



NEBRASKA

DEPT. OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

INVESTMENTS & IMPACTS

2014 – 2018

CDBG OVERVIEW

Established as part of the Housing and Community Development Act in 1974, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program allocates funding directly to the State of Nebraska and to the four entitlement communities (Bellevue, Grand Island, Lincoln, and Omaha) from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) implements and oversees the State CDBG program to develop viable communities by providing Nebraskans with safe, affordable housing and infrastructure, as well as by creating quality jobs and investments through the financing of new and expanding businesses.

The allocation of CDBG program funds must support at least one of three national program objectives: to benefit low and moderate income persons; to prevent or eliminate slums or blight; or to meet urgent community development needs.

Over the past five years, 131 communities and counties have benefited from the State CDBG program, encompassing more than 146,500 low and moderate income individuals. The current overview highlights State CDBG program investments made in communities and counties across Nebraska.

*Category is no longer active as of 2016.

The State CDBG program provides funding to communities and counties in the following categories:

- Comprehensive Development
- Comprehensive Revitalization*
- Comprehensive Investment & Stabilization*
- Downtown Revitalization
- Economic Development
- Owner Occupied Rehabilitation
- Planning
- Public Works
- Tourism Development
- Water/Wastewater

BY THE NUMBERS



\$52,487,919

State of Nebraska
Non-Entitlement Investments



256

Projects



146,500+

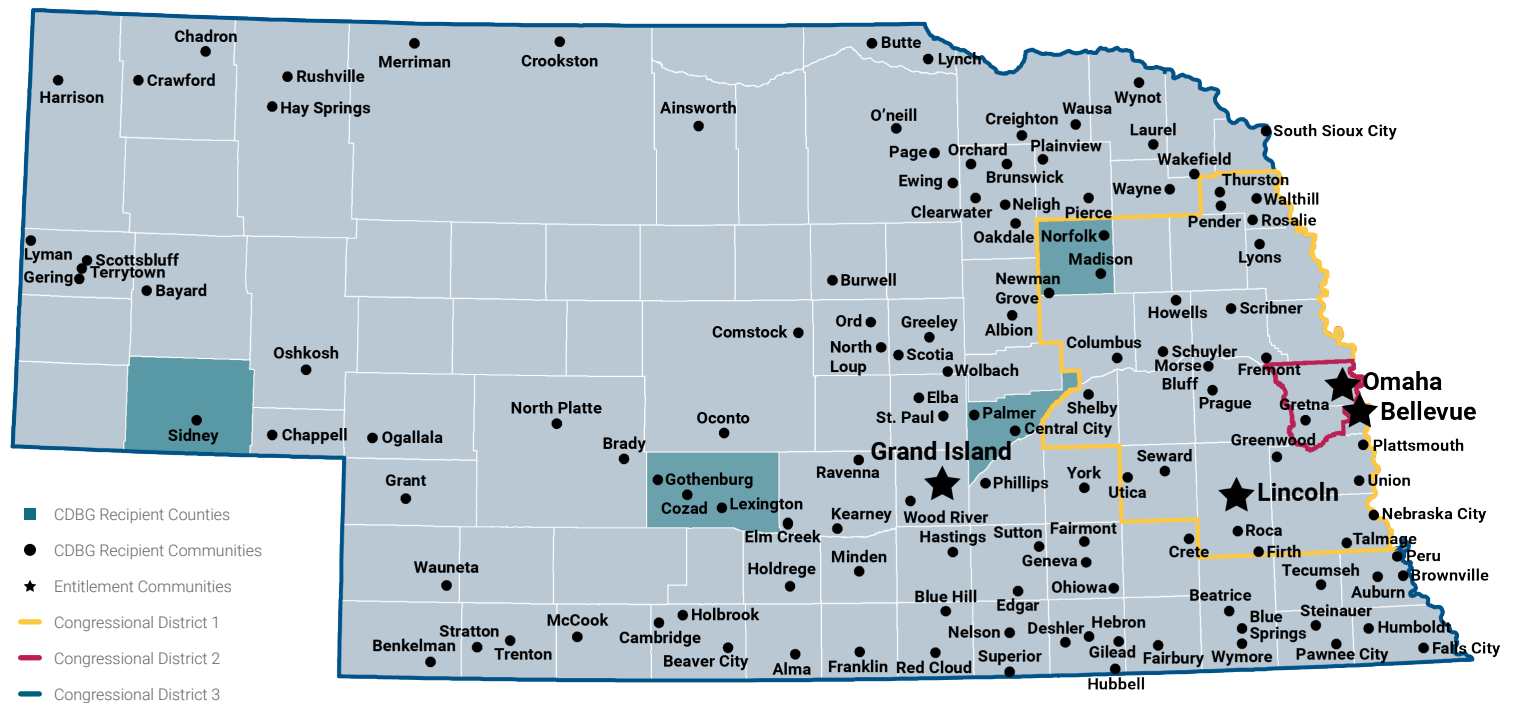
Low and Moderate Income
Individuals Assisted



131

Communities and
Counties Impacted

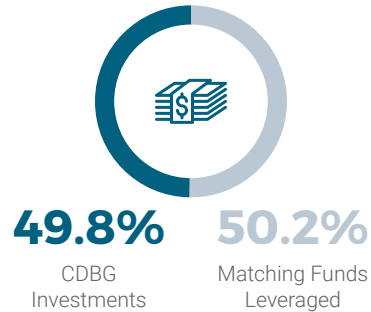
For the non-entitlement area, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development makes CDBG funds available to Nebraska counties and communities with a population of less than 50,000. All information contained in this publication pertains to the non-entitlement area.



INVESTMENT SUMMARY

CDBG & OTHER INVESTMENTS FOR ALL PROGRAM CATEGORIES

\$52.4 million in CDBG funds leveraged over \$52.8 million in matching funds to enable 256 projects.



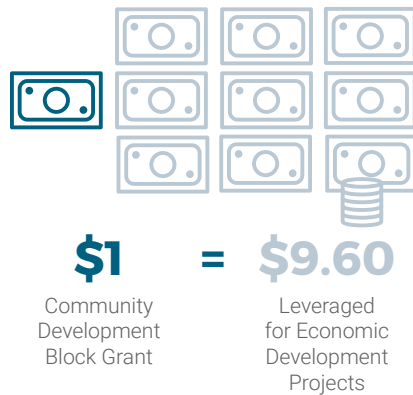
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT JOBS CREATED & RETAINED

There were a total of 3 Economic Development projects. Overall, 66 jobs were created/retained. Of these, 50 jobs benefited low and moderate income persons.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT INVESTMENTS

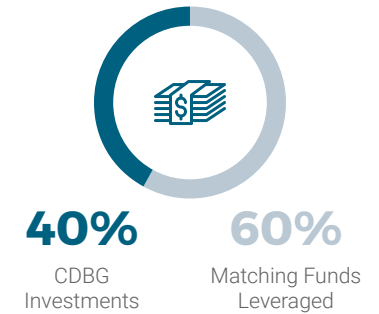
Over \$1.5 million in CDBG Economic Development Investments leveraged more than \$15 million in public and private investment.



INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENT INVESTMENTS

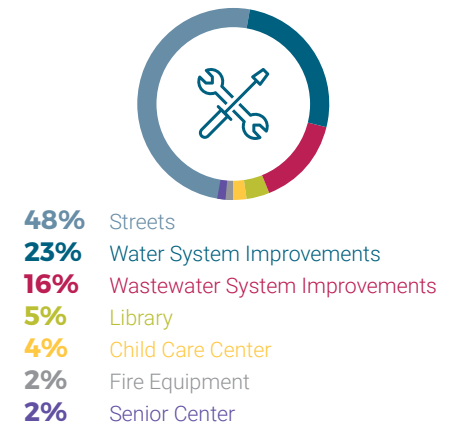
Over \$14 million in CDBG Infrastructure and Facility Improvement investments leveraged more than \$21 million in public and private investment.

\$1 CDBG = \$1.50 Leveraged for Public Works and Water/Wastewater projects.



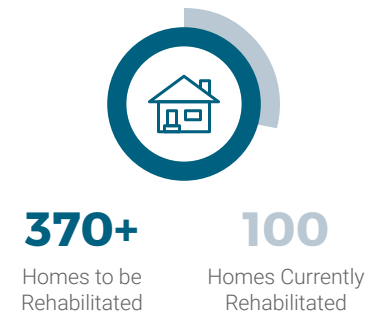
INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

A total of 56 projects focused on infrastructure and public facilities within the CDBG categories of Public Works and Water/Wastewater.



HOUSING REHABILITATION

Over \$11.5 million in CDBG funding has been invested to address housing needs. Today, 100 homes have been rehabilitated, benefitting low and moderate income households. In all, the funding will assist the rehabilitation of over 370 homes.





Red Cloud officials receive the Showcase Community Award, April 2018.

RED CLOUD HONORED FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Red Cloud Receives 2018 Governor's Showcase Community Award

The City of Red Cloud, Nebraska (population 1,138) proudly took home the Governor's Showcase Community Award during Nebraska's celebration of Community Development Week in 2018.

The Showcase Award recognizes Nebraska communities that have displayed outstanding achievements in community development over the past five years, as well as the innovative use of CDBG funding to meet program objectives.

Red Cloud was recognized for an array of projects that have sparked additional tourism initiatives, improved childcare access, and enhanced overall quality of life throughout the community.



Patrons visiting The Willa Cather Bookstore, located inside the National Willa Cather Center.

National Willa Cather Center is an International Tourism Centerpiece

Red Cloud was the childhood home of American author Willa Cather, and the locally-based Willa Cather Foundation (WCF) maintains an extensive collection of Cather's works and memorabilia. These, as well as dozens of historic monuments and landmarks, draw scholars and tourists to Red Cloud from around the world.

In 2015, assisted by \$300,000 in CDBG tourism development funds plus grants and donations, the City of Red Cloud, WCF, and other partners began construction on the National Willa Cather Center (NWCC) — a multi-use facility designed to celebrate and preserve the author's life and works. Featuring a museum, shops, climate-controlled archive, and other amenities, the NWCC serves as the centerpiece of Red Cloud's heritage tourism assets.

The NWCC project involved the renovation and repurposing of a historic downtown building, the Moon Block, as well as the removal of architectural barriers to the adjacent historic Red Cloud Opera House. CDBG funding was essential to this effort, supporting the removal of architectural barriers and the installation of an ADA accessible elevator, restrooms, and features.

The NWCC was completed in 2017, with former First Lady Laura Bush presiding over the ribbon cutting. City leaders say tourism increased dramatically in the ensuing months. Meanwhile, a coffee shop and a wine and craft beer tasting room occupying the ground level commercial space have added to the city's tourist appeal. Three second-floor loft apartments have created space for visiting scholars and artists.

The Valley Child Development Center Addresses Critical Childcare Needs

A community survey conducted in 2015 found that childcare access was one of the biggest issues facing the future of Red Cloud. Today, with support from the CDBG program, The Valley Child Development Center (TVCDC) is helping to make that challenge a thing of the past.

Over half of rural American communities qualify as childcare deserts — areas where childcare is either inadequate or unavailable. This issue presents challenges for working parents, inhibits local population growth, and can lead to adverse outcomes for children. Prior to TVCDC, there was only one certified childcare provider within a 20-mile radius of Red Cloud. Now, with support from the CDBG program, approximately 55 children are enrolled at one of the newest, most innovative childcare facilities in the state.

With classrooms, a full playground, and a staff of three certified teachers and five early childhood development specialists-in-training, TVCDC feels more like an elementary school than a daycare. A creative curriculum developed in Nebraska schools focuses on children's social, physical, and intellectual development. It's a place kids want to be — not just somewhere they get dropped off in the morning.

TVCDC was made possible by a \$250,000 grant from the CDBG program, as well as local grants and donations. Without CDBG support the project may have never been possible. For Red Cloud, what was once a critical challenge has become a source of pride — and a brighter tomorrow.



Children cut the ribbon for the opening of The Valley Child Development Center.



Exterior of The Valley Child Development Center.



Interior of The Valley Child Development Center.



Auld Public Library.



CDBG Comprehensive City Planning Grant Enables a Vision of Future Growth

A 2016 CDBG planning award of \$30,000 enabled Red Cloud to update its communitywide Comprehensive Plan, Blight Study, and Redevelopment Plan – as well as to carry out additional planning efforts, such as a Downtown Visioning Plan. The ensuing projects will add vitality and create new opportunities throughout Red Cloud, creating a better quality of life for residents.

In addition, the City of Red Cloud received a grant from the Civic and Community Center Financing Fund (CCCFF), which made it possible for the Auld Public Library to undergo restorations, improving both its appearance and functionality. The restorations included installing an elevator and ground-level entry to make the library more accessible to persons with disabilities; new landscaping; and several renovations to create more useful space for public activities. Auld Public Library has been a piece of Red Cloud history since 1917, and these updates were critical to improving accessibility for all people of Red Cloud. Today, the library houses over 10,000 volumes, and serves as a gathering space for various community programs, including those that benefit children.



\$2.2 million in CDBG funding was invested into the development of facilities such as libraries, fire stations, child care facilities, and senior centers across the state.

CDBG PROGRAM HELPS TO RESTORE SAFE, RELIABLE DRINKING WATER IN TERRYTOWN

Financial support from the CDBG program was vital to restoring reliable drinking water to the residents of Terrytown, Nebraska (population 1,198).

In 2012, routine tests of Terrytown’s water supply uncovered a major health and safety issue, when it was discovered that arsenic concentrations in one of the town’s two functioning wells had surpassed acceptable levels.

Residents were quickly notified, and Well #1 was placed on “emergency use only” status. Meanwhile, with half of the city’s water supply compromised, leaders were left looking for solutions to what was both a public safety concern and a financial challenge.

“ The CDBG program helped our community address an important challenge that was beyond our resources at the local level.”

LONNIE MILLER, CITY ADMINISTRATOR

City engineers soon determined that there were two options for restoring Terrytown’s water reliability. Option one, the City could drill a new well; however, this would require a costly search for groundwater, plus the construction of an arsenic treatment plant in case issues persisted. Option two, Terrytown could choose to obtain its water from another city’s wellfield.

With only a few short miles separating the cities, it was determined that connecting to the Gering water supply was Terrytown’s most efficient option; moreover, if treatment was needed in the future, the two communities could share the costs.

This plan would come with a significant price tag – one that a small community like Terrytown could scarcely afford on its own. Altogether, estimates for connecting Terrytown to the Gering water supply totaled more than \$380,000. Fortunately, the City was able to secure financial assistance through the CDBG Water/Wastewater category.

Working with the Panhandle Area Development District (PADD) – a regional economic development organization – Terrytown submitted an application, and was awarded \$250,000 in CDBG funding for its water connection project. The City leveraged local funds for the remaining cost.

“The CDBG program helped our community address an important challenge that was beyond our resources at the local level,” Lonnie Miller, City Administrator for Terrytown said. “Our community is grateful for what the program has allowed us to achieve, as well as the support we received from PADD and DED in helping us obtain CDBG assistance.”

Today, additional improvements to the community’s water system are now underway, made possible through funding from USDA. Since connecting to the Gering water supply, residents and community leaders can once again rest easy knowing their drinking water is safe and secure.



CDBG FUNDING SUPPORTS KEY HOUSING INITIATIVES IN BENKELMAN

The City of Benkelman, Nebraska (population 973) has been rejuvenating homes and revitalizing neighborhoods to create a better quality of life for low and moderate income residents since 2011.

CDBG’s Owner Occupied Rehabilitation (OOR) category enables communities to improve both the appearance and functionality of homes. Benkelman received its first OOR award in 2011 in the amount of \$243,044. Combined with local match, the City was able to rehabilitate nine homes on behalf of low and moderate income individuals and families.

In 2015, Benkelman was awarded an additional \$189,000 in OOR funding, enabling a second round of home rehabilitation projects, this time transforming seven homes.

 **\$4.5 million in CDBG funding was invested in Water/Wastewater projects.**

“ **CDBG financial support makes it possible to accomplish projects that make an immediate impact on at-need residents, and that create stronger communities with a better quality of life. We’re very grateful for the program, and all it has helped to achieve in the city of Benkelman.**”

AMY THELANDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SWNCBC

“With housing being a major concern for the City of Benkelman, the OOR program has saved many homes and prevented families from having to relocate,” said Benkelman City Clerk Diane Rosenfelt. “The Mayor and Council feel very strongly about the CDBG program, and the benefits the funding provides for our community.”

Benkelman has worked side-by-side with Southwest Nebraska Community Betterment Corporation (SWNCBC) — a nonprofit organization committed to housing improvement and assistance — to carry out its OOR efforts. Amy Thelander, who serves as Executive Director for SWNCBC, said, “CDBG financial support makes it possible to accomplish projects that make an immediate impact on at-need residents, and that create stronger communities with a better quality of life. We’re very grateful for the program, and all it has helped to achieve in the city of Benkelman.”

In a town of less than a thousand, the rehabilitation of 16 homes can make an enormous difference. Yet, Benkelman’s efforts are still not complete. In 2017, the City sought and was awarded its third round of OOR funding for \$189,000, which will rehabilitate an additional six homes.

City leaders say the scope of the community’s OOR projects has improved the health, safety, and living conditions of dozens of people in need — from families with children, to retirees on limited income, to people with disabilities. Homeowners live in houses that are safer, more energy and cost-efficient, and more accessible.



Courtesy of The Fairbury Journal-News

CDBG PROGRAM REVITALIZES TOURISM AND ENTERTAINMENT IN DOWNTOWN FAIRBURY

Thanks to dedicated residents, donor support, and financial assistance from the CDBG program, the historic Bonham Theatre in downtown Fairbury, Nebraska (population 3,765) is drawing crowds once again.

Almost 90 years after it opened to a packed house in 1926, the Bonham Theatre closed its doors for what many thought would be the last time.



38 communities have benefited from \$11.5 million invested in Housing Rehabilitation.



Courtesy of The Fairbury Journal-News

Interior of the newly renovated Bonham Theatre.

Not long after the Bonham was forced to close, a group of concerned citizens gathered to take action. Not only was the Bonham part of Fairbury's history and culture, it had also been one of the town's only entertainment venues and main tourist attractions. Its closing left few activities for local youth, threatened commerce and tourism in the downtown district, and jeopardized foot traffic to local businesses. It also hampered Fairbury's ability to attract and retain residents.

Determined to bring the Bonham back to life, locals formed a registered nonprofit, The Bonham Theatre Project. While the group's early discussions focused on replacing the outmoded projection system, it was soon apparent that much more work would be needed to reopen the theater. This included major updates to meet fire, safety, electrical, and accessibility codes. When all was said and done, estimated project costs totaled over \$700,000.

Yet the town forged ahead. The Bonham Theatre Project began a series of local fundraising activities, and received funding from organizations including The Peter Kiewit Foundation, USDA, and Union Pacific. It wasn't long before the nonprofit had raised over \$450,000.

“CDBG funding was crucial to the success of our project. Without support from the program, completing all the work that was needed might have been impossible from a financial standpoint.”

BROOKLYN SCHWAB, THE BONHAM THEATRE PROJECT

However, without financial support from the CDBG program, all of these efforts might have fallen short.

The City of Fairbury received \$250,000 in CDBG funding to support the Bonham's restoration. This funding was instrumental to completing the safety and accessibility upgrades needed to bring the theater up to code. Finally, after years of hard work and a community-wide effort, construction on the Bonham was able to commence.

“CDBG funding was crucial to the success of our project,” said Brooklyn Schwab, a founding member of the Bonham Theatre Project. “Without support from the program, completing all the work that was needed might have been impossible from a financial standpoint.”

On September 26, 2017 — exactly 91 years after its original grand opening — people once again lined the sidewalks in front of the Bonham Theatre for its birthday reopening celebration. Today, the Bonham remains a popular gathering place for community residents and tourists alike.

“This is something our whole community banded together to achieve, and something everyone can enjoy” Schwab said. “The CDBG program played a big role in helping us make it a reality.”



\$1.9 million in CDBG funding was invested into Tourism Development projects.



CDBG PROGRAM SUPPORTS BUSINESS EXPANSION, JOB CREATION IN MADISON COUNTY

With support from the CDBG program, Weiland Doors has expanded to a larger, more efficient factory, and continues to create quality employment opportunities for the residents of Madison County (population 38,876) and surrounding communities.

Over the span of three decades, Weiland Doors grew from a one-man operation into one of the nation's most trusted manufacturers of industrial doors.

“The CDBG program really made a difference in helping us make our project a reality,” Haake said. “But it also allowed us to create jobs that would benefit people in our area.”

ROB HAKKE, WEILAND DOORS

Leon Weiland built his first industrial door in his barn in 1984 to sell to a local meat packing plant. By 2010, Weiland Doors was a national brand, and Leon and his wife, Jean, expanded the partnership of the company to their son and sons-in-law. The three new partners — Carl Weiland, Rob Hakke, and Jason Ash — quickly set out to build upon the owners' legacy, while continuing the same level of service Leon had established.

Focused on innovation and growth, Weiland invested in new technology and equipment, more than doubling its staff over the course of only five years. Soon, plans to move to a larger facility were underway.

“Weiland had become this incredibly successful national company, but our competitors would say ‘they literally make their doors in a barn,’” Haake said. “On one hand we embraced it because, yes, we were making the best industrial doors in the country from a barn. We never shied away from who we were. But we also knew that to accommodate future growth, it would be best to expand into a new building.”



Weiland Doors' ribbon cutting ceremony.



“ Everyone on the team feels like they’re a co-owner, and they’ve all played a role in the company’s success. When you’ve got that kind of culture, the sky is the limit as to what you can achieve.”

ROB HAKKE, WEILAND DOORS

After hundreds of hours scouting potential locations and drafting new factory designs, the partners located a property just outside the city of Norfolk. There, Weiland would not only have room to spread out, but would be in closer proximity to the city’s labor pool.

With the help of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Madison County, and Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District, Weiland received \$275,000 in loan-based CDBG assistance to cover equipment costs for the new expansion. In return, the owners created 10 new jobs, of which six were made available to low and moderate income persons.

“The CDBG program really made a difference in helping us make our project a reality,” Haake said. “But it also allowed us to create jobs that would benefit people in our area.”

Today, Weiland Doors’ new factory is state-of-the-art, with much-needed space and design improvements that are allowing the company to operate more efficiently than ever before. Since the facility was completed in 2018, Weiland has added 12 new employees, exceeding its own expectations. Leon and Jean remain a constant reminder of the core values that began the framework of the company.

“They’ve given this business a solid foundation on which we could build. They are two of the hardest working people I’ve ever met, and spend virtually all their time serving others. They represent exactly who we as a company strive to be. We’re all proud of where we’re at today,” Hakke said. “Everyone on the team feels like they’re a co-owner, and they’ve all played a role in the company’s success. When you’ve got that kind of culture, the sky is the limit as to what you can achieve.”



Across the State, 66 jobs have been created through Economic Development projects.

HOMES, COMMUNITIES TRANSFORMED THROUGH CDBG PROGRAM

Columbus (population 22,834)

Low and Moderate Income Households Served: 18

The City of Columbus, Nebraska has harnessed three rounds of CDBG funding to rejuvenate homes and revitalize neighborhoods within the community on behalf of low and moderate income individuals and families.

In total, the City of Columbus was awarded \$693,674 in CDBG funds for the purchase, rehabilitation, and resale of single family units within targeted areas. These funds were matched by the City, providing approximately \$981,608 divided among additional projects for sewer and street improvements.

Over the three-year run of CDBG funding for community revitalization, with the City's knack for matching funds, Columbus was able to rejuvenate a total of 18 homes - adding value and appeal to dwellings and neighborhoods, while supporting the City's efforts to attract and retain residents. Additionally, much-needed street and sewer repairs and improvements have enhanced quality of life and improved public health and safety. In Columbus, the CDBG

program is promoting economic growth and new opportunities for the entire community.

Talmage (population 233)

Low and Moderate Income Households Served: 8

The Village of Talmage, Nebraska transformed eight homes with support from CDBG's Owner Occupied Rehabilitation (OOR) category. CDBG provided an award of \$248,000 to the Village for this project. In a community of less than 300, the program has not only had a major impact, but is creating a ripple effect.

With the majority of houses in Talmage being built prior to 1978, critical updates were needed to ensure safe housing. Housing needs in Talmage ranged from roof and siding updates to electrical repair, weatherization upgrades, lead-based paint inspection, and home clean-up. The Village worked closely with the Southeast Nebraska Development District (SEND) to ensure a successful project.

Following repairs, low and moderate income homeowners have experienced a greater sense of pride



and higher property values. The program also encouraged residents outside the program to make improvements to their homes. By helping to address blight and neglect issues throughout the community, the CDBG OOR program has created a new sense of purpose and place throughout Talmage.

Fairmont (population 644)

Low and Moderate Income Households Served: 14

Support from the CDBG program enabled the Village of Fairmont, Nebraska to transform homes and

lives through a series of OOR projects. Fairmont was awarded \$430,625 in CDBG funds, which allowed the Village to rehabilitate nine homes, with another five on the way to completion. Most homes had single-paned windows, deteriorating siding, and contained lead-based paint. With the majority built before 1950, many were also in critical need of weatherization upgrades.

Witnessing these changes, homeowners throughout the community were inspired to carry out their own improvements, adding value to their homes and neighborhoods. With the CDBG program as a catalyst, citizens are working to create a better Fairmont.



\$33.8 million in CDBG funding was invested throughout the state to revitalize neighborhoods and downtown areas in 67 communities.

The City of Red Cloud, NE was awarded the Governor's Showcase Community Award in 2018 for outstanding achievements in community development.



NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Opportunity.

Nebraska Department of Economic Development
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opportunity.nebraska.gov