

CDBG Planning Grant Minimum Plan Requirements

Economic Recovery Plans

The following are the minimum technical specifications for an Economic Recovery Plan as part of an OCRA CDBG Planning grant. Once the initial draft is completed, a digital copy should be submitted to OCRA for review. Once OCRA has approved the draft plan, it must be submitted to and approved by the local governing body. Once approved by the local governing body, a final digital and paper copy that includes the approval by the local governing body must be submitted to OCRA in order to close-out the grant.

The plan must include or address all of the following items and relevant content:

Required Items

- Cover Page
- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary (2-4 pages)
- High-quality, colored and captioned maps, photographs, and/or drawings that illustrate the critical elements of the plan
- Concise narratives with minimal use of professional jargon
- Citation of all sources used in both the footnote and the reference page
- Plans must be in color, have page numbers, and be free from unusual formatting.

Required Contents (Plan must be organized in this order and with these headings)

A. Executive Summary

1. Purpose of the plan
2. Scope of the plan
3. Process to develop plan, including public input via hearings, surveys, etc.
4. Plan summary in 2-4 pages
5. Outline of key goals, strategies and desired outcomes

NOTE: Include page references

B. General Background

Provide a brief overview of the demographic, economic and educational profile of the target area (city/town, county, or region), including but not limited to:

1. Key population features (such as age structure, population change, educational attainment, etc.)
2. Economic base (major employers, main industrial activity, etc.)
3. Key anchor institutions in the community/county (such as public library, hospitals/clinics, community centers, museums, public schools, higher education institutions, etc.)

C. Recovery Planning Committee (RPC)

Provide a summary of the RPC. This should include:

1. List of the members of the committee and the entity they represent
 - a. This committee should be diverse in terms of representation (such as local government, Main Street organization, Chambers of Commerce, Industry

support groups such as Tourism, Community Banks and Credit Unions, economic development organizations, business/industry, education, foundations, health, nonprofit, faith-based, revolving loan fund (RLF) committee leadership, as well as other appropriate organizations/agencies and demographic groups)

2. Outline of the committee's work in developing the plan including a listing of meetings, summaries of public hearings, and a discussion of how consensus was reached for the plan
 3. Describe role of the RPC which includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Serving as liaison between the area, OCRA, partners, funders
 - b. Engaging in studying key data indicators related to recovery
 - c. Being actively involved in developing, with active public input, the plan for the targeted area
- D. Recovery Vision and Key Goals
1. Vision of the future state and use of the area. The vision must:
 - Be future focused (5 to 10 years) and take into consideration foreseeable needs of the community
 - Identify how the area will be used with an emphasis on economic recovery, development, and community engagement
 - Include possibilities for programming that will help to revitalize the surrounding neighborhoods and attract tourists and outside businesses
 - Address any service gaps and needs associated with the area
 2. Key goals, along with measurable strategies linked to each goal, that will help sustain and recover the downtown business district area and expand access to/outreach of the area
- E. Post Economic Contraction ¹Conditions
- Describe the current state of the local economy following an event that causes the economy to contract. Specifically, provide information on the following:
1. Market Conditions
 - a. Conduct an assessment survey to determine the extent of impact on local businesses
 - b. Basic demographic information and trends: should also identify businesses and jobs that have been lost or at-risk
 - c. Basic information on the area from the Census of Retail Trade
 - Ratio of small businesses to total number of businesses
 - d. An analysis of the commercial development opportunities
 - Might include ESRI data obtained from the Indiana Small Business Development Center (though not required)
 - e. Recommendations of the types of commercial uses that could be supported by its own residents as well as by others from neighboring and/or regional communities
 - f. The problems and opportunities in the retail areas
 2. Existing Plan Conditions
 - a. Summary analysis (including when last updated) of existing plans:

¹ Contraction, in **economics**, refers to a phase of the business **cycle** in which the **economy** as a whole is in decline. A contraction generally occurs after the business **cycle** peaks, but before it becomes a trough

- i. Comprehensive Plan and/or Capital Improvement Plan, Parks and Recreation Plan, etc.
 - ii. Existing land use controls: zoning, site plan review, design review, signage, etc.²
 - iii. Strategic or economic development plans by City, Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development, downtown social services, etc.
 - 3. Physical Conditions: An inventory of the community's current physical conditions and what opportunities exist to reconfigure/reimagine these areas to assist with economic recovery.
 - a. Land use, including district and sub-areas
 - Inventory of current building stock and their uses
 - b. All entrances and gateways to the downtown
 - c. Open spaces – vacant land and status of property for potential commercial/neighborhood development
 - d. Green spaces – parks, parklets, alley activations, etc.
 - e. Parking – public and private, future parking, city parking lot
 - f. Public transit
 - g. Facades
 - i. Current photos of all downtown buildings
 - n. Vacant buildings (number and potential use)
 - o. Existing local economic development tools – Redevelopment Commission, loan pool, etc.
 - p. Summary of liabilities and issues
 - q. Summary of strengths and opportunities
 - 4. Cultural/Social Conditions
 - Analysis of the local business community's cultural and social resources, including:
 - Events such as festivals, art fairs, concerts and retail promotions
 - Cultural institutions such as schools, museums, etc.
 - Present downtown organizations such as a main street, downtown retail group, merchants association, etc.
 - Analysis of the local business community's current image within the community and trade area
- F. Recovery and Community Wide Implementation Options
- 1. Prioritized outline of at least three (3) options to promote economic recovery that include:
 - a. Description of how current assets/policies/program can be leveraged to assist with economic recovery goals
 - b. Outline Physical/Policy/Program improvements
 - c. Pro-Forma for operations
 - d. Maps, pictures, or illustrations

² Please note: This information is used to help describe reworking your community spaces to better align with social distancing and health guidelines or parameters set by the situation in which economic recovery is necessary. Think through what it means to know that information to better prepare for reworking your downtown to meet the needs.

- e. Projected number of visitors and/or jobs retained or created through business assistance programs and/or new business attraction
- f. Cost and benefit estimates
- g. Implementation timeline
- h. List of funding sources both private and public
- i. List of possible partnerships
- j. List of other available resources and agencies

- 2. Description of Main Street Organization involvement (group status/progress)
- 3. Proposed revisions and reconnections to existing plans and land use regulations if applicable

G. Economic Recovery Action Plan

- 1. Discussion of predominant ideas, guiding principles and action steps for the following:
 - a. Economic diversity
 - b. Business development potential
 - c. Redevelopment and revitalization
 - d. Labor force, education and training
 - e. Regulatory processes
 - f. Urban growth area
 - g. Resource areas and critical areas
 - h. Compliance with comprehensive plan elements
- 2. Present a specific action plan to implement the Economic Recovery Strategy
 - a. Community infrastructure
 - b. Business assistance
 - c. Business retention, expansion, formation and recruitment
 - d. Process and regulation
 - e. Communication, marketing and promotion
 - f. Management, monitoring and accounting
 - g. Financing and incentives
 - h. Timeframes and mechanisms for evaluation, monitoring and updating the plan
- 3. Description of how current assets can be leveraged to implement the action plan

H. Action Items

The purpose of this section is to immediately begin to take action as dictated in the plan. The plan should therefore conclude with a summary of action items that will be taken upon OCRA approval of the plan. This action items should also have an implementation timeline to provide accountability for full implementation of the plan.

The following are recommended action items for this type of plan:

- 1. Operationalize at least one of the projects from this plan that was developed by the RPC and fully supported by the appropriate governing body
- 2. Identify and seek external funding to prepare for future recovery projects included in the plan (fundraising, CDBG Construction grants, federal grants, etc.)
- 3. Building owner “buy-in” (especially for façade programs) for projects and their sustainability

I. Appendices

For further guidance on how to create a Downtown Revitalization Plan, see the following resources:

[\(Re\)Building Downtown: A Guidebook for Revitalization](#) – Smart Growth America

[Turning Around Downtown: Twelve Steps to Revitalization](#) – Brookings Institution

[Downtown Revitalization](#) – USDA Rural Information Center

For further guidance on how to create an Economic Development Plan, see the following resources:

[Rural Economic Development: Building a Sustainable Community](#) – National Rural Economic Developers Association (NREDA)

[Integrating Economic Development Strategies into Everyday Planning](#) – Metropolitan Council

[Planning for Economic Development](#) – Municipal Research and Services Center

[Framework for Creating a Smart Growth Economic Development Strategy: A Tool for Small Cities and Towns](#) – EPA Office of Sustainable Communities Smart Growth Program

[Creating a Strategic Plan for Local Economic Development: A Guide](#) – Federation of Canadian Municipalities

[Comprehensive Economic Development Plan](#) - Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority

[Local Government Tool Box: Economic Development](#) – Ohio State University Community Development