



APRIL 1-5, 2024 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WEEK



The National Community Development Association (NCDA) has recognized April 1-5, 2024, as National Community Development Week. This week provides the opportunity for communities to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Member communities are also recognizing the work of the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program. The programs are critical to the development of local strategies and initiatives to provide affordable housing, critical services, community infrastructure, and economic development in low- and moderate-income areas.

Enacted by Congress in 1974 under the Housing and Community Development Act, the primary goal of the CDBG program is simple yet profound: to empower local communities, providing them with the resources and tools necessary to enhance the quality of life for all residents. Over 1,250 state and local governments receive CDBG allocations to support housing rehabilitation programs, public infrastructure projects, small business assistance, emergency housing assistance, and a broad range of public service programming.

From FY2005 to FY2023, CDBG facilitated the creation and retention of 563,236 economic development related jobs, contributed to infrastructure developments benefitting approximately 57 million persons, assisted over 189 million persons through public service activities, and met the housing needs of over 1.9 million households.

Since 1992, the HOME program has produced more than 1.37 million affordable housing units and assisted more than 387,000 households through tenant-based rental assistance.

National Community Development Week provides the opportunity for Congressional members to see firsthand the results of these programs and to learn from grantees, program subrecipients and beneficiaries why more program funding is needed. We support National Community Development Week and value the impact the CDBG and HOME programs have made in our community.

NCDA and National Community Development

CDBG & HOME Overview

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funding is a popular, bipartisan budget item that is granted to local governments nationwide through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through a formula that calculates the age of housing stock and income of residents.

In Year 49 (the current program year), the City was awarded \$916,835 in CDBG funds and \$542,547 in HOME funds.

This year will be the second completed year for our 5-year consolidated plan. The following pages highlight programs supported by CDBG and HOME, and notes the leveraging impact of both these funds and the Community Development staff.



What's happening with CDBG?

Just last month, on March 19, 2024, the City Council voted to approve the Mayor's recommendations for CDBG funding.

A second public hearing will be held on these projects on April 23 on the Third Floor of City Hall at 5:00 P.M. to discuss the Action Plan for year 50. All are welcome!

The City will submit its Action plan to HUD by May 15 in advance of the July 1 program year start.

The Year 50 applications brought both returning applicants and new projects to the table. In the upcoming year, CDBG funds will be invested in several youth programs, it will assist in bringing several parks projects to completion, and we will also be supporting some new programs including Serving Fitchburg Through Partnership, the Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority's Grant program, and upgrades to the Fitchburg Historical Society's iconic Phoenix Building. To view a copy of this year's Action plan, visit our website at:
<https://www.fitchburgma.gov/CDBG>

Year 49 HOME Program Highlights



Pictured to the left, an artistic rendering of the Fitchburg Arts Community, currently under construction, the former B.F. Brown School.

HOME Funds Supporting Conversions across Massachusetts

The Fitchburg Art Museum and NewVue Communities, a regional community development corporation, are working together to turn three former municipal buildings into approximately 68 units of affordable rental artist living and working space. The Fitchburg Arts Community, as it will be called, will be located adjacent to the Art Museum in downtown Fitchburg. It will include a variety of one, two, and three-bedroom apartments, along with studio and workspaces, and other artist amenities currently under design. Most units will be affordable, available to artists with annual family incomes between approximately \$25,000 – \$55,000, and approximately 30% of the apartments will be market-rate units. The project was jointly funded through State and local HOME funding using \$650,000 of Commonwealth of Massachusetts' HUD HOME funds and \$850,000 of Fitchburg's HUD HOME funds.



Habitat for Humanity: Building Community in Fitchburg

Habitat for Humanity North Central Massachusetts is a local, independent affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International dedicated to providing home ownership opportunities and critical home repairs to residents of our 30-town area. Habitat utilizes volunteer skills, donated and purchased materials, local funds, and low cost land to build affordable houses. Habitat homeowners provide “sweat equity” and pay for a below-cost home through an interest-free mortgage.

This home was built through a partnership with the City of Fitchburg who issued an RFP for the land and contributed funds through down payment assistance. In addition, a partnership with Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School allowed the students to learn their trades on a real-life project while helping Habitat NCM to complete the home more quickly.

*-Carolyn Read, Executive director,
Habitat for Humanity*



*Liz Murphy, Community
Development and Planning
Executive Director, pictured
left, presenting the new
Habitat homeowner with Salt
as part of the blessing of their
new home.*

Economic Development Highlights

Business Loan Assistance in Downtown Fitchburg

Thanks to the help of the City's CDBG Revolving business loan pool, Mamajuana's Victor Vicioso was able to get assistance with a business loan to open his Dominican Restaurant right on Main St. in the heart of the downtown.

Victor's was among several businesses receiving loan funds by the City of Fitchburg's CDBG program.



Commonwealth Spotlights Rise and Grind in their Press Release

Rise and Grind, at 805 Main St., also received a grant from Fitchburg to assist with their start-up costs for their newest location. The funds they received from the City were matching funds to a business loan they were given through the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce. The complete article can be viewed here:

<https://www.leominsterchamp.com/rise-grind-opens-second-location-thanks-to-development-grant/>

"Located in the heart of Fitchburg a short distance from Fitchburg State University, this will be Rise and Grind's second location. They plan to provide coffee, protein smoothies, and healthy options for local students, commuters, and



Rise and Grind at their grand opening on Main St. in Fitchburg.

The City of Fitchburg has offered a zero percent interest, five-year loan with final six months forgiveness valued at approximately \$13,158, and a \$25,000 store improvement grant from the Reimagine North of Main partnership. The Commonwealth has approved \$10,000 in refundable tax credits to support this project." To see other projects like this one, visit, <https://www.mass.gov/news/commonwealths-economic-assistance-coordinating-council-approves-three-projects-for-the-economic-development-incentive-program>

Downtown Coordinator Assists Microenterprises in Fitchburg



The images above showcase just a small portion of the portfolio of work done by our Downtown Coordinator, working with many Microenterprises throughout Fitchburg. This includes igniting the local spirit on Small Business Saturday in Fitchburg with a lineup of small businesses, come featured specials, deals, and pop-up events unleashing the power of community support as we celebrated the heartbeat of our community, our small businesses. A day of shopping, savings, and celebrating local gems.

Pictured below that to the left, Impeccable Cleaning Services requested some logo enhancements for improved legibility and received some technical assistance regarding website builders. The coordinator provided banner images, logo assets for brand expansion, assisted with card designs, and gave guidance on initiating a google business listing.

To the right, AM Events worked with the Downtown Coordinator to convert their logo into a vector format for enhanced versatility. Using some provided photography, they further accentuated their service offerings adding a personal touch to their visual identity to foster community familiarity and trust. The inclusions of Spanish translations on the posters underscored their bilingual capabilities, catering to a diverse clientele.

Congresswoman Lori Trahan Visits Montachusett Regional YMCA to Celebrate Community Development Week for CDBG's 50th Anniversary

On March 26, 2024, the Montachusett Regional YMCA in Fitchburg and the Community Development and Planning Department had the pleasure of hosting Congresswoman Lori Trahan, alongside the District Representative Michael Kushmerek to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Over the past ten years, the Spartacus program has received over \$103,000 in CDBG funding.

Spartacus is a program designed to help at-risk teens who are vulnerable to issues such as substance abuse, failing school, anger management, and making healthy decisions. Through a diverse offering of curriculum, including exercise, academic tutoring, community service opportunities, and workshops focused on topics like anger management, leadership development, and substance abuse, participants build their character, self-confidence as well as abilities. Local partners, including public school boards, the YWCA, LUK Inc., and MOC, enrich and strengthen the program offerings with additional content. A myriad of adult role models, both from the YMCA and the Fitchburg community at large equips teens with the necessary skills and knowledge to create solutions to



Our Community Development Team

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