



PLANNING GRANTS SCORING CRITERIA:

Applications must achieve a minimum score of **450 points** to be eligible for award.

NATIONAL OBJECTIVE SCORE (100 POINTS):

Depending on the National Objective to be met by the project, one of the following two mechanisms will be used to calculate the score for this category.

1. National Objective = Benefit to Low- and Moderate-Income Persons: 100 points maximum awarded according to the percentage of low- and moderate-income individuals to be served by the project. The total points given are computed as follows:

$$\text{National Objective Score} = \% \text{ Low/Mod Beneficiaries} \times 1$$

2. National Objective = Prevention or Elimination of Slums or Blight: 100 points maximum awarded based on the characteristics listed below. The total points given are computed as follows:

National Objective Score = (Total of the points received in each category below)

- Applicant has a Slum/Blight Resolution for project area (50 pts.)
- The project site is a brownfield* (25 pts.)
- The building or district is listed on the Indiana or National Register of Historic Places** (10 pts.)
- The building or district is eligible for listing on the Indiana or National Register of Historic Places** (10 pts.)
- The building is on the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana's "10 Most Endangered List" (15 pts.)

*The State of Indiana defines a brownfield as an industrial or commercial property that is abandoned, inactive, or underutilized, on which expansion or redevelopment is complicated due to actual or perceived environmental contamination.

Project may either be listed on or eligible for listing on the Indiana or National Register of Historic Places. **Both cannot be checked.

COMMUNITY DISTRESS FACTORS (175 POINTS):

Various factors are used to determine the distress of a community. OCRA has partnered with Stats Indiana, an Indiana University entity to analyze and calculate the distress of Indiana's small cities, towns, counties and townships. Factors used to calculate the Community Distress points used for CDBG scoring include:

Percentage of Households with Income under Poverty Level
Median Household Income
Percent of Housing Units that are Vacant

Median Home Value
Unemployment Rate
Labor Force Participation

Local government scores, which are updated and published annually, can be found at: www.stats.indiana.edu/.

LOCAL MATCH CONTRIBUTION (75 POINTS):

A maximum of 75 points based on the percentage of local funds devoted to the project. This total is determined as follows:

$$\text{Total Match Points} = \% \text{ Eligible Local Match} \times 1$$

The points total is capped at 75 points or 75% match, i.e., a project with 75% match or greater will receive 75 points. Below 75% match, the formula calculation will apply. Eligible local match can be local cash or debt sources. Federal, state, and local government grants are considered eligible match.

PROJECT DESIGN FACTORS (300 POINTS):

A maximum of 300 points awarded according to the evaluation in three areas:

Project Description – Is the project clearly defined as to determine eligibility? – 50 points

Project Need - Is the community need for this project documented and compelling? – 125 points

Financial Impact - Why is grant assistance necessary to complete this project? – 125 points

The points in these categories are awarded by the OCRA Scoring Committee when evaluating the projects. **Applicants should refer to the application packet and address all questions present.** Applicants should work with their OCRA Community Liaison to identify ways to increase their project’s competitiveness in these areas.

PROGRAM SPECIFIC POINTS (50 POINTS):

Planning Grants (PL)

- **Community Input and Collaboration** – A maximum of 25 points are awarded for communities that document three public input and collaboration efforts including public hearings, letters of support, and surveys.
- **Connection to Previous Planning Effort** – A maximum of 15 points are awarded for documentation that the plan that is being applied for connects to a previous planning effort done by the community.
- **Implementation of Previous Plan or First-time Plans** – A maximum of 10 points are awarded for communities that document the successful implementation of a previous planning grant plan or for communities that have never received a Planning Grant before.

BONUS POINTS POLICY:

It is OCRA’s policy to encourage and support regional coordination amongst rural communities. As such, a grant application that is included in a regional plan will be awarded 25 bonus points. To receive these bonus points requires verification of the regional plan from the CDBG Program Director approximately 1 week prior to application submission.

Bonus Points for Regional Planning – 25 points

POINTS REDUCTION POLICY:

It is the policy of OCRA not to fund more than one plan or component of a single plan type in different funding rounds. This applies to all plan types, although it is particularly relevant to utility plans. If a community needs to phase a plan in order to complete it, they should consider which phase would be most appropriate for CDBG assistance. Even if a community doesn’t intentionally phase a plan, OCRA will take into account previously awarded plans for the same plan type. A community that has previously been awarded a grant for the same plan type will likely not be competitive and will be subject to the follow point reduction.

0 – 5 years since previous funding – (-50 points)

Example: Community submits and receives a Planning grant in 2015 to conduct an environmental assessment for a particular site. When applying for a Planning grant in 2020 to do an environmental assessment for a different site, they would be subject to a point reduction of 50 pts. They would have no point reduction in 2021.

Planning Grants - Project Design Scoring Questions

Project Description
Project Description
Is there a detailed easy to understand the planning project description, in non-technical terms?
Are there clear and measurable desired outcomes addressed by the planning project after completion?
Scope of Work
Is the scope of work clear and logical for the type of planning project? Are ineligible items noted?
Does the scope of work correlate with the detailed budget? Per item costs are included.
Project Development and Support
Is there documentation of a robust development process for the planning project?
Are there high-quality, clearly labeled maps that identify the expected area covered by the plan?
PROJECT NEED
Priority
Is there documentation of a 3-5 year history of issues this plan would address?
Is frequency/prevalence of the issue(s) this plan would address compelling? Is adequate documentation included in the Appendix?
Is there a risk of the issue(s) this plan would address having a significant impact on residents? Is adequate documentation included in the Appendix?
Is this plan a community priority? Is adequate documentation included in the Appendix?
Are survey results and other data related to the issue(s) this plan would address included to adequately describe the need? (Photos are not considered data.)
Current Conditions
Are the current conditions well explained and documented?
Are high-quality color pictures showing conditions within the past 5 years included? Does every picture have a caption and date stamp? If no pictures, are reasons provided?
Residential Impact
Is the residential impact of the issues being addressed by the plan explained and documented? What are potential impacts on residents if planning is not completed?
Is residential support/need for the planning project outlined and documented?
Health and Safety
Are health and safety issue(s) this plan would address explained in detail? What are potential health risks if planning is not completed explained in detail?
Are health and safety issue(s) this plan would address well documented?
FINANCIAL IMPACT
Previous Efforts
Have there been previous efforts to address the issue(s) this plan would cover by the community?
Is supporting documentation included explaining past efforts including partnerships, expenditures and labor hours?
Sustainability
Is there an adequate sustainability plan for this project? Does the community have a timeline to update the plan?
Are there commitments to maintain the plan past the 5 year closeout window?
Financial Options
Were at least three (3) other financial options for the planning project investigated?

Is there an explanation of why CDBG is the best option for the planning project? Why are other financial options not the best option?
If CDBG funds are not awarded, will the planning project move forward?
Local Match
Is the local match well explained and documented?
Fund Balances
Are the fund balances and relevant documentation for the applicant and sub-recipient adequately explained?
Are all discretionary fund balances accounted for and explained?