

51st Anniversary

CELEBRATING

THE 51ST

YEAR

CIDIBG

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WEEK

APRIL 21-25, 2025



PARKHILL PARK

CDBG funding has been instrumental to the completion of both Parkhill park and Joanne “Mama” Fitz Park. These parks collectively have been supported by several years of CDBG funded Activities. Funding was used for the removal and installation of the paved path in Parkhill Park, as well as repairing the brook, and improvements to the granite-lined culvert. This was done in conjunction with the brook repair to mitigate the erosion that caused the issue that has been repaired. The Ball field was also repaired. The infield was graded down and recut, irrigation was relocated, and supplies to repair the pitcher’s mound and home plate were installed. The dugout was repaired with new wood, along with repairs to the concession stand.

This year, new playground equipment was installed and is now available for public use. While there is still some site work left to be completed, we are thrilled with the result and look forward to the completion of the project in 2025.

MAMA FITZ PARK





CDBG assisted 10 microenterprises so far this year utilizing over \$49,000 from year 48 and 49 funding to reduce blighted conditions in the downtown and increase economic activity by providing assistance to replace defunct signs with professionally designed, quality signage. Owner's match 30% of the cost for an award of up to \$10,000. They may also match by investing 30% of the cost into other physical improvements within their space.



CDBG SIGNS PROGRAM



CRITICAL HOME REPAIR



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

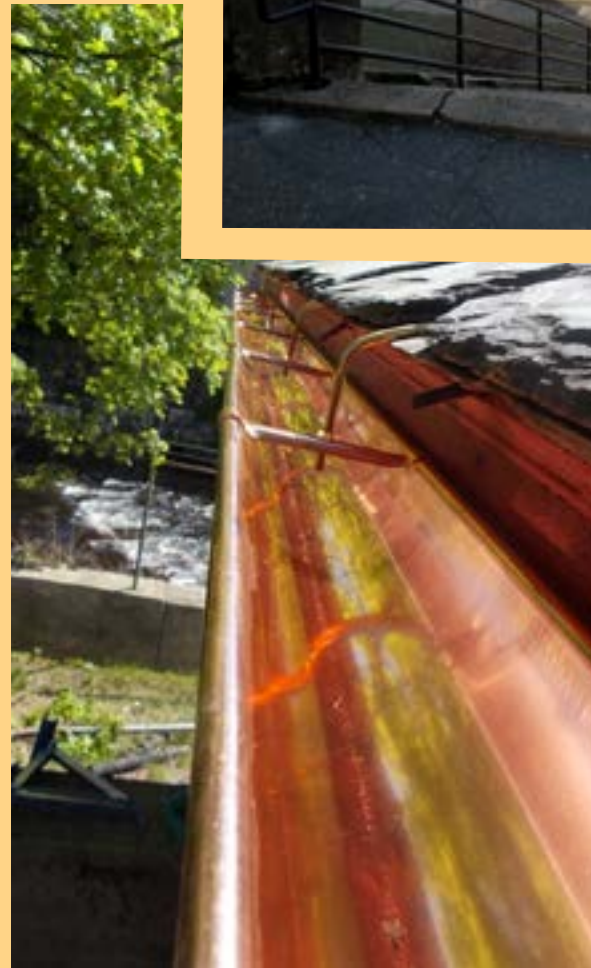
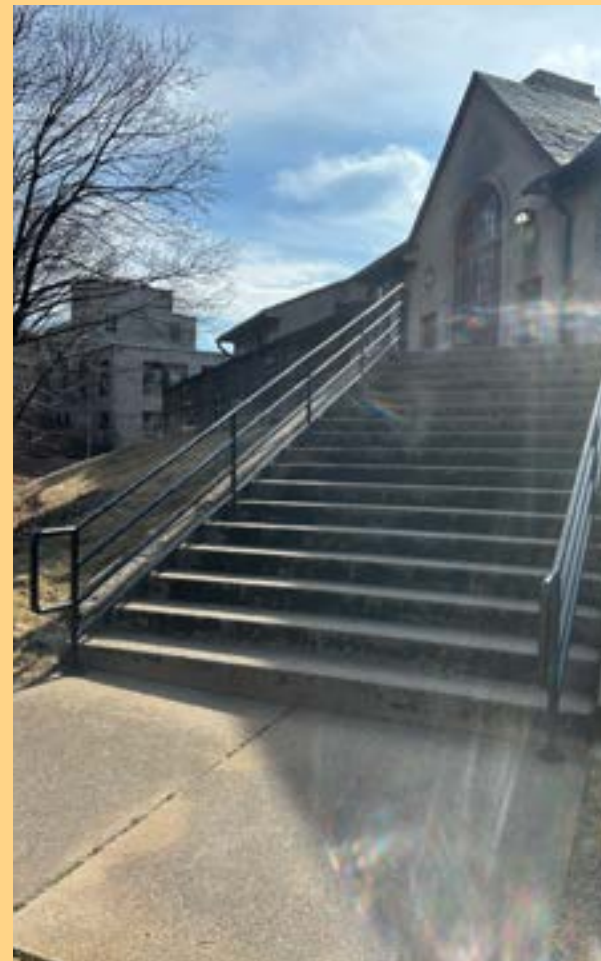
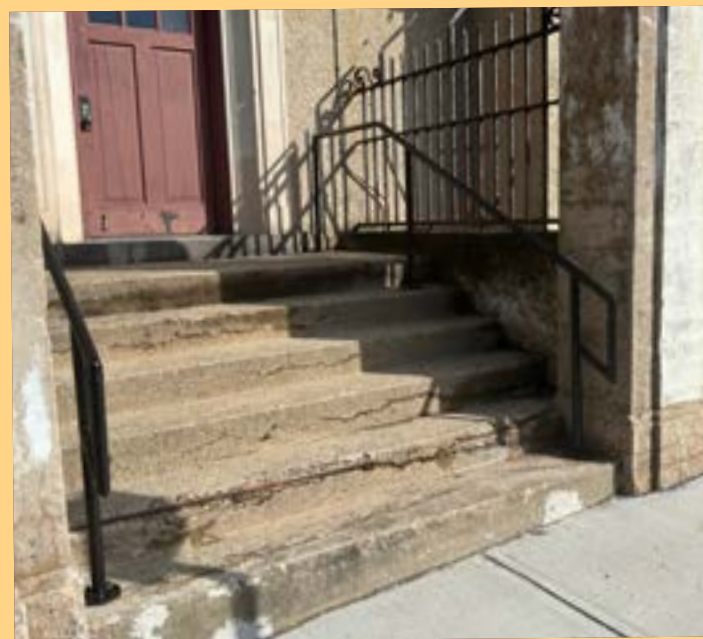
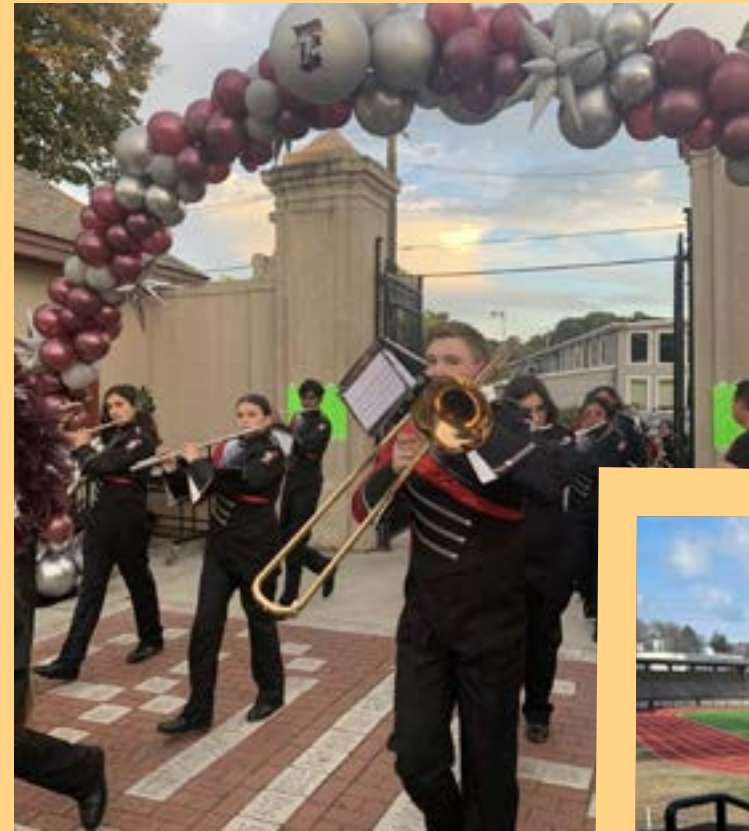
Habitat for humanity has partnered with the City of Fitchburg utilizing \$225,000 in HOME funds in the past year alone to assist income-eligible first-time homebuyers with downpayment assistance to purchase their first homes. Our CDBG program funding was also used by Habitat for their Critical Home Repair program, providing needed interior and exterior repairs addressing code violations, safety concerns, accessibility problems, and weatherization issues. They assist between 4-6 low-income homeowners in Fitchburg every year so that they may maintain a safe, decent, and affordable place to live.



DOWNPAYMENT ASSISTANCE

CROCKER FIELD RESTORATION

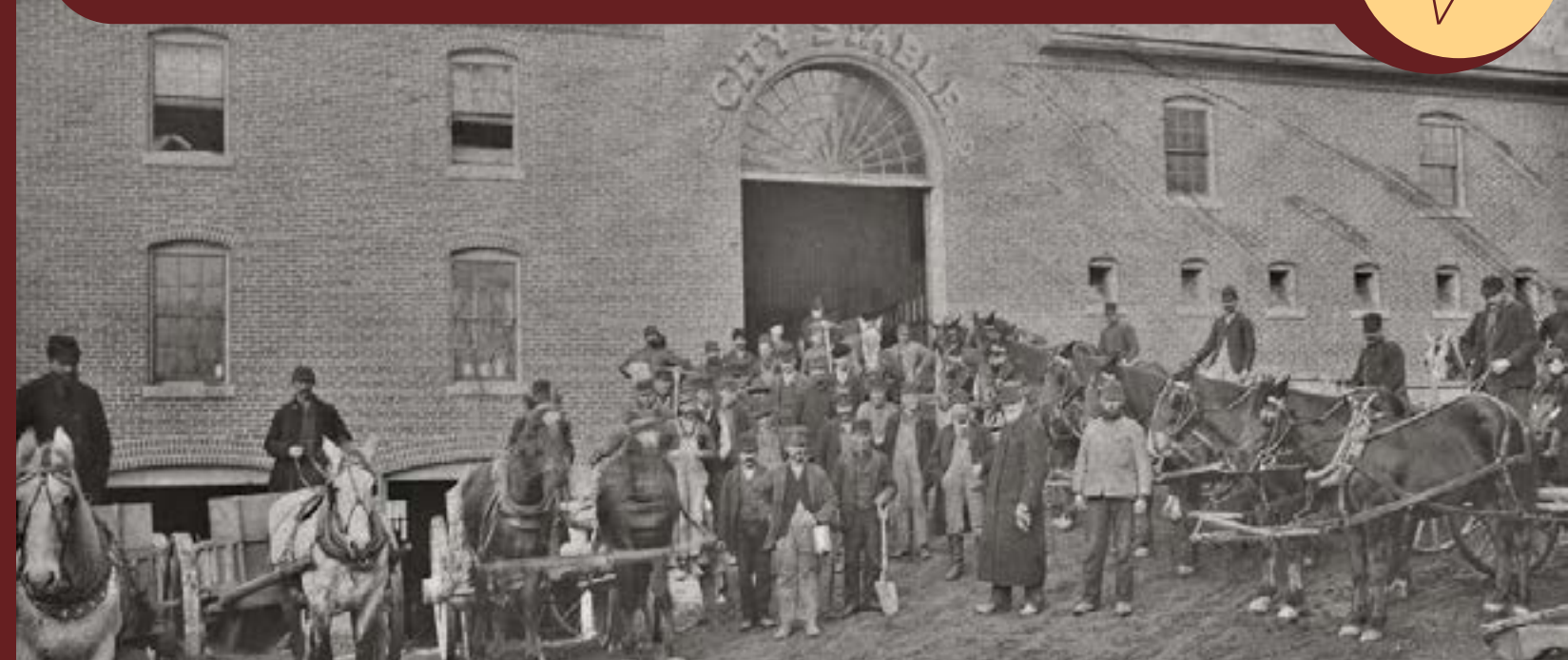
The Crocker Field Restoration Committee has made great strides in the preservation of Crocker Field. CDBG has assisted in funding numerous activities to update the field's amenities that include the Crocker field house roof and gutters, the fencing, concrete pillars surrounding the field, iron fencing, construction of the track, the grandstand roof restoration, the grandstand rear wall, handrails and steel painting, and the replacement of the Grandstand benches. Each phase of the project was matched by the School Board. This year the committee completed replacing the football field with turf accompanied by a rededication of the field.





To view the Congresswoman's shout-out to Fitchburg CDBG and Home, Visit:

<https://trahan.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=3300>



Congresswoman Lori Trahan Visits Fitchburg





FITCHBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT

A special thank you to the Fitchburg Police Department. With the help of CDBG, the City of Fitchburg is a safer place. This past year, the Department was commended for it's assistance with the apprehension of a several constituents for their roles in a fentanyl and cocaine Trafficking conspiracy.

To view the articles, visit:

<https://www.telegram.com/story/news/local/2023/03/17/pedro-villot-santiago-of-fitchburg-pleaded-guilty-to-drug-charge-of-possession-and-trafficking/70021986007/>

<https://www.justice.gov/usao-ma/pr/fitchburg-man-sentenced-prison-fentanyl-and-cocaine-trafficking-conspiracy>

Support CDBG

The National Community Development Association (NCDA) has recognized April 21-25, 2025, as National Community Development Week. This week provides the opportunity for communities to celebrate the 51st anniversary of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Member communities are also recognizing the work of the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program. These 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.

CDBG Impacts the Nation

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. For the past five decades, the CDBG program has been one of the most important resources for state and local governments to meet community needs.

CDBG serves to address critical affordable housing needs. Since FY2005, CDBG funded housing activities have directly benefited over 2 million households across the country. In FY2024 alone, CDBG provided funding for affordable housing improvements that assisted 132,739 households.

From FY2005 to FY2024, CDBG facilitated the creation and retention of 581,495 economic development related jobs, contributed to infrastructure developments benefiting over 59 million persons, assisted over 204 million persons through public service activities, and met the housing needs of nearly 2.1 million households.[1] CDBG focuses on the elimination of conditions which are detrimental to health, safety, and public welfare through code enforcement and rehabilitation of single family and rental properties. CDBG activities result in the expansion of the affordable housing stock through housing preservation. Grantees [like Fitchburg] also use CDBG to assist first-time homebuyers with downpayment and closing cost assistance.

CDBG Lowers Housing Costs

CDBG helps preserve affordable housing and expand the affordable housing stock. In FY24, CDBG grantees spent over \$453 million to rehabilitate single-family owner-occupied homes.[2] This activity preserves affordable housing, addresses unsafe living conditions, lowers housing costs through energy efficiency improvements, allows seniors to age in place, and provides accessibility improvements for people with disabilities. Likewise, CDBG grantees spent over \$101 million in FY24 to rehabilitate multifamily properties to provide decent, safe, and affordable housing to a multitude of renters.[3]

CDBG Builds Critical Infrastructure

As the foundation for commerce, social, physical, and environmental activities, infrastructure maintains a prominent role in community well-being. CDBG contributes extensively to public facilities and improvements (infrastructure). Roads, streets, and other infrastructure improvements connect people to neighborhoods, businesses, parks, services, and jobs.

Communities use CDBG to provide greater accessibility, mobility, and connectivity by funding these improvements. One of the largest investments of CDBG is public utility development specifically for water and sewer improvements as well as stormwater drainage for low- and moderate-income communities.

CDBG Serves Local Communities

CDBG grantees can use up to 15% of their annual allocation for public services to address a wide range of community needs. These services include employment training, meals and other services for the elderly, services for abused and neglected children, aid to local food banks, homelessness prevention, and support for many other community services and agencies. Services are provided by large and small public and private organizations in diverse settings such as schools, community facilities and other venues.

CDBG Drives Economic Success

CDBG economic development activities help communities tackle economic distress, stimulate private investment, and spur business growth. Small businesses are the cornerstone of the American economy and CDBG helps socially and economically challenged small businesses start and grow. Likewise, CDBG investment in large-scale commercial projects leads to area renewal, job creation and retention, and retention or creation of important businesses that serve to anchor a community and provide important services. CDBG has a great return on investment with every dollar of 2022 CDBG funding leveraging an average of \$5.02 in local investment.[4]

The Need for Investment

With inflation and stagnant CDBG allocations, the program is not able to assist as many people as in the past. States and local communities often receive more CDBG funding requests than they can accommodate. The cost of materials and labor related to the program's two major activities, infrastructure and housing rehabilitation, has increased exponentially. And with rising inflation and housing costs, more people need assistance.

For example, seniors need assistance to make emergency improvements to their homes to age in place. With the acute shortage of affordable housing, preservation of affordable housing through single-family and multifamily rehabilitation is essential. Small and rural communities need assistance to install water and sewer upgrades and the rise in homelessness has increased demand for public services.

CDBG often serves as critical gap financing for a wide array of projects and services that are essential to local economies. In FY24 alone, CDBG funding created or retained 11,754 jobs, benefitted more than 7.2 million people through public services and provided public improvements and infrastructure projects for more than 1.8 million people.[5] Investments in CDBG provide support for locally driven projects that otherwise might not be feasible.

CDBG formula grants have never been adjusted for inflation causing diminished resources for communities. The program's latest appropriated level - \$3.3 billion in FY24 is \$150 million less than in FY21 and far less than its highest mark of \$4.5 billion in FY95. As a result, fewer funds are available to drive local solutions to varying affordable housing and community development challenges.

CDBG has a 50-year record of successful projects, and a broad network of state and local agencies trained to manage community development grants.

Support for CDBG Funding:

Funding has significantly diminished since the inception of the program. The 2024 enacted appropriation of \$3.3 billion represents approximately one quarter of the funding level in 1975 when adjusted for inflation, while the number of grantees has doubled. The CDBG Coalition calls on Congress to provide at least \$4.2 billion for CDBG formula grants in FY2026.

National Community Development Week provides the opportunity for Congressional members to see first-hand 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.

Please consider sending a letter or postcard to your local congressional members to share how the Community Development Block Grant has impacted you and how the funding has assisted your community or organization.

We appreciate your support!

Your Community Development Team

Liz Murphy
Executive Director of Community Development and Planning

Mary Jo Bohart
Director of Economic Development

Maribel Cruz
Director of Housing & Development

Kimberly LeBlanc
Community Development Coordinator

Amy LeBlanc
Senior Project Manager

Tracey Howe
Program Management Assistant

Melissa Richard
Administrative Assistant

Herlin Jaime
Conservation Agent

Chantell Fleck
Principal Planner

What can you expect from Fitchburg CDBG Year 51 Activities?

Applicant	Public Facilities and Improvements	Award
Fitchburg DPW	West main St. Paving & Sidewalk Reconstruction	\$176,000
Parks & Recreation	City Parks Signs Replacement	\$15,000
School Department	Crocker Field - Grandstand Restoration	\$30,000
TOTAL		\$221,000

Applicant	Public Services	Award
Fitchburg Health Department	Street Outreach	\$20,000
Growing Places	Fitchburg Farmers' Market	\$7,000
Montachusett Regional YMCA	Spartacus	\$20,000
Fitchburg Police Department	Fitchburg Community Policing Project	\$40,000
North Star Family Services	Family Homeless Shelter	\$10,000
Community Legal Aid	Fitchburg Homelessness Prevention Project	\$7,000
Big Brothers & Big Sisters of CM & MW	One-to-One Mentoring for Fitchburg Youth	\$5,000
Mayor's Office	Mayor's Energy Fund	\$3,000
Boys and Girls Club	Project Learn STEAM Transportation	\$16,500
First Parish Housing / The Sundial	Resident Service Coordinator	\$7,000
TOTAL		\$135,500

Applicant	Economic Development	Award
New Vue Communities	Small Business Technical Assistance	\$30,000
Community Development and Planning	Sign and Façade Program	\$60,000
Community Development and Planning	Fitchburg Downtown Coordinator	\$35,000
TOTAL		\$125,000

Applicant	Economic Development	Award
Habitat for Humanity	Critical Home Repair	\$30,000
Fitchburg Board of Health	Code Enforcement	\$121,000
Fitchburg Building Department	Code Enforcement	\$91,000
TOTAL		\$242,000

Applicant	Demolition / Clearance	Award
Community Development Department	Demolition	\$104,412

SPONSOR	Planning & Admin (20% Cap)	Award
Community Development Department	CDBG Administration and Planning	\$183,967

TOTAL AWARDED	\$1,011,879
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*All figures are subject to fluctuation pending budget approval by congress

To view this year’s action plan, and more about the activities, you can find a copy of the draft on our website:
<https://fitchburgma.gov/cdbg>