

2007 Agency Profile
CITY OF WARREN COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



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WARREN, OHIO 44481

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Agency Information

The City of Warren's Community Development Department focuses on the creation of strong and vibrant neighborhoods through collaborative efforts with other city departments, government offices, non-profit and private-sector organizations. The department administers a range of community-based programs with the objective of improving economic opportunities and housing conditions within the city, as well as creating and maintaining partnerships with residents and other city agencies, to provide an array of proactive, responsive, and people-oriented services.

Location

Community Services Building
418 Main Avenue SW
Warren, Ohio 44481
P: 330-841-2595
F: 330-841-2643

The Community Development Department office can be found on the second floor of the Warren Community Services Building, just south of US-422 (South Street) on Main Avenue. Public parking is available in the lot adjacent to the building, as well as the lot located behind the building.

Office Hours

7:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday

Accessibility

Please provide the office with 48-hours notice if you require an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for non-English speaking persons. The department office and associated meeting and conference rooms are handicapped accessible, including restrooms. To reach the office via TDD telephone, please dial 330-841-2718.

Staff Members

Michael Keys, Director
Heather McMahan, Urban Design and Grants Coordinator
Cathy Angelo, Accountant
Melanie McBride, Program Specialist
Janet Musolf, Program Coordinator
Susan Howard, Executive Secretary

History

In 1962, Warren City Council passed an ordinance authorizing the removal of slum and blight conditions throughout the City of Warren. Two years later, City Council established the Urban Renewal Department, predecessor to the current Community Development Department.

By the mid-1970s, the concept of *community development* replaced urban renewal on federal, state, and local levels. This resulted in the reorganization of several programs administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) into a streamlined system through which local governments could provide necessary services to low- and moderate-income residents. The principal objective of these programs is to development viable communities through the improvement of living environments and the expansion of economic opportunities. To that end, the Community Development Department follows specific objectives, including:

- Elimination of slum and blight conditions in the City of Warren;
- Prevention of unhealthy and unsafe conditions for residents;
- Conservation and expansion of decent and affordable housing stock;
- Expansion and improvement of community services;
- Reduction of isolation among economic, racial, and ethnic groups; and
- Preservation of uniquely historic structures and character in the city.

Program Funding

The federal government has provided Warren with the designation of entitlement community. This allows Congress to appropriate resources through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program on an annual basis. Together, the City of Warren and Trumbull County are recognized as a participating jurisdiction in the HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) program, which provides funding for the development and maintenance of affordable housing.

CDBG and HOME programs are funded according to the federal fiscal year, which begins October 1 and ends September 30. The City of Warren has elected to receive its funding allocation according to the calendar year. Consequently, funds appropriated to the city in 2007 were placed into the federal budget on October 1, 2006. The city is able to begin spending those funds January 1, 2007, providing all grant agreements have been signed and approved.

Before program funds may be expended, the city must provide confirmation that a series of documents have been submitted to and approved by HUD, including the Citizen Participation Plan, Consolidated Housing & Community Development Plan, Annual Action Plan, and Comprehensive Annual Performance & Evaluation Report. These documents are available for public review at the Community Development Department office during regular business hours, or by visiting the city website at www.warren.org/communitydevelopment.htm.

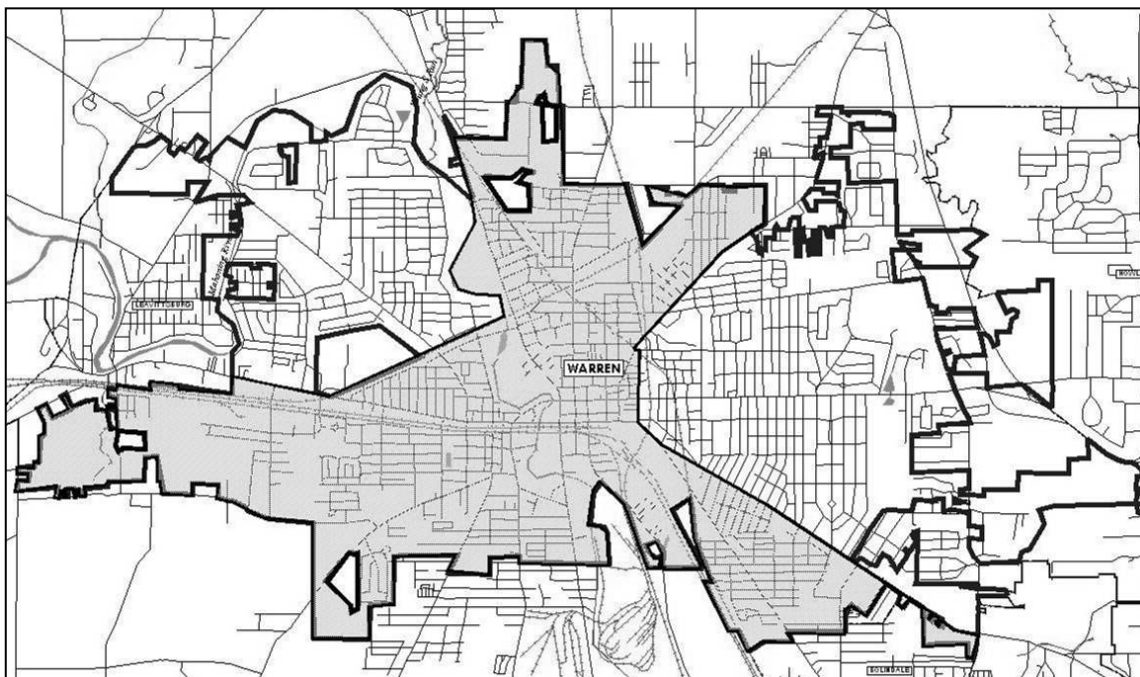
Department Budget

All funds spent by the Community Development Department originate from HUD, the State of Ohio, and alternative public and private funding sources. Federally distributed CDBG and HOME funds constitute the majority of funding available to the department; all other funds are obtained through separate federal and state programs or private foundation resources. The department is not supported by the City of Warren general fund or other city resources, including administrative costs.

Annual program expenditures are governed by a budget recommended by the Citizen Review Committee, then approved and adopted by City Council. If an activity arises that was not previously described in the 2005-2009 Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan, or if substantial changes arise in the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiary of an activity, the department is required to complete a program amendment as required by the Citizen Participation Process, which entails public announcement in the local newspaper, the solicitation of public comment, and publication of new funding allocation(s).

Geographic Focus

In order to serve the needs of low- and moderate-income individuals and families, the Community Development Department, in accordance with HUD principles and conditions, has designated certain districts within city boundaries as Target Area neighborhoods for economic and community development. Those neighborhoods which qualify as Target Areas (according to the 2000 Census) are highlighted in the following map. For a larger map or more information, please contact the Community Development Department.



Citizen Participation

Public participation and cooperation are fundamental elements of all successful housing and community development programs. Consequently, the CD department has developed an open consultation program that reflects vital issues and concerns within our community. The development and implementation of specific projects and programs are guided by direct and representative citizen input on an annual basis, through the Citizen Participation Plan and Citizen Review Committee, as well as Citizen Council meetings, Housing Summit meetings, and participatory surveys.

The Citizen Participation Plan governs the process by which federal funding is allocated. This plan ensures that citizens are provided with information, that public hearings are held to obtain and incorporate public input, and that all residents are provided with an opportunity to comment on the city's community and economic development performance. The current Citizen Participation Plan was adopted for use with the approval of the 2005-2009 Comprehensive Plan. The plan is an updated and expanded version of the document that has guided HUD and department expenditures for the past 30 years, and is available for review at the Community Development office or on the city website.

Each year, a Citizens Review Committee is appointed by the Mayor and City Council to ensure citizen participation in the annual funding process, with particular emphasis placed on the representation of low- and moderate-income individuals. As updated in the 2005-2009 Consolidated Plan, the committee consists of 15 representatives. Six of these are selected by the standing Mayor, and the other nine consist of the three councilpersons serving on the Community Development Committee and two residents each of their selection. Citizen-solicited projects are reviewed by the committee under the counsel of department staff, and a priority list of reviewed projects is recommended to Council according to need.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

Background

The Community Development Act of 1973 introduced the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which provides eligible cities and counties with annual direct grants that are used to revitalize neighborhoods, expand housing and economic development opportunities, eliminate slum and blight, and improve community facilities and services, all while addressing the needs of low- and moderate-income individuals.

The program is designed to be used in Target Area neighborhoods, primarily older neighborhoods where at least 50 percent of residents are classified as low- or moderate-income households. Economic development and job creation activities are an important part of this program, as are infrastructure improvements, code enforcement, housing rehabilitation, and community services.

CDBG funds can also be used to supply local matching funds for state and federal grants. Each year, Community Development Department staff estimate the amount of additional grant matching money required by city projects, and request that the Citizen Review Committee set money aside in the budget for this purpose. Match requests are made when the department anticipates application to funding sources for specific projects in the coming year.

Allocation

In 2004, the City of Warren received \$1.57 million in CDBG funding; in 2005, \$1.5 million; in 2006, that figure was reduced to \$1.35 million; a three-year average of \$1.47 million. As in 2006, in program year 2007 the city will receive nearly **\$1.35 million** in CDBG funding.

HUD regulations permit up to 20 percent of the annual CDBG budget to be used for program administration costs, including salaries, employee benefits, equipment, and office operation. Each year, up to 15 percent of the funding allocation may be allocated to public assistance, which typically includes support programs for disadvantaged populations, youth activity programs, and other community service endeavors. Though this category incorporates a small share of funding, it receives principal consideration from the Citizen Review Committee due to the number of social service agencies and non-profit organizations competing for limited funds. The remaining funds are set aside for general purpose projects, including capital improvements such as street and sidewalk repair, parks development, economic and preservation projects, and local matching funds for department grants.

Program Activity

The following 2007 CDBG programs were endorsed and adopted by City Council after review and recommendation by the Citizens Review Committee.

<i>2007 Programs</i>		<i>Revised Allocation</i>
1	Target Area Street Resurfacing	\$175,000
2	Willard and Youngstown Road Traffic Signal	\$75,000
3	Riverwalk/Kinsman House Project	\$25,000
4a	Target Area Sidewalks	\$15,000
4b	Downtown Sidewalks	\$15,000
5	Downtown Enhancements	\$25,000
6	Program Administration	\$269,799
7	Code/Demo	\$50,000
8	Mahoningside	\$246,200
9	Contingency	\$0
10	Lead Hazard Control Program	\$30,000
11	Revolving Loan Fund	\$50,000
12	Economic Development Professional Services	\$51,250
13	Christy House Emergency Shelter	\$25,462
14	Commercial Land Acquisition	\$40,000
15	Property Maintenance Code Division	\$44,000
16	Mobile Meals' Rethermalizer	\$8,000
17	The Solace Center Visitation Program	\$5,000
18	Adult Day Care Transportation	\$5,462
19	Truancy Intervention Program	\$33,462
20	ACOP's Saturday Academy	\$13,462
21	Project Excel	\$29,462
22	Community Volunteer Council	\$10,000
23	Homeless Benefits	\$2,975
24	Historic Preservation	\$10,000
25	Beatitude House's Potter's Wheel Program	\$15,462
26	Community Solutions' On the Move Again Program	\$4,000
27	Community Outreach Nutrition – Warren Family Mission	\$25,000
28	Packard Music Hall Capital Improvement	\$50,000
TOTAL		\$1,348,996

HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Background

In 1991, Congress passed the National Affordable Housing Act, including a new program designed to create affordable housing to low-income households. The HOME Investment Partnership Program accomplishes this task through the provision of formula grants to communities in partnership with local non-profit groups that purchase, construct, and/or rehabilitate affordable housing for rent or ownership, as well as provide support for direct rental assistance to low-income individuals.

The HOME Program focuses on the improvement of housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income residents through empowering communities to design and implement strategies that emphasizing local planning priorities and the support of public-private partnerships. Funds are prioritized according to a general housing market analysis, the condition of local housing stock, and community input.

The Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) committee directs the allocation of resources to the most effective programs and provides a mechanism for public participation and review. The committee meets periodically to determine progress towards established goals, and recommends updated housing strategies to the Citizen Review Committee for the five-year Consolidated Housing and Community Development plan, updated for the 2005-2009 planning period.

Under HUD and HOME Program regulations, a consortium of governments was created between the City of Warren and Trumbull County, in order to attain regular program status as a participating jurisdiction, which results in direct annual allocations from the federal government. By agreement, the city and county have a 60/40 percent split of the first \$1 million of yearly funding, and an equal share of any allocation in excess of \$1 million.

Allocation

In 2004, the consortium received \$954,500 in funding; \$859,000 in 2005; and \$794,600 in 2006; a three-year average of \$869,400. In program year 2007, \$800,000 will be allocated for HOME, of which the city share is **\$480,000**.

According to regulations, up to ten percent of the annual funding allocation may be used for planning and administration costs. The remaining funds are earmarked for rehabilitation and homeownership programs, including 15 percent for local community housing development organization (CHDO) activities.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

The following 2007 HOME programs were endorsed and adopted by City Council after review and recommendation by the Citizens Review Committee.

<i>2007 City of Warren</i>		<i>Allocation</i>
1	Administration	\$48,000
2	Housing Rehabilitation	\$132,000
3	American Dream Downpayment Initiative	\$0 *
4	Woods Senior Housing	\$192,000
5	Beatitude House – Warren Project	\$250,000
TOTAL		\$622,000

<i>2007 Trumbull County</i>		<i>Allocation</i>
1	Administration	\$32,000
2	Housing Rehabilitation	\$146,000
3	American Dream Downpayment Initiative	\$0 *
TOTAL		\$178,000

2007 Match Requirement

Match Requirement for 2007 \$ 180,000 **

Additional Projects and Transfers

From City Match \$ 200,000
 County Match \$ 120,000

To Beatitude House \$ 100,000
 Villas at Cortland Creek \$ 220,000

Optional 2007 CHDO Funding ***

Maximum Operating Fund \$ 40,000
 Project Fund \$ 120,000

*ADDI funding amount set by HUD and announced at time of grant receipt.
 Does not require match and may not be included in administration calculation.

** Match Requirement will be \$170,000 should the Consortium elect to fund the CHDO Operating fund.

*** The Consortium reserves the right to fund a CHDO should the occasion arise in 2007. The funds will be transferred from those of the City's and County's Housing Rehabilitation projects, following the 60/40 split, when applicable.

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

Homeownership Program

Homeownership is a critical element in the maintenance and improvement of the existing housing stock. In the City of Warren, only 58 percent of occupied housing units are owner-occupied. Preserving affordable single-family, owner-occupied housing throughout the city requires a stable core of homeowners who encourage private reinvestment and community pride. The Homeownership Loan program encourages low- and moderate-income residents to purchase homes in Target Area neighborhoods. HOME funds provide zero-interest deferred loans for \$5,000.00 outside these neighborhoods or \$7,500.00 within these neighborhoods. Currently, 16 local lending institutions participate in this program.

Single-Family Homeowner Rehabilitation Program

A declining population combined with new housing construction in suburban areas frequently leads to disinvestment in older, urban housing stock. Additionally, the deferred maintenance of these units increases rehabilitation costs of the structure, at times in excess of its value. To that end, the City of Warren provides deferred payment loans up to \$30,000 to preserve existing housing stock, rather than allow structures to be abandoned and deteriorate. Annual funding is allocated from both CDBG and HOME programs to rehabilitate up to 20 houses each year, providing investment in existing housing throughout the city.

Emergency Home Repair Program

To combat disinvestment and deferred maintenance in older urban neighborhoods, the City of Warren provides assistance designed to alleviate immediate threats to the health and safety of low-income resident homeowners by providing partial assistance to those whose incomes fall under 60 percent of area median income. Through CDBG funding, a deferred payment loan up to \$4,000 offers assistance to owners of deteriorated properties which endanger the health and safety of the occupants. Priority is given to physically disabled residents, those 62 years of age or older, and households with children who have elevated blood lead levels.

Lead Hazard Control Program

The Lead Hazard Control Program was initiated after new guidelines were issued regarding lead-based paint in federally-funded activities. CD staff conduct visual inspections and risk assessments, verify hazard mitigation documentation, monitor and test all sites when necessary. The City of Warren has also partnered with the Trumbull County Planning Commission, local health departments, contractors and lead poisoning prevention representatives in the Trumbull County Lead Task Force. The Task Force provides comprehensive information regarding all aspects of poisoning prevention.

City of Warren Land Bank

The City of Warren runs a Land Bank program which permits the city to acquire vacant and abandoned tax delinquent property and to then market that property to individuals, developers, and other organizations for development. In addition to land already owned by the city, property is received into the Land Bank program through Trumbull County Sheriff tax foreclosure sales, Trumbull County Auditor forfeited land sales, and gift-in-lieu of foreclosure donations. The City of Warren then sells this property in accordance with Ohio Revised Code. Currently, over 260 properties are available through the Land Bank Program.

Economic Development

It is our goal to work with private industry and state, regional, and local economic development agencies to continually improve conditions in our community, assisting in the creation, retention, and expansion of job opportunities for Warren residents. The City of Warren offers a full-range of incentives to existing and relocating firms, including small business loans and tax abatements. Economic development services are also contracted to Warren Redevelopment and Planning (WRAP) and are administered on behalf of the city, including both the Reinvestment Partnership Corporation (RPC) and Revolving Loan programs.

Business Park Development

In cooperation with Mahoning Valley Economic Development Corporation (MVEDC) Warren Commerce Park was developed into a home for industry, with tenants that include Leedsworld, Charles Manufacturing, Jaro Transportation, the Consolidated Container Company, and Frito-Lay. Proximity to highways and rail service provide a variety of transportation options, offering market advantages to tenants. The City of Warren also developed Northwest Business Park (adjacent to SR-82 and with direct links to the Ohio Turnpike) through the advancement of local public-private partnerships. Currently, the park is home to Boy Scouts of America's regional headquarters and a number of smaller manufacturing firms. In addition, Eastgate Technology Center on Warren's east side is anchored by Time Warner Cable and accommodates innovative high-tech corporations.

Riverwalk/Amphitheatre Campus

A combination of community organization, public support, private fundraising, and grant funding created the Warren Riverwalk, a pedestrian-bicycle trail originating in Courthouse Square and following the Mahoning River north. As development progresses, the Riverwalk will be a connector in the Lake-to-River Greenway Trail. The first several phases of the project are complete, including initial development of the Riverwalk, the exterior restoration of the historic Kinsman House and Land Office, and construction of the Riverwalk Stagehouse at the Warren Community Amphitheatre.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & HUD CALENDAR

All funding received by the Community Development Department through federal resources follows a calendar year schedule, which is sometimes altered due to delays in the US Congress. The following timeline illustrates department scheduling for HUD programs and planning documents required by the federal government.

January

Begin program administration and expenditure of project allocation

February, March

Prepare Comprehensive Annual Performance & Evaluation Report (CAPER) for past project year; hold public hearings during 30-day review period; submit report to HUD (Columbus field office) with comments

April, May

Arrange for selection of Citizen Review Committee by Mayor and members of City Council CD Committee; hold meetings for CDBG and HOME program application

June, July

Schedule meetings for those non-profit entities submitting funding applications

August, September

Call Citizen Review Committee into session; interview proposal sponsors; evaluate projects and make funding allocation decisions; present committee recommendation to City Council for adoption

October, November

Prepare annual Action Plan for upcoming project year; hold public hearings during 30-day review period; submit to HUD (Columbus Field Office) with comments

December

Submit Requests for Release of Funds and Grant Agreements to HUD (Columbus Field Office); submit any supplemental information as requested

All other planning and program activities assumed by the Community Development Department are accomplished in tandem with the above schedule of work required for CDBG and HOME program funding approval.