- Environmental determination of level of review form
- Community needs narrative

Post Award:

- Complete ER (must be paid with local funds)
- Site Completion with stamped drawings
- If applicable, comply with Uniform Relocation Assistance (URA), Davis-Bacon wage rates, and BABA purchasing regulations, and Section 3

BLUEPRINT TO BUILD - PHASES

Phase 1: Designs Purchased by Commerce

Through the Blueprint to Build initiative, the Kansas Department of Commerce utilized CDBG planning funds to contract with Hutton for the development of three scalable, pre-approved community center designs. These design packages are approximately 75% complete and include comprehensive architectural, interior, structural, and MEP (mechanical, electrical, and plumbing) systems, along with floor plans, site plans, exterior elevations, renderings, and fire protection layouts.

While these plans are highly developed, they are not yet construction-ready. Instead, they serve as standardized templates intended to reduce local design costs and significantly accelerate the project timeline for cities and counties applying for construction funding. By investing in high-quality bridging documents up front, Commerce has laid the groundwork for a streamlined process, ensuring that local governments can focus their resources on adapting these plans to meet local needs.

Phase 2: Project Development (Community-led Planning)

During this phase, communities take the lead in shaping their project proposals using the tools provided in Phase 1. Activities include:

- **Pick Your Blueprint:** Select one of the three pre-approved community center designs that best meets local needs.
- **Identify a Site:** Secure a site that is eligible, accessible, and appropriate for new construction. The site must be under public ownership or control.
- **Secure Match Funding:** Ensure that the minimum local match (50%) is available and committed. Additional local or leveraged funding should also be identified if needed.
- **Submit a Pre-Application:** Communities must complete and submit a pre-application to verify project eligibility, confirm site readiness, and receive technical assistance. Only pre-approved communities will be invited to submit full applications for construction funding.

This phase ensures that communities are positioned for success, with a viable site, committed funding, and a selected design before moving forward to full application and construction.

Phase 3: Submit Full Application

Once a pre-application is approved, the community will be eligible to receive a bridging document set from Hutton. This set will include DWG (AutoCAD) and PDF architectural drawings, along with a digital specifications book that matches the bridging documents level of completeness in identifying and defining the design intent. The documents will be delivered through Hutton's secure cloud system and are intended to support the preparation of a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) or Preliminary Architectural Report (PAR). The PER or PAR must be submitted with the full application to demonstrate how the prototype design will be tailored to the selected site and meet all local requirements.

Hutton will not perform any site-specific final design work or serve as the Architect of Record (AOR). Their role is limited to providing standardized prototype materials and design intent guidance. The city or county must then procure a licensed AOR using proper CDBG procurement procedures. The AOR will adapt the Hutton-provided design to local conditions—addressing topography, utility connections, fire code, and ADA compliance—and complete the final stamped and sealed construction documents. Once the design is finalized and the CDBG environmental review is complete, the project may proceed to the bid phase using HUD-compliant procurement methods.

Because so much design work has already been completed, most projects will be ready for construction much sooner than under traditional CDBG timelines. Final design and construction costs depend on the design size and type. If additional local funding is required, applicants must specify the amount and source of those funds in their budget. Construction cannot begin until a project is approved.

SIZE	Sq. Ft.	BUILDING FOOTPRINT	NO. OF CITY LOTS	SUGGESTED PARKING	EST. COST
Small	5,185 SF	100' by 110'	Fits on Four 135' by 25' City Lots	30 Standard, 2 ADA	\$ 3,100,000
Medium Gym	16,747 SF	112' by 200'	Fits on Eight 135' by 25' City Lots	67 Standard, 3 ADA	\$ 7,500,000
Medium Pool	16,747 SF	112' by 200'	Fits on Eight 135' by 25' City Lots	67 Standard, 3 ADA	\$ 9,650,000
Large Two Gyms	23,950 SF	138' by 237'	Fits on Ten 135' by 25' City Lots	86 Standard, 4 ADA	\$ 8,830,000
Large Gym & Pool	23,950 SF	138' by 237'	Fits on Ten 135' by 25' City Lots	86 Standard, 4 ADA	\$ 10,750,000

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The local government must hold **two public hearings** to demonstrate that reasonable efforts have been undertaken to ensure involvement of citizens or citizen organizations throughout all stages of the program. A notice about the hearing must be published in a local newspaper with the widest circulation, and it must appear **at least 5 full days before the hearing**—not counting the day it’s published or the day of the hearing itself. These hearings must be held at a time and location convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries, with accommodations for non-English speaking residents and persons with disabilities.

Initial Public Hearing

The first public hearing must be held **at least 15 days before** the CDBG application is submitted, and **no earlier than 120 days**. The purpose of the hearing is to inform citizens about the proposed project, including its location, total cost, activities, and beneficiaries. Community members must be given a chance to suggest other project ideas and share their input, and the local governing body should carefully consider this feedback before submitting the application. **The total project funding and CDBG amount requested must match what appears in the public hearing notice.**

Close Out Public Hearing

The second public hearing is held at the conclusion of the project prior to close out to inform citizens of the project’s successful or unsuccessful completion and to obtain input on the grantee’s performance.

SAMPLE PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The City/County of _____ will hold a public hearing on (day), (date), at (time) in the (location) to consider an application to be submitted to the Kansas Department of Commerce for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds under the _____ category. A specific project application to be discussed is (description) in an area generally bounded by (location) that will consist of (specific activities). The estimated project cost is \$_____ with the grant request for \$_____ of the project cost.

Other project proposals introduced at the hearing will be considered. Oral and written comments will be recorded and become a part of (City/County) CDBG Citizen Participation Plan.

Reasonable accommodations will be made available to persons with disabilities. Requests should be submitted to _____ by (date).

MATCHING FUNDS

Local funding is required for all CDBG projects, and no project can be funded entirely by grants. Matching funds can originate from private or public sources, but the application must document that these funds are firmly committed (e.g., a letter of commitment from a bank or other funding source). A minimum 50% local match is required. For example, a small community center project totaling \$3,100,000 should include a \$1.5 million CDBG request matched by \$1.6 million in local funds to meet the 50% requirement. Any cost overruns must be covered locally.

Examples of matching funds include bank loans, industrial revenue bonds, owners' equity, contributions from local governments, or grants and loans from economic development entities. Applicants are allowed to match CDBG funds with other grant funds if that funding is secured in a city/county account by the time the contract is signed. At least 10% of the matching funds must be cash from a local source (i.e., owner funds, city/county cash). **Any expenses incurred prior to the grant award are ineligible for reimbursement with CDBG funds. This includes grant writing, engineering, and architecture.**

If a community intends to hold a special election to approve the issuance of bonds for a project or to pass a sales tax (for example) to support a project, the community must: a) provide evidence of this intent in the form of a governing body resolution; and b) commit to holding this election by no later than Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2025. If those conditions are met applications will be reviewed with a presumption of passage of the special ballot question and, if awarded, such awards will be expressly contingent upon passage. Should the ballot question fail, any award will be automatically rescinded.

PRE-APPLICATION

Applicants must submit a pre-application to confirm eligibility before applying for CDBG funding. This process allows us to provide early feedback and address any eligibility concerns before applicants complete the full application, and ensures projects align with program goals and are prepared for funding. The form requires a brief project description, estimated budget, eligibility status, and readiness to proceed.

Commerce will review submissions within ten days and provide further instructions. Only those with an approved pre-application may submit a full application, but approval does not ensure grant funding. If you are new to the CDBG program, please reach out to us to schedule an initial discussion first. The deadline to submit a pre-application is Oct. 14, 2025. <https://forms.office.com/g/YDSrt6VuMN>

PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING/ARCHITECTURAL REPORT

As part of the Blueprint to Build Phase 3, participating communities must procure a licensed Architect of Record (AOR) or Professional Engineer (PE) to conduct a formal review and develop a PER or PAR for their selected site and building plan. This report is a threshold requirement and must be submitted as part of the full application. It builds on the Hutton-provided design template and confirms the feasibility of site-specific adaptation. Failure to submit a compliant report will result in ineligibility for funding.

The PER or PAR must be uploaded directly to the online application. At a minimum, the following must be addressed in the report:

1. Name of the applicant or owner of the system.
2. Name, address, and telephone number of the engineering/architectural company.
3. Date of review.
4. Description and documentation of the problem.
5. Cause(s) of the problem, including the age of any existing publicly owned system(s).
6. Discussion of the alternatives – Several alternatives should be considered to determine feasibility and cost-effectiveness, with justification of the alternative selected. The alternatives must be listed.
7. Estimated construction and non-construction costs. Cost per square foot is not an acceptable architectural estimate. Costs must be broken out for the specific structure.
8. If the scope of the report includes more activities than the proposed CDBG project, clearly identify the CDBG portion in narratives and cost estimates.
9. Analysis of operation, maintenance, and replacement budget.
10. Land requirements – Identify sites and easements required. Also specify whether these properties are currently owned, acquired, or leased. Must attach proof to receive credit.
11. Asbestos must be addressed if you do a building renovation or demolition.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

All CDBG-funded projects require an environmental review under the National Environment Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and HUD's implementing regulations at 24 CFR Part 58. The Environmental Determination of Level of Review form must be submitted with the application. This form will inform Commerce as to what level of environmental review you will undertake for your project if awarded.

Post-award, the city or county must conduct a full environmental review of the project, even for small projects that don't require construction. This responsibility cannot be delegated and the cost to conduct the review **must be paid with local funds**. The entire project, not just the CDBG-funded portion of the project, is subject to the NEPA review. The project must group together all activities that are related either on a geographical or functional basis or are logical parts of an overall project into a single project for review. The environmental review process includes determinations of applicability to various laws and authorities, consultation with various regulatory agencies, publication of findings, a 7-day or 15-day advertised local comment period, and a 15-day state comment period.

The NEPA review focuses on exploring possibilities and evaluating how the project's design may affect the environment. Once a CDBG application is submitted, no "choice limiting actions" can occur for any part of the project, whether funded by CDBG or other sources. "Choice limiting actions" refer to any commitments of HUD or non-HUD funds or any activities by the recipient (city or county), project participants (public or private, nonprofit or for-profit), or their contractors that could negatively impact the environment or restrict the range of reasonable alternatives. **After Commerce issues the environmental release of project funds, participants may proceed with project activities.**

THRESHOLD REQUIREMENTS

Before the application will be scored and ranked, it must meet the following threshold requirements:

1. The applicant must be eligible.
2. The application must be received within the application period.
3. Only complete standard application forms will be accepted.
4. The proposed activity for CDBG funding must be an eligible activity under Section 105(a) of Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, and meet one of the national objectives discussed herein.
5. Provide appropriate matching funds with supporting documentation. All matching funds must be secured at the time of application.
6. A Basic Site Analysis (BSA) must be included. The report shall address the items included in the section herein discussing such requirements.
7. Survey process approval is now required for all CDBG applicants prior to conducting surveys. Completed income surveys are required at the time of application. Failure to obtain approval to conduct a survey will result in possible threshold. Surveys must demonstrate a minimum of 51 percent LMI beneficiaries
8. The public hearing notice must be published at least five full days before (starting one day after publication date and not counting the date of the hearing, i.e., a total of seven days) but not more than 20 days prior to the public hearing. The public hearing must occur a minimum of 15 days but not more than 120 days prior to the application due date.
9. Absence of required interlocal agreements shall be considered a threshold criterion
10. Construction Management Contracts are not allowable under Kansas CDBG regulations because of free and open competition for bidders.
11. Two maps: (1) Target Area Map, (2) City map if different from target.

Should any document be missing, incorrect, or otherwise have deficiencies that do not meet threshold requirements, contact will be made with the applicant after the applications are initially reviewed. The applicant will be given two weeks from notification to correct the deficiency. Threshold items such as an inadequate amount of time for a public hearing, a public hearing not having required information, or a public hearing too late would not be correctable, and the application will not be scored.

The extension of time granted is not intended to provide extra time for securing commitments from alternative sources, lifting contingencies, or finalizing the particulars of the application.

RATING CRITERIA

All CDBG projects are evaluated based on a numerical scoring system tied to the established rating criteria. While there is no official minimum score required for consideration, priority is given to applications that score higher. As a general guideline, projects scoring below 75 are typically not competitive and are less likely to be approved. Applicants are encouraged to review the criteria carefully and ensure their proposals are as compelling as possible.

All applications must include a Community Needs Narrative, which should be drafted and then pasted into the online application portal. The narrative should describe the community's overall prioritized needs, not just those related to the proposed project. Applicants should explain how these needs were identified and whether they have been formalized in any existing plans or documents. The narrative should tell the story of the community and highlight needs across all sectors. It is limited to one page and must specifically address housing needs. Examples of community needs include education, childcare, fire safety, community and government buildings, transportation, recreation, housing, workforce development, economic development, and homelessness.

The matrix below describes each selection criterion as a numerical score within the **Blueprint to Build Program**.

SELECTION CRITERIA MATRIX	MAXIMUM
1. Project Need	30
2. Past Efforts to Address Need	10
3. Project Readiness	20
4. Project Impact	20
5. Ability to Maintain	20
6. <i>Optional Bonus Points</i>	<i>Up to 10 points</i>
MAXIMUM TOTAL	100 Points

1. Project Need (30 points)

- a. Applicants must clearly demonstrate the need for a new community center by detailing the underlying causes, how long the issue has existed, and its impact on the community. A strong application will use specific data and figures to illustrate the urgency of the need. Additionally, applicants should explain how the proposed project compares in priority to other community needs. Beyond immediate concerns, applications should outline long-term solutions, including how the facility will address ongoing community challenges and remain sustainable over time. While letters of support are encouraged to showcase community backing, they will not receive specific point values in the scoring process.

2. Past Efforts to Address Need (10 points)

- a. Applicants must describe all efforts from the previous five years that have been made to address the community's overall needs. This includes the proposed project and all other city/county activities, i.e. street improvements, water/sewer improvements, senior centers, health departments, accessibility enhancements, etc.

3. Project Readiness (20 points)

- a. Applicants must describe the degree to which the applicant is ready to proceed with the project. In the event land must be procured, a strong application will have identified that the applicant owns the land. A strong application will identify that there are not any environmental concerns that would delay the project.
- b. Applicants will be required to summarize all the alternative solutions that were examined to address the need above. This must also include a financial analysis of all the proposed solutions. Failure to include financial alternatives will result in point deductions. Applicants will also be required to document all sources of funding for the project. The applicant must state the solution they have chosen and the reasoning behind the choice. Describe any acquisition activities completed or required for the project.
- c. Scope of Work: Provide a detailed description of the project, including the expected completion timeline, planned activities, total project costs, and cost per beneficiary. Clearly outline the activities funded by CDBG separately.
- d. Bonds are not required to be sold to be eligible, but a commitment for purchase must be "in hand" for any issues other than private market. Bond ordinances must be passed and published, and proof thereof included in the application.
- e. Consideration will be given to applications where proposed facilities are in walkable commercial areas with existing infrastructure.
- f. Provide a realistic timeline for critical benchmarks of the project.

4. Project Impact (20 points)

- a. Applicants should describe the anticipated impact on the LMI community. Describe measurable outcomes, which LMI residents will benefit, and how the applicant will determine if the project is a success.
- b. Applicants should discuss sustainability and long-term benefits to the LMI population of the project.
- c. Applicants should discuss integration with other community development initiatives in the community. A strong application will describe how the project connects with other initiatives in the community for the LMI population.
- d. Applicants should address factors such as walkability and proximity to downtown.

5. Ability to Maintain (20 points)

- a. The community must determine how they will maintain the facility and identify a funding source for its upkeep. This approach should be reasonable and align with the operation and maintenance resolution.
- b. Reasonable fees may be charged for the use of the facility assisted with CDBG funds, but excessive membership fees that would preclude LMI persons from using the facilities are not permitted.
- c. The rate structure or charges assessed for entry need to be established, and there should be a commitment to this structure for a specified duration.

6. Optional Bonus Points (up to 10 points)

A total of 10 bonus points is available under two criteria: applicants who have not received funding in the past five years (5 points) and private match (5 points). If seeking bonus points for private donations or foundation grants, at least 10% of the matching funds must come from that source to gain the 5 bonus points.

Following the completion of the ratings, CDBG leadership will conduct a final review to ensure that projects are equitably distributed across the state, with priority given to those demonstrating the capacity to complete on time, presenting minimal CDBG compliance risks, and contributing to geographic dispersion. This approach ensures grant awards represent the diverse regions of Kansas while supporting program goals for effective and timely implementation.

POST AWARD

Real Property Acquisition

If the project involves the purchase of land or buildings, the property transactions must follow the provisions of the Uniform Relocation Assistance (URA) and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. This law is commonly referred to as the Uniform Act. The Uniform Act applies regardless of whether federal grant funds are being utilized for the actual property transaction. **The use of CDBG funds in any part of the project triggers the application of the Uniform Act.**

Davis-Bacon Wage Rates

If CDBG funds are utilized in site preparation, construction or renovation of a building, the construction workers and mechanics must be paid the prevailing (Davis-Bacon) wage rates, as determined by the U.S. Department of Labor. If the application is funded, the grantee will have to consult with Commerce to obtain wage rate determinations as applicable. Commerce must be contacted concerning the applicability of Davis-Bacon wage rates. **Davis-Bacon requirements are triggered when construction work over \$2,000 is financed in whole or in part with CDBG funds.**

Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act

The grantee must comply with the Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act, which requires all iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in federally funded infrastructure projects to be produced in the United States. Funds obligated by HUD must follow BABA requirements unless an approved waiver applies, as outlined in HUD's "Public Interest Phased Implementation Waiver for FY 2022 and 2023" (88 FR 17001).

Section 3

Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 requires that economic opportunities generated by CDBG funding be directed toward low- and very low-income persons. Section 3 applies to training or employment and contracting opportunities arising in conjunction with CDBG construction projects funded with more than \$200,000 in CDBG funds. These opportunities are required to be given to low- and very low-income persons and business concerns living the project area.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST - BLUEPRINT TO BUILD

The following forms must be signed and submitted through the online application portal:

1. Community Needs Narrative (drafted and pasted into the online application portal)
2. Pre-Selection of Professional Services
3. Project Budget Form
4. Statement of Assurances and Certifications
5. Resolution of Governing Body to File Application
6. Maintenance and Operation Resolution, including dollar figure and source
7. Commitments from other Funding Sources
8. Affidavit of Public Hearing Notice *
9. Environmental Determination of Level of Review
10. Letters of Support
11. Map of Project Area
12. Disclosure Report
13. Anti-Displacement Plan
14. Project Items BABA Status Worksheet
15. Preliminary Engineering/Architectural Report

Please also include the below, if applicable:

16. Intergovernmental Agreements (on behalf of or multi-jurisdictional applications), if applicable
17. Submission of completed surveys (must be received prior to application submission by mail or hand delivery; no electronic submission)
18. Copy of Survey Instrument
19. Survey Methodology
20. Copy of Survey Tabulation w/description of variance, if applicable
21. Copy of Survey Process Approval from CDBG

** The total project funding and CDBG amount requested must match what appears in the public hearing notice*

More Questions?

CONTACT THE CDBG TEAM



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kansascommerce.gov/cdbg



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