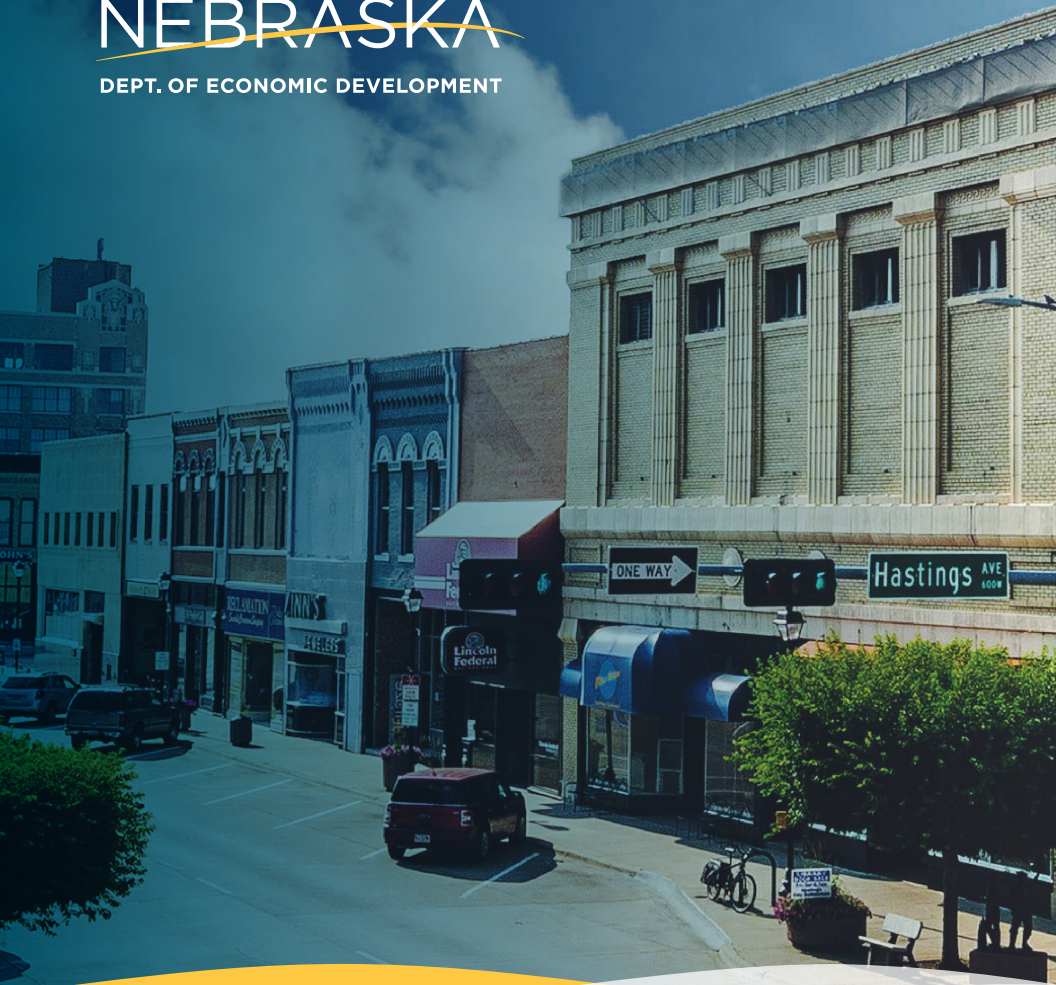


NEBRASKA

DEPT. OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

INVESTMENTS & IMPACTS

2013 – 2017

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, four counties, 125 communities, and more than 173,000 low and moderate income individuals have benefited from the state CDBG program. The current overview highlights state CDBG program investments made in communities and counties across Nebraska.

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

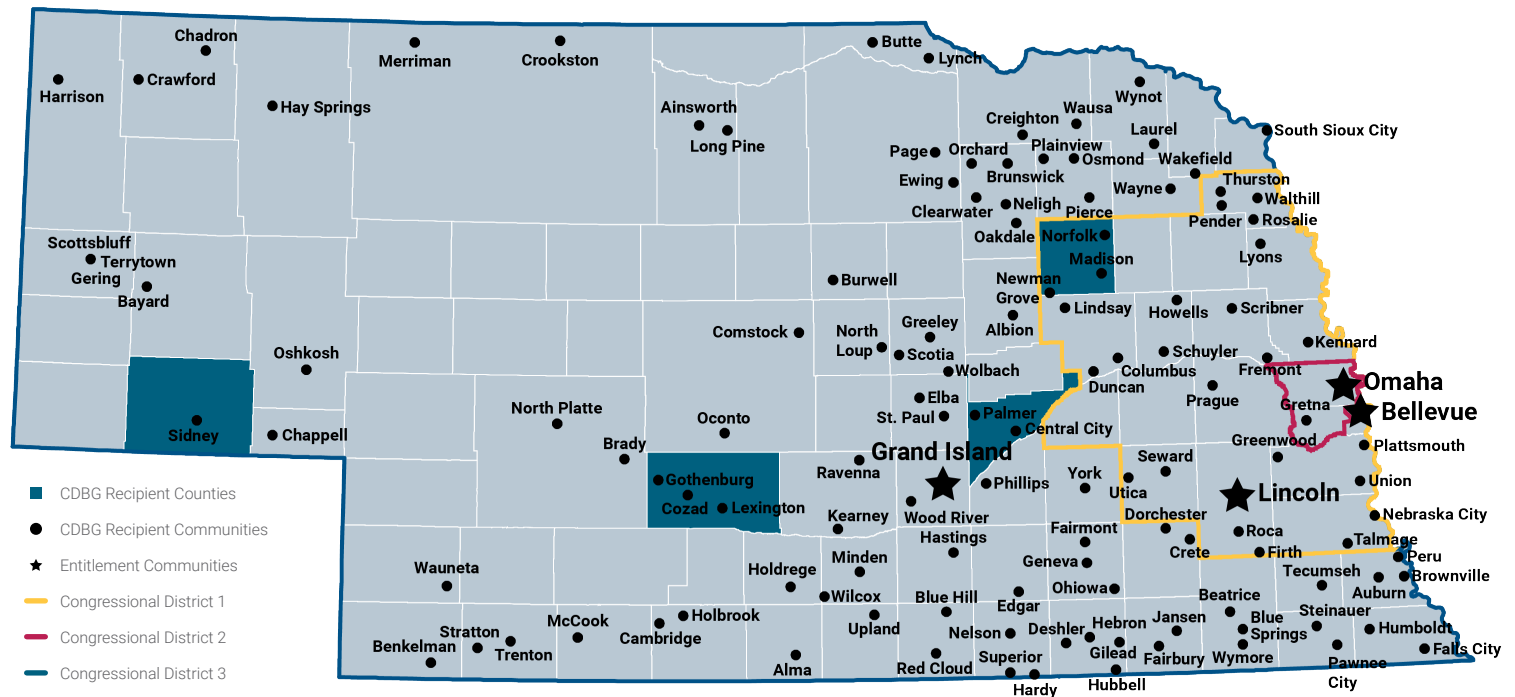
 **\$51,835,440**
State of Nebraska
Non-Entitlement Investments

 **283**
Projects

 **173,000+**
Low and Moderate Income
Individuals Assisted

 **129**
Communities and
Counties Impacted

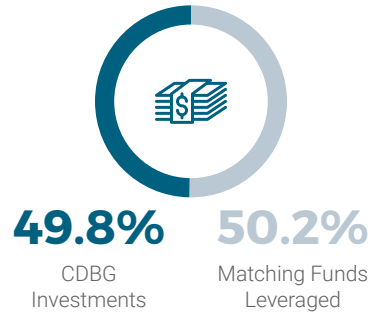
For non-entitlement communities, the State of Nebraska makes CDBG funds available to Nebraska counties and communities with a population of less than 50,000. All information contained in this publication pertains to non-entitlement areas.



INVESTMENT SUMMARY

CDBG & OTHER INVESTMENTS FOR ALL PROGRAM CATEGORIES

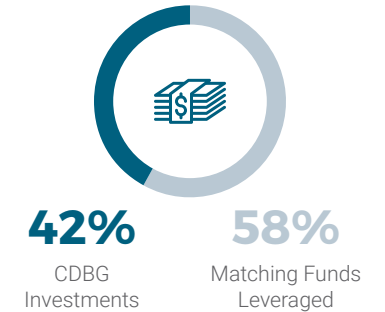
\$51.8 million in CDBG funds leveraged over \$52.2 million in matching funds to enable 283 projects.



INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENT INVESTMENTS

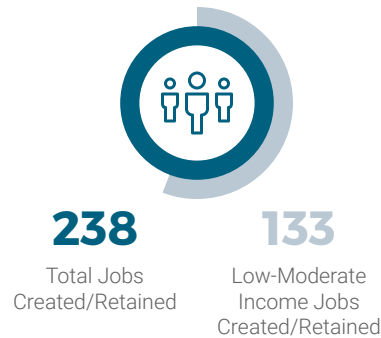
Over \$12.2 million in CDBG Infrastructure and Facility Improvement investments leveraged more than \$16.9 million in public and private investment.

\$1 CDBG = \$1.38 Leveraged for Public Works and Water/Wastewater projects.



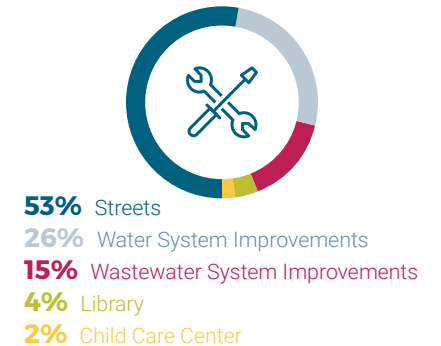
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT JOBS CREATED & RETAINED

There were a total of 11 Economic Development projects. Overall, 238 jobs were created/retained. Of these, 133 jobs benefited low and moderate income persons.



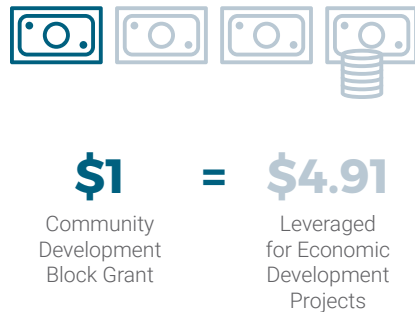
INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

A total of 53 projects focused on infrastructure and public facilities within the CDBG categories of Public Works and Water/Wastewater.



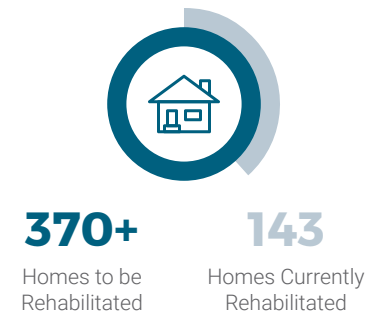
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT INVESTMENTS

Over \$3.6 million in CDBG Economic Development Investments leveraged more than \$17.9 million in public and private investment.



HOUSING REHABILITATION

Over \$10.7 million in CDBG funds have been invested to address housing needs. Today, 143 homes have been rehabilitated, benefitting low and moderate income households. In all, the funding will assist the rehabilitation of over 370 homes.





Hastings officials receive the Showcase Community Award from Governor Pete Ricketts, April 2017.

HASTINGS EARNS ACCOLADES FOR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION SUCCESSES

Governor Pete Ricketts presented the City of Hastings with the Showcase Community Award in April, 2017.

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

In Hastings, a series of projects has generated economic growth and brought new vitality to the downtown district, while directly benefitting citizens through infrastructure improvement.



Downtown Façade Improvement Program Sparks New Housing, Local Business

Since 2013, the CDBG-assisted Façade Improvement Program in downtown Hastings has contributed to a larger effort to transform formerly aging, blighted buildings into contemporary housing complexes and thriving commercial businesses.

On downtown Second Street, a century-old dilapidated building is now the site of "Uptown Experience," a rejuvenated complex containing five luxury lofts and a contemporary first-floor restaurant. Close by, the renovated Block 27 Lofts are home to a popular ground-level microbrewery, with the addition of a highly-anticipated restaurant slated for 2018. A second microbrewery, with plans for large-scale product distribution, has opened in a repurposed building on First Street. Approximately \$377,000 in CDBG program funds have been vital to the success of Hastings' downtown revitalization efforts, providing the financial resources for exterior façade work, ADA accessibility upgrades, and parking improvements in the target area.



The Lark is a multi-purpose performance, music, arts, conference, and events center featuring contemporary design and superior acoustics.

Multipurpose Center Energizes Downtown Events, Culture

A performance space for local and touring musicians, “the Listening Room” had been a Hastings institution since it was founded in 1991. But owner Robin Harrell and community leaders had a greater vision for the outdated venue, which had long made its home in a rented space downtown.

With support from the City’s Redevelopment Authority, Harrell worked with stakeholders to not only relocate the Listening Room, but transform it into a modern arts and cultural center that would benefit the entire community and attract people to the downtown area. With the assistance of \$300,000 from the CDBG program and funding from local donations, renovations to an aging downtown building commenced, and by 2013, “the Lark” was open to the public. Today, the facility is a multi-purpose performance, music, arts, conference, and events center featuring contemporary design and superior acoustics. The new facility is sparking commerce and has added appeal to the downtown district.



Ongoing development of Pioneer Spirit Trail is expanding pedestrian, bicycle, and exercise routes and encouraging active modes of travel.

Residents Benefit from Commitment to Infrastructure Improvement

With the assistance of approximately \$1.1 million in total CDBG awards, Hastings has carried out extensive infrastructure improvements since 2013, directly impacting citizens and improving travel throughout the city. ADA accessible ramps added to over 80 sidewalks have created new, convenient routes for seniors and people with disabilities. Meanwhile, street and sidewalk repairs throughout residential neighborhoods are estimated to have benefitted at least a thousand low and moderate income residents to date. Additionally, ongoing development of the Pioneer Spirit Trail is expanding pedestrian, bicycle, and exercise routes and encouraging active modes of travel.



CAMBRIDGE CARRIES OUT FLOOD MITIGATION PROJECT

Funding from the CDBG program helped the City of Cambridge address a major public works issue, resulting in enhanced public health and safety.

Prior to 2016, heavy rains usually meant standing and pooling water in low-lying portions of Cambridge, Nebraska (population 1,153)—the result of an inadequate drainage system. For years, the issues that accompanied the flooding not only generated significant costs to the city, but endangered the health and property of residents.

Gravel roads in the affected areas were frequently damaged by the rains, riddled with potholes or turned into washboard surfaces. Entire streets sometimes became impassable in the wake of a storm; at the very least, citizens were forced to avoid them. And each year, the City paid a heavy price to resurface its water-torn roads.

“The City would not have been able to make the project a priority for residents without the use of the Community Development Block Grant Program.”

KANDRA KINNE, CAMBRIDGE CITY CLERK

The direct impact on citizens was no less severe. As it happened, the flooding occurred mostly in the southeast portions of Cambridge, an area containing many of the city’s low and moderate income residents. And in the warm months, the standing water became a mosquito breeding-ground, exposing the population to an increased risk of West Nile virus.

Unable to fund a proposed flood mitigation plan on its own, in 2013, the City sought the assistance of the CDBG program, and was granted \$160,500 to support drainage system improvements. With the help of local match, that year saw new culverts installed to discharge storm sewer runoff toward the nearby Republican River and away from Cambridge’s low-lying residential areas.

When the drainage project was complete, citizens experienced immediate relief.

“Following the project, the city was able to observe the results after a major rain storm, and the drainage system worked exactly as was intended. Storm runoff was handled quickly,” said Kandra Kinne, Cambridge City Clerk.

Soon thereafter, with most of the major work complete—and benefitting from money saved thanks to the CDBG program—the city was able to contribute local dollars to pave gravel roads in the afflicted area.

“The City would not have been able to make the project a priority for residents without the use of the Community Development Block Grant Program,” said Kinne.



\$7.1 million invested into Public Works infrastructure projects across the state.



FREMONT INVESTS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING

CDBG funding has helped the City of Fremont create a more vibrant and livable community.

Community revitalization is breathing new life into the heart of Fremont, Nebraska (population 26,450), with renewed streetscapes and restored upper-level housing sparking local business and culture in the downtown district.

Financed by CDBG awards totaling \$356,750, Fremont's Downtown Façade Improvement Program has granted financial assistance to 13 business and commercial property owners for the restoration of aging and blighted building exteriors. Funded improvements have ranged from the repair of exterior brick masonry work to upgrades for ADA accessibility. With an emphasis on preserving historical features, the program has added beauty and character to the downtown, creating a new draw for tourism and commerce.

Meanwhile, with a CDBG award of \$703,926, leveraged with state and local investments, Fremont's Housing Rehabilitation Program is improving the lives of low and moderate income residents.

Since 2013, a total of 14 owner-occupied homes and 14 single family rental homes have benefitted from repairs including new roofing, siding, window replacement, plumbing and electrical updates, cement work, bathroom remodels for ADA accessibility, painting, and flooring. Four additional home improvement projects are planned for 2018. Meanwhile, the paving of a gravel road has increased the value of homes in the target residential area. The resulting improvements have not only changed the appearance of neighborhoods, but have instilled a new sense of pride throughout the community.

“ Fremont has been blessed to be able to apply for and receive Community Development Block Grant funding. It's an excellent tool that has made a tremendous impact on the continued growth and development of our community.”

SCOTT GETZSCHMAN, MAYOR OF FREMONT



Throughout the city, CDBG funds leveraged for street and sidewalk improvements have helped to install ADA accessible ramps at 85 intersections, resulting in safe, convenient travel routes for the elderly and people with disabilities. And thanks to the Walk Safe project, a sidewalk installed in the vicinity of Washington School has created a safe route for children who walk or bike.

Projects planned for the future will continue to benefit the citizens of Fremont. With \$200,000 in CDBG assistance as well as local match, Fremont's Friendship Center—a focal point for seniors—is slated to receive new ADA accessible restrooms, new flooring, and a canopy over its entranceway this year. An additional \$40,000 will add ADA accessible restrooms to Keene Memorial Library.

With invaluable aid from the CDBG program, Fremont's commitment to community development has created new opportunities and a better quality of life.

"Fremont has been blessed to be able to apply for and receive Community Development Block Grant funding," said Mayor Scott Getzschman. "It's an excellent tool that has made a tremendous impact on the continued growth and development of our community."



\$23.8 million invested throughout the state to revitalize neighborhoods and downtown areas has benefited 39 communities.



CDBG PROGRAM HELPS RED CLOUD PURSUE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

**The new National Willa Cather Center
is attracting tourism and sparking local
business.**

Beloved American novelist Willa Cather spent much of her childhood in Red Cloud, Nebraska (population 1,115), with the city later appearing as a backdrop for some of her most cherished works. Headquartered in Red Cloud since 1955, the Willa Cather Foundation (WCF) preserves dozens of historic sites that chronicle and celebrate the author's life and legacy. These, as well as Cather's stories about Nebraska, draw thousands of visitors to the city each year from all over the world.

Prior to 2017, the WCF made its home in Red Cloud's historic Opera House. Forming a street front, the attached Moon Block building—once the site of shops and local businesses, and now listed on the National Registry of Historic Places—sat vacant and dilapidated. Consequentially, structural deterioration to the Moon Block threatened



A climate-controlled archive within the NWCC ensures long-term preservation of the Willa Cather Foundation's mixed collection.

to jeopardize the Opera House, which had only recently undergone a nearly \$2 million restoration.

Circa 2001, the WCF, in collaboration with the City of Red Cloud and numerous stakeholders, formulated a long-range plan to restore, preserve, and repurpose the historic Moon Block while removing architectural barriers to the Opera House. The resulting multi-use facility would comprise a museum, art gallery, shops, performance space, and state-of-the-art, climate-controlled archive, all devoted to preserving Cather's works and memorabilia. Plans for the new facility would also include space for four commercial businesses on the ground level, along with three upper-level luxury apartments, satisfying community needs for additional commercial and housing space.

By 2015, restoration of the Moon Block was underway, assisted by a \$1.8 million Peter Kiewit Foundation Challenge Grant, \$300,000 in CDBG program funds, and grants and donations from nearly 170 additional partners. CDBG funding assisted in the three-floor renovation project, the removal of architectural barriers, and the installation of an elevator and ADA accessible restrooms and features.

The NWCC was completed in April, 2017, with former First Lady Laura Bush presiding over the ribbon cutting ceremony. Later that year, the Nebraska State Historical Society awarded the NWCC the Nebraska Preservation Award; it was also named the 2017 Outstanding



A permanent exhibit within the NWCC.

“ Today, the City of Red Cloud estimates that the new facility draws as many as 2,500 additional visitors to the city each year.”

Tourism Attraction by the Nebraska Tourism Commission, and received a Build Nebraska Award from the Nebraska Building Chapter.

Today, the City of Red Cloud estimates that the new facility draws as many as 2,500 additional visitors to the city each year. Meanwhile, a wine and craft beer tasting room and contemporary coffee house have opened on the ground level, while the building's upper-level apartments serve as attractive options for entrepreneurs and scholars in residence. The NWCC functions as the focal point for the downtown district.

Thanks to the CDBG program, Red Cloud has been able to embrace and promote a unique economic opportunity that will serve the city for generations to come.



\$3.6 million invested into Economic Development projects



VILLAGE OF OCONTO BENEFITS FROM WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

Tasked with upgrading its water system, the Village of Oconto turned to the CDBG program for assistance.

As its water system displayed worsening symptoms of age and deterioration, villagers of Oconto, Nebraska (population 157) knew their community was facing a big challenge—one that would require more financial resources than the local budget, alone, could muster.

“Due to the advanced age of our water system, we were having multiple failures of our water mains, as well as pressure drops,” said Dan Eggleston, Chair of the Oconto Village Board. “Of course, any time there is a breach in the system there are water quality problems, and correcting those problems requires money.”

“ **This project has stabilized our quality of water and provided durability and longevity to our water system ... This simply would not have happened if it were not for CDBG grant funds.**”

DAN EGGLESTON, CHAIR OF THE OCONTO VILLAGE BOARD

Diagnostics ordered by Oconto’s Wastewater Advisory Committee revealed a long list of problems. Due to leaks throughout the distribution system, the village was hemorrhaging water. The old meters were beyond their useful life, and needed to be replaced. The local water tower lacked several safety upgrades, and would need new exterior and interior coating.

And villagers had known about a second problem all along: with only a single well and no redundant water supply, there was always the risk that a mechanical issue—or perhaps a natural disaster, like the tornado that had struck Oconto on Halloween in 2000—could leave residents without water for days.

In 2015, after searching for funding for its water improvement needs, Oconto obtained assistance in the form of an \$899,000 USDA Rural Development dollars and a CDBG program grant of \$250,000. Soon thereafter, the repairs and upgrades began. By 2017, Oconto had a functional, up-to-date water system, including the backup well that the village had needed for decades.

Today, Oconto’s water quality and efficiency have dramatically improved, and villagers live with the peace of mind of having a safe, reliable water supply that will serve Oconto for generations to come.

“This project has stabilized our quality of water and provided durability and longevity to our water system,” Eggleston said. “Not having numerous water maintenance projects also helps our community fiscally. This simply would not have happened if it were not for CDBG grant funds. The Village of Oconto is very grateful.”



\$4.3 million CDBG funds invested in Water/Wastewater projects



WALTHILL REPURPOSES “OLD FIRE HALL” INTO NEW PUBLIC LIBRARY

With the assistance of the CDBG program, a formerly vacant building is now a source of pride for the residents of Walthill, Nebraska (population 739).

With help from the CDBG program, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local donors, the Walthill Fire Department relocated in 2014 from its tired, 70-year-old fire hall into a brand new facility. Though you might think the Old Fire Hall would subsequently be happy to retire, today it is starting life anew as a place that the whole community can use and enjoy.

Not too far from the Old Fire Hall, the Walthill Public Library was showing signs of its age. Water leaked in whenever it rained. The electrical system was out of date. The facility was small and crowded. Improvements for ADA accessibility over the years had been few and far between. And if that weren't enough, being located next door to a bar, and the problems that came along with it, didn't help either.

Town leaders sensed it was time for a change. In a small community like Walthill—an Omaha Indian Reservation community where two-thirds of the population is low and moderate income—a public library isn't just a home for books. It's a public gathering place. An afterschool program. A point of internet access. Leaders knew that any investment in a new library would also be an investment in the community. And down the road, the Old Fire Hall stood, waiting.

Before long, the Village of Walthill, in partnership with the Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District, procured the necessary funding to repurpose the fire hall into a new library that would better serve the community's needs. Funding arrived in the form of a \$250,000 CDBG program grant, with additional assistance from the USDA Rural Development program, the Peter Kiewit Foundation, and other contributors.

Within months, renovations were underway, and the once-tired fire hall was given new windows and glass doors; new siding, paint, gutters, and downspouts; updated heating, electrical, and air systems; improvements for ADA accessibility; new drywall, interior paint, carpet, and tile. By March of 2017, the ribbon cutting ceremony was underway.

The new facility is clean. It's warm, bright, and spacious. It has a kitchen for catering community events. A teen area complete with couches and chairs. There is more room for afterschool programs. The computer area even has some of the town's most reliable internet access.

The new library is everything, says library director Lola Briggs, that Walthill needed it to be, and more. But it's not just the amenities that make it so impactful, she says. It's the new sense of hope, pride, and optimism it has restored to a community that's faced its fair share of struggles over the years.

"It's been uplifting because of the problems we've had," Briggs said. "The town has really suffered. It needed an uplift. So it's not just a library. It's a community building that hopefully is homey and welcoming. Such a welcoming community building was something we needed."



CDBG funds can be invested into the development of facilities such as libraries, fire stations, child care, and community centers.

HOMES, COMMUNITIES TRANSFORMED THROUGH CDBG PROGRAM

Humboldt (pop. 867)

Low and Moderate Income Households Served: 7

A 2014 CDBG award of \$221,000 to the City of Humboldt has enabled the improvement and renovation of seven single-family homes. Beneficiaries of the City's housing program have included families with children, retirees on fixed incomes, and adults with disabilities. As a result, vulnerable residents now live in homes that are safer, more accessible, and more affordable. Residents have also benefitted from improved energy efficiency and lower utility bills. "The City is so thankful for this investment in its aging housing stock, which helps to make these homes a resource for our community for the next generation," said Humboldt Mayor Crystal Dunekacke.

York (pop. 7,899)

Low and Moderate Income Households Served: 10

With assistance from the CDBG program, the City of York's housing revitalization efforts have instilled a new sense of pride among community residents. \$248,799 in CDBG funding has aided in the repair and revitalization of 10 homes on behalf of low and moderate income residents.

"We have had more applicants than funds, and wish we could have done every requested project," said C. Jean Thiele, York City Clerk/Treasurer. "We have received so many positive comments, and have been contacted time and again by homeowners hoping to be put on a list in case of another round of funding. This has been a tremendously successful program!"

Pawnee City (pop. 1,075)

Low and Moderate Income Households Served: 10

Building on previous successes, Pawnee City is currently preparing for its third round of CDBG-assisted housing projects. In 2013, with CDBG funds totaling \$271,210, the community's rehabilitation efforts improved the appearance and function of homes to the benefit of 10 low and moderate income households. These projects have given people with limited options the chance to bring their houses up to code, to make needed weatherization improvements, and to experience a new sense of security. "The clerks and city officials here in Pawnee City have truly appreciated the opportunity to serve our community with this great housing rehab program," said Tamela Curtis, City Clerk/Treasurer.

Stratton (pop. 354)

Low and Moderate Income Households Served: 5

Essential home repairs have enhanced the quality of life for five low and moderate income households in the Village of Stratton since 2013, thanks to the assistance of \$152,478 in CDBG program funds. With additional funding from the Nebraska Housing Developers Association, one homeowner has been able to make modifications to meet ADA accessibility needs; meanwhile, assistance from the USDA Weatherization Program has helped make two homes in the village more energy efficient. Other homes have benefitted from general repairs. These health and safety improvements—as well as the rehabilitation of 14 homes that occurred in 2001—have helped to revitalize significant portions of the community.

Fairbury (pop. 3,816)

Low and Moderate Income Households Served: 9

With assistance from \$251,264 in CDBG program funding, nine homeowners in Fairbury are experiencing a new quality of life. Success stories like the one told by Carissa Lufkin, City Clerk/Treasurer, reveal the measurable impact of the CDBG housing program on everyday citizens.

"A local woman I know was recovering from surgery. She was no longer able to work, and was struggling to make ends meet, especially when it came to her utility bills—even though she always set her thermostat conservatively. This woman couldn't afford to replace her old windows, add insulation, or repair her roof. But thanks to CDBG's revitalization program, she and others have been able to reduce their utility costs, while also benefitting from significant improvements to their homes."

Fairmont (pop. 651)

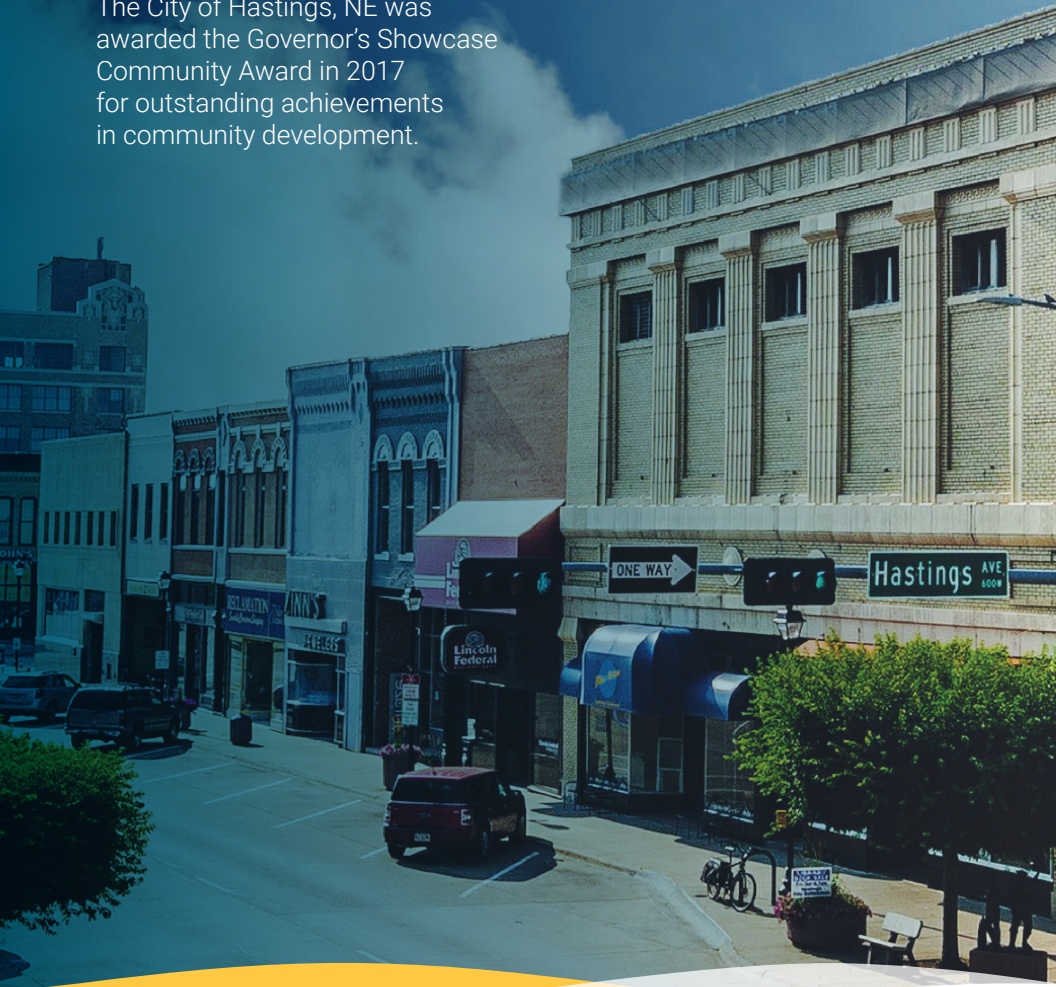
Low and Moderate Income Households Served: 17

In a small, rural community, housing can be a difficult commodity to come by. Such was the case in the Village of Fairmont, where a number of otherwise-viable homes were aging and dilapidated. But assistance from the CDGB program has helped to greatly expand Fairmont's housing options. In 2009 and 2013, \$455,787 in CDGB funding enabled the revitalization of 17 homes, while a third round of funding slated for this year will impact 13 additional low and moderate income households. "For rural communities, the ability to make improvements to older homes through programs like CDBG is crucial for retaining and attracting residents," said Linda Carroll, Fairmont Clerk/Treasurer.



34 communities have benefited from \$10.7 million invested in Housing Rehabilitation.

The City of Hastings, NE was awarded the Governor's Showcase Community Award in 2017 for outstanding achievements in community development.



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