

City of Sheboygan's Community Development Block Grant Program

The FY2018 budget released by President Trump last week eliminates 6% of the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The more than 40-year old CDBG program is a cornerstone tool for cities to pay for affordable housing development, create economic opportunities and ensure suitable living environments for low and moderate income residents

The City of Sheboygan has historically received approximately \$800,000 to \$1,000,000 from the CDBG program. Over the past decades, the City's Block Grant program has been administered by the Department of Planning and Development and has provided assistance in a wide array of projects. Over the past 10 years, the City has provided on average \$150,000 in funds to local non-profit agencies that support a number of efforts; everything from Salvation Army, Shoreline Metro, Safe Harbor, Family Connections, Partners for Community Development, Habitat for Humanity- Lakeside, Lakeshore CAP, Mental Health America, among others. These funds are typically used for administration of the programs that helps a lot of Sheboygan residents in a time of need. Last year the CDBG program funded \$16,000 to the Boys and Girls Club for renovations to the Stayer Unit to benefit children of Sheboygan. In 2011, the City provided \$50,000 to the Salvation Army to purchase an elevator for their shelter expansion.

The City has dedicated funds to a housing rehabilitation loan program to all qualifying homeowners and landlords as a source for obtaining funding to complete updates to their properties. The City also dedicates CDBG funds to a business development loan program that allows the opportunity for the City to assist businesses looking to expand in Sheboygan. The City also has used a large percentage of the funds towards street reconstruction. The streets these funds have replaced include Erie Avenue, St. Clair Avenue, Superior Avenue, Huron Avenue, South 8th Street, etc. CDBG funds have built the new shelter at King Park and made improvements to the Kiwanis Park shelter. The redevelopment of Erie Avenue with new houses being built by Habitat for Humanity and the community garden at the corner of North 10th Street and Erie Avenue would not have been possible without community development block grant funds. In 2010, the City received an award from HUD for the redevelopment of the former Kingsbury/Verifine development where the Garton Toy Apartments are located.

Funds from the CDBG program also help provide funds to the City budget to off-set costs of advancing the City through neighborhood and planning services. Over the past 20 years, block grant funds have been used extensively downtown, the riverfront and the South Pier development. These federal funds have completed projects that would not have been completed with local tax dollars. Elimination of the program will have direct impacts on local economy here in Sheboygan should the budget be passed. In Sheboygan, over the past 10 years, the program has funded a good portion of the

public infrastructure that has been completed and the elimination of the program will create challenges for the City and Common Council to fund non-profit agencies to neighborhood improvements to continue to make Sheboygan the best place to live, work and play.

Another program proposed to be cut includes the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). This program was crucial in funding Sheboygan River cleanup project as well as other beach restoration projects. A few weeks ago, a reporter covering the cuts to GLRI visited Sheboygan from Washington D.C. to gather a first-hand experience of how GLRI funds have helped Sheboygan. If you are interested in reading her article, please visit the following link: <http://www.eenews.net/stories/1060051637>