

The Brighter Future

A Northwest Georgia Regional Commission Newsletter

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The CDBG is the major community revitalization initiative application offered by DCA. The CDBG program is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. The program works to ensure decent affordable housing, to provide services to the most vulnerable in our communities, and to create jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses. CDBG is an important tool for helping local governments tackle serious challenges facing their communities.

Eligible Activities typically benefit low- and moderate-income persons, offer prevention or elimination of slums or blight, and/or address community development needs having a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community for which other funding is not available.

Examples include:

- housing improvement projects
- public facilities such as water and sewer lines
- buildings such as local health centers or heard start centers
- economic development projects

Local Match Requirements:

Grants up to \$300,000, or grants for single activity housing projects - no matching funds required.

Grants of \$300,000 to \$500,000 - 5% local matching funds required

Grants of more than \$500,000 - 10% local matching funds required.

As we are fast approaching the new year, it is important that you notify the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC) to assist with your CDBG by October 15, 2014 to ensure an appropriate amount of time to prepare your application.

** A Revitalization Area Strategy (RAS) will permit a more competitive CDBG application. For more information on developing a RAS for an underserved neighborhood or area, please contact the Community and Economic Development Department of the NWGRC.*

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) was created in 1977 to serve as an advocate for local governments. The mission of the DCA is to partner with communities to help create a climate of success for Georgia's families and businesses.

DCA promotes and implements community and economic development, local government assistance, and safe and affordable housing. Using state and federal resources, DCA helps communities spur private job creation, implement planning, develop downtowns, generate affordable housing solutions and promote volunteerism. DCA also helps qualified low- and moderate- income Georgians buy homes, rent housing, and prevent foreclosure and homelessness.

OneGeorgia EDGE SUCCESS STORY



The Dalton-Whitfield County Joint Development Authority was awarded \$700,000 from OneGeorgia EDGE for the purchase of equipment that will assist with the conversion of Aladdin's Dalton manufacturing facility. The conversion of the manufacturing facility will create 420 new jobs and \$83 million in investment.

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Important Dates

Oct 1st
RTP Notification

Oct 15th
CDBG Notification

Nov 13th
Financial Planning for Disaster Workshop

Nov 30th
Final RTP Application

1st of The Year
DCA Notification on 2015 ARC Pre-Applications

March 1st
ARC Final Applications Due

April 1st
CDBG Final Applications Due

*Contact the Regional Commission for further information.

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Employment Incentive Program (EIP)

EIP is also administered by DCA and funded by the CDBG Program. The EIP is a financing program that may be used in conjunction with traditional private financing to carry out economic development projects which will result in employment of low and moderate income persons. Many types of projects can be financed with EIP funding. However, projects creating opportunities for low and moderate income persons to advance themselves by obtaining employment, greater job security, better working conditions, job training, enhancement of workplace skills and advancement opportunities receive the greatest consideration.

Eligible Uses

- Public water and sewer systems, distribution and/or collection lines, wastewater treatment projects, rail spurs, and various other types of public facilities.
- Financing for fixed assets including: land, new facilities, rehabilitation of existing facilities, machinery, and equipment.

Eligible applicants for the EIP are general purpose "non-entitlement" local governments with activities encompassing two broad areas; 1) grants to local governments for the installation of public infrastructure which will support an eligible economic development project; or 2) grants to local governments who may then loan the EIP proceeds to a sub-recipient industry to finance various fixed assets which will be used in an eligible economic development project.

EIP loan repayments may be used to establish or recapitalize a local revolving loan fund (RLF) to be used in other eligible projects. Each EIP project must create or retain employment principally for low and moderate income persons.

Ineligible applicants under the EIP are any incorporated city within a HUD Entitlement Urban County which chooses to participate through a Cooperating Agreement with the Urban County in the HUD Entitlement Program.

EIP Representative Examples

Twiggs County will use \$500,000 in EIP grant funds to assist with improvements to a public sewage collection, treatment and drip irrigation system that serves Academy Sports and Outdoors.

- Proposed Jobs: 250
- Proposed Private Investment: \$44,000,000

Jefferson County and the City of Wrens will use \$500,000 in EIP grant funds to assist with the construction of public sewer line system improvements to serve PyraMax Ceramics, LLC's new facility location. The Company plans to construct a new ceramic proppants manufacturing facility, creating 60 new jobs and investing approximately \$120,000,000.

- Proposed Jobs: 60
- Proposed Private Investment: \$120,000,000



We are happy to announce...

Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is available this year!

The RTP is a reimbursement program for which the United States Congress appropriates funding. The Federal Highway Administration manages the Program, but RTP is administered at the state level. In Georgia, administration is handled by staff of the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites.

The purpose of the RTP is to provide and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities identified in, or that further a specific goal of, the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Eligible projects include:

- trail and trailhead construction
- trail maintenance
- trail assessments/studies
- property acquisition for trail recreation facilities

Grants are awarded on a competitive and annual basis; the award will reimburse up to 80% of total project cost. The minimum grant award is \$25,000. Projects that provide for non-motorized uses can receive a maximum grant award of \$100,000. Projects designed to accommodate off-road motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, or off-road four-wheel-drive trucks may propose a higher grant amount. Grant recipients must match 20% of the project cost.

**NWGRC expects for the application deadline to be in November as the grant application is not available until October 1, 2014. Please notify us of potential projects by October 1st. **

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NWGRC Updates & Information



North Floyd Industrial Park Sewer Project funded by ARC for 2012 Lowes Distribution Center

2015 ARC Pre-Applications Submitted

- STEAM/ Industrial Innovation FabLab Center
- Cedartown - One Door Polk Network
- City of Jasper Sewerage System Improvements
- Dalton Business Incubator Feasibility Study
- Floyd County Airport Infrastructure Improvements
- North Georgia Healthcare Center Mobile Telemedicine Lab Unit
- Trenton-Dade Industrial Park Phase II Railroad Safety Improvements
- Trion Industrial Park Site Development
- Tunnel Hill Depot Renovation Planning
- Walker County Business Park Sewerage System Improvements

Regional Digital Economy Plan

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, with support from the Georgia Technology Authority, has developed the Digital Region 1 (DR1) plan to grow business, recruit and retain industry, and support local institutions with technology. Digital technology can be powerful means to grow incomes, improve products and services, and increase competitiveness. The strategic focus of DR1 is top-line growth via investments in software and workforce that capitalize on and foster additional investments in hardware and infrastructure. The goals of DR1 are to:

- Increase the benefits of and reduce the costs of using digital technologies
- Address common issues, needs, opportunities, problems, etc., across education, healthcare, local government, manufacturing, tourism, and small business sectors
- Share best practices and other knowledge to increase use of, investment in, and benefits from technology

The DR1 plan is a starting point for that process, focused on northwest Georgia's economic drivers and supporting institutions. Our research shows that northwest Georgia has generally very good digital infrastructure. Leading organizations in all sectors we examined—especially manufacturing—have invested in hardware. Now we need to invest in digital skills and software. Improvements in basic industries, particularly advanced manufacturing, will be catalysts for digital development by other sectors. DR1 is a blueprint for doing more with hardware and infrastructure by investing in software and workforce. As an economic development plan, DR1 must have measurable impacts on productivity and prosperity. For all sectors and the entire regional economy, the objectives of the plan are to increase:

- Technology investment and use by organizations
- The number and sizes of the region's technology companies
- The number of technology jobs and occupations
- Income & wages via digital leadership and workforce skills

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Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP)

On May 28, 2014 U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker announced the first 12 communities that will be designated "Manufacturing Communities" as part of the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) initiative. Out of 70 applications, the Northwest Georgia region was one of the 12 communities designated. The designation gives the region a federal liaison at each of the partner agencies to help navigate federal opportunities, and the community being featured on a portal targeting potential domestic and international opportunities. The designation also gives the region access to possible funds and other resources we could use to assist the region with implementing the strategy – but no funding is guaranteed.

Georgia Tech's Enterprise Innovation Institute has been working on this project since September 2013 in conjunction with NWGRC. The end product is expected to be an advanced manufacturing strategic plan for the northwest Georgia region. While the floorcovering industry has been the initial focus, the results of this strategy will have overarching effects on other major advanced manufacturers in the region – including the plastics, chemical, and automotive industries. The NWGRC and GA Tech have spoken with industries in the region individually and at the same table, and will continue to bring these players together throughout the project. Our concentration will be in sustainability, materials research, workforce training, and commercialization assistance. Please help us contact major industries in your community.

Economic Development Administration (EDA) 2014 Regional Innovation Grants

EDA has released the 2014 Regional Innovation Grants, which will include the upcoming I-6 challenge. EDA is committed to helping foster connected, innovation-centric economic sectors which support commercialization and entrepreneurship as described in the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010, including regional innovation strategies for global competitiveness. We anticipate submitting an application to implement the S-FLOR Proof of Concept/ Commercialization Center for Manufacturing Sustainability, which will combine efforts from College and Career Academies, Georgia Northwestern and Chattahoochee Technical Colleges, Dalton State University and surrounding colleges and universities, Chambers of Commerce and Development Authorities, advanced manufacturing industries, and Georgia Tech's Manufacturing Extension Partnership. This would be a key implementation step in our EDA IMCP designation and the Advanced Manufacturing Strategy. The Center would combine education, workforce development, research and innovation, and business incubation services in one center to ensure that employees, students and innovators have access to 21st century learning technology and develop the skills needed to support continued investment in advanced manufacturing in Northwest Georgia. Outcomes will be job creation, increased exports and leveraged private investment. ***Industry support and contribution to this project will be critical to its success. We need your help to pull together the resources and commitments to make this Center a success!***

Georgia Manufacturing Survey 2014

The Georgia Manufacturing Survey (GMS) is a statewide study conducted every two to three years by Georgia Tech's Enterprise Innovation Institute and the Georgia Tech School of Public Policy to assess the business and technological conditions of Georgia's manufacturers. Survey results are used to improve manufacturing assistance programs and regional innovation and sustainability initiatives in Georgia. Results from the 2014 GMS are available. You can access a 12-page summary of results by visiting <http://www.gms-ei2.org/>. The full report will be available soon.

Georgia Tech Economic Development Research Program

The Georgia Tech Economic Development Research Program provides research services to communities throughout the state. Through this program, state resources with funding from the EDA are leveraged with a small local match to provide needed research to local communities. Two projects were awarded in Liberty County (transitioning military workforce study) and Grady County (economic impact of the Cairo motocross facility) last year. Another round of funding will be announced soon, therefore communities should be ready to submit their project requests. An independent panel reviews the applications, and a maximum of two projects will be selected during this round. If a community has a need for innovative research, is willing to become actively involved in the project during the study phase and follow-up implementation, and is willing to provide *some level* of cost match, Georgia Tech and EDA will partner with the community to conduct the research. Please visit the project site for 2014 applications: <http://www.edrp.org/>