

City of Scranton
Office of Economic and Community Development (OECD)
Application Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria

All applications submitted by the required date and are stamped in by an OECD staff member will be reviewed by a member of the OECD staff to make sure that all required elements of the application are submitted. All applications that pass through this threshold review will then be evaluated by the City/OECD review team members against four competitive areas: Need, Feasibility and Readiness, Capacity of the Applicant, and Financial Completeness.

The maximum evaluation score is 100, which is broken out as follows for each of the competitive areas:

Need	30 points
Feasibility/Readiness	25 points
Applicant Capacity	25 points
Finances	20 points

Process: All applications for CDBG, HOME and ESG will be reviewed in two steps. First, all applications received by the deadline date will be reviewed by an City/OECD review team members for completeness and basic eligibility. At this step, applications will be checked to make certain that all required elements are submitted and that the applicant is an eligible organization under the NOFA published by City/OECD. Second, after this initial step ascertains that the application is eligible, each application will then be reviewed for competitiveness by the review team of OECD using the following evaluation criteria.

A description of the competitive criteria follows on pages 2 through 5.

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Need (up to 30 points possible)

This criterion deals with the need the community has for the proposed project, and how well the project serves those in need. The City of Scranton has a number of needs – in housing, economic development, physical revitalization and human services. Thus, it is important to use scarce public funding to meet the needs of as many people as possible.

The applicant will need to demonstrate the community need to be addressed by the proposed project. The applicant will have to show that it will use the federal funding to assist low- and moderate-income people. It will also have to demonstrate that it is serving a significant enough population to justify the grant being requested.

Also, while the city recognizes that it has supported many excellent organizations and many positive projects in recent years, it also looks for new ideas.

Thus, new organizations are encouraged to apply for funding, as are those with ideas for new activities and projects.

Performance Measures:

- Will the proposed project serve low- and moderate-income people?
- Has the applicant indicated how many people will be served, and the percentage that will be low- and moderate-income?
- Will the proposed project serve “the greater good” of the city, or will it only serve a small, discrete community?
- Does the proposed project meet national CDBG objectives? (i.e., does it principally benefit low- or moderate-income people, prevent or eliminate blight, or address urgent community needs)
- Does the project represent a new applicant or a new project or activity idea?

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Feasibility/Readiness (up to 25 points)

The second criterion against which all applications will be assessed is the feasibility of the project, and the readiness to implement the project. City/OECD wants to give priority to projects and activities that are ready-to-go and can be accomplished in a timely manner. The application must include material that demonstrates that it can be started quickly – preferably within three months of grant award – and be completed within 24 months. This will require that such items as site identification and control, permitting, environmental reviews, and financing be completed prior to the application.

Performance Measures:

- Does the application include persuasive material showing that the project or activity can be accomplished in a reasonable period of time (no more than 24 months)?
- Does the application describe all of the major tasks needed to complete the project, and identify who, how and when those tasks will be accomplished?
- If the project includes physical development, are the sites for the project identified in the application? Is it/are they under control of the appropriate entity so that the project can move forward without long negotiation or purchasing processes? (Or, if not, can it explain how it will proceed with the project in an expeditious manner without property control?)
- Are all appropriate partners (if any) for the project identified and included in the application? Is there written evidence from those partners that they will be involved in project action, once approved?
- Does the applicant demonstrate that it has assembled appropriate funding and civic support within the community to move forward in a timely manner?
- Is there a plan (as needed) for sustaining the project once funding is expended?

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Applicant Capacity (up to 25 points)

The application must provide evidence that the applicant has the capacity to carry out all aspects of the proposed project. This can be done by proving that the applicant itself has the skills, capacity and resources to complete the work, or it can be done by presenting the capacity of a team of project partners which together have all of the appropriate skills.

Capacity can be demonstrated through evoking experience of the applicant and/or its partners in completing similar work, in type and scale. If the applicant has received federal funding from the city previously, its prior activity – including whether it has completed the work on-time and demonstrated sound financial management, without undue problems or monitoring – will be taken into account.

Performance Measures:

- Does the application include a thorough description of the capacity of the applicant?
- Are any partners indicated, and, if so, is there capacity to implement their roles explained and backed up with their experience explained?
- Does the applicant demonstrate that it has adequate staff time to complete and oversee the project work? Does it have appropriate management systems and support, administrative structures, and policies and procedures?
- Has the applicant received funding from CDBG, HOME or ESG previously – and demonstrated that it has implemented any funded projects or activities in a responsible manner? Has it conducted its federally-funded project in a financially responsible manner, submitting invoices and reports in a timely and complete manner?

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Finances (up to 20 points)

It is vital that all funding recipients have a reasonable project budget, and that selected projects and activities have the financing needed to move forward rapidly toward completion. Thus, it is incumbent on the applicant to prove it has carefully considered what the proposed project will cost, and has assembled the financing needed to complete the project.

Quite often, particularly for larger, more complex projects, the OECD funds will be only a part of the project financing. The OECD funds may form the leverage to secure other funds, or be important to fill a gap where other financing is already in place. City/OECD wants to encourage leveraging – and thus will look favorably on projects that demonstrate that other funders are involved. However, it is still important to demonstrate that this other funding will be in place when needed to complete the project. Letters from the other funders, indicating their investment in the project (and any contingencies) should be included in the application.

Performance Measures:

- Does the application include a budget for the project that is understandable, reasonable and realistic?
- Is there a budget narrative that explains budget figures well and concisely? Does it use the experience of the applicant in carrying out other activity?
- Does the application demonstrate – in narrative and backed up by letters or other signals of support – that the applicant has secured all needed and reasonable match and other support needed to implement the project?
- Does the applicant use all reasonable resources available to it – including other public funds, partner contributions, private sector resources, debt funding, etc.? If City/OECD is the major source of capital for the project, does the applicant explain why it has not sought other, leveraged funds?
- If all leveraged funds are not immediately available to the project, does the applicant explain the circumstances needed to clear the funds (such as waiting for PHFA approval for a tax-credit project)?