

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

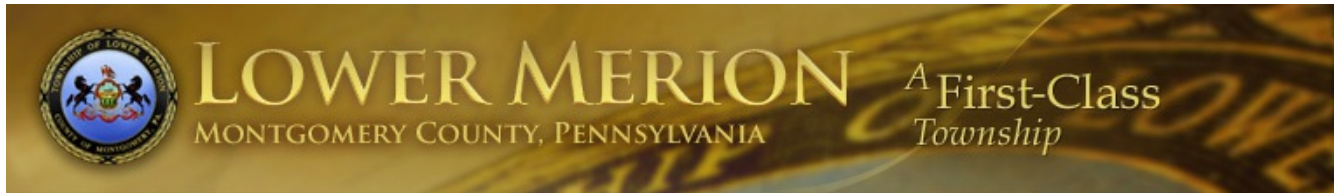
GRANTS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

**Wednesday, May 14, 2025
6:00 PM (Approximately)**

Chairperson: Maggie Harper Epstein
Vice Chairperson: Ray Courtney, Andrew Gavrin

AGENDA

- 1. SECOND PUBLIC HEARING ON 2025-2026 CDBG ANNUAL ACTION PLAN
BUDGET AND DRAFT FIVE-YEAR CONSOLIDATED PLAN 2025-2029**



AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

ITEM: SECOND PUBLIC HEARING ON 2025-2026 CDBG ANNUAL ACTION PLAN BUDGET AND DRAFT FIVE-YEAR CONSOLIDATED PLAN 2025-2029

The Committee will hold a second public hearing to obtain the views of citizens and local organizations on the Township's housing and community development needs and recommendations for activities to fund in the Township's 2025-2026 Fund Year 51 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Budget and the draft Five-Year Consolidated Plan (2025-2029). After closing the public hearing, staff will seek input from the Committee on whether to make any amendments to the proposed CDBG Budget and Consolidated Plan.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	Type
<input type="checkbox"/> Issue Briefing	Issue Briefing
<input type="checkbox"/> Executive Summary	Backup Material
<input type="checkbox"/> 2025-2029 Draft Summary of Priorities and Goals	Backup Material
<input type="checkbox"/> CDBG Funding Budget - Proposed	Backup Material

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Grants and Community Development Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: **Citizens Participation on Housing and Community Development Needs in the Township's Draft Five Year Consolidated Plan 2025-2029 and Fiscal Year 2025-2026 CDBG Annual Action Plan Draft Budget**

Prepared By: Emily Crane, Community Development Technician

Date: **May 9, 2025**

- I. **Action To Be Considered By The Board:**** This is a public hearing and no action is required at this time. A second public hearing to obtain community's comments on the proposed Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Five Year Consolidated Plan for 2025-2029 and the Annual Action Plan for 2025-2026 is required to comply with HUD regulations. Although no formal action is required at this time, staff is seeking input from the Board and the general public about any potential changes to the Consolidated Plan and to the FY2025 Annual Action Plan budget. This will provide staff with time to make any changes prior to the adoption of the Action Plan in June.
- II. **Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:****
Federal regulations require the Township to hold two public hearings to obtain public comment on the proposed Annual Action Plan. The Board of Commissioners are required to adopt a Resolution and submit the application to the Federal Department of Housing and Community Development (HUD) for funding allocation for the coming year.
- III. **Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):**** The Board is required to comply with HUD regulations with the Citizens Participation Plan to obtain the Township's CDBG funding allocation for 2025-2026.
- IV. **Other Relevant Background Information:**** Activities considered for funding are required to meet one of three national objectives and eligibility requirements in order to be funded through HUD's CDBG program. The plans will be available for public review for the minimum 30-day period beginning May 9, 2025. The estimated CDBG allocation for 2025-2026 is \$936,000, which represents a 5% decrease from the 2024-2025 allocation.

The three national objectives are listed below:

- Benefiting low- and moderate-income persons,
- Preventing or eliminating slums or blight, or
- Meeting other community development needs having a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community and other financial resources are not available to meet such needs.

The spreadsheet attached to this Issue Briefing includes the staff recommended draft 2025-2026 CDBG Annual Action Plan budget. This spreadsheet provides the different categories of funding with the totals on the last page.

The draft CDBG 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan and 2025-2026 Annual Action Plan can be found on the Township Website at <https://www.lowermerion.org/CDBGReports>

- V. Impact On Township Finances:** The Federal CDBG Program assists the Township to meet the public service needs, physical improvements and economic development for the community and reduces the need to use local funding sources to provide these services.
- VI. Staff Recommendation:** Staff asks that the Board provide staff with direction for any amendments to be included in the proposed CDBG budget or the Draft Five Year Consolidated Plan. The Board will be required to adopt the CDBG Five Year Consolidated Plan and the Action Plan budget as proposed at the June 18, 2025, Board of Commissioners meeting.

Executive Summary from Five Year Consolidated Plan (2025-2029)

This Executive Summary is designed to provide a brief overview of the Lower Merion Township's 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan.

1. Introduction

The Township of Lower Merion, Pennsylvania, has prepared a Five-Year Consolidated Plan to identify housing and community development needs and to develop specific goals and objectives to address those needs over a five-year period. This Five-Year Consolidated Plan for the Township covers the period of July 1, 2025, until June 30, 2030. The Consolidated Plan allows the Township to continue to receive federal housing and community development funds as a direct Entitlement from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In order to continue to receive these funds for Fiscal Year 2025 Lower Merion must submit their Five-Year Consolidated Plan (2025-2029) and FY 2025 Annual Action Plan to HUD by August 15, 2025 or at such time as specific allocations are provided by HUD. The 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan stipulates that the Township's Department of Building and Planning, Community Development Division will administer the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program.

The FY 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan will describe to HUD how the Township of Lower Merion intends to use federal and non-federal resources to meet community needs. The funds are intended to provide low and moderate-income households with viable communities by addressing one of HUD's three objectives; 1. Provide decent housing, 2. Create a suitable living environment, and 3. Create economic opportunities. Eligible activities include community facilities and improvements, roads and infrastructure, housing rehabilitation and preservation, development activities, public services, economic development, planning, and administration.

Program outcomes will be designed to show how each activity benefits the community or people served. All activities must provide one of the following benefits; 1. Improved Availability / Accessibility, 2. Improved Affordability or 3. Improved Sustainability.

Community Development Block Grant funds to address the needs outlined in this Plan are estimated to be \$936,000 allocated for fiscal year 2025 and similar funding levels are anticipated over the next five years.

2. Summary of the objectives and outcomes tentatively identified in the Plan Needs Assessment Overview

General Goals

The Lower Merion Township Consolidated Plan will represent a vision for housing and community development. Included in the 2025-2029 Five-Year Plan are the Township's goals, needs, strategies and projected resources to address those needs and specific projects. The general goals around which the Plan was written include:

- provision of decent, affordable housing
- provision of a suitable living environment
- expansion of economic opportunities
- increase homeownership
- assist the Continuum of Care to end chronic homelessness

Housing and Community Development Priorities

- **Housing**
 - Increase the supply of affordable housing units for elderly and other low income households
 - Preserve the supply of rental units for the elderly and other low-income households
 - Improve the safety of housing units for low and moderate income families in the Township
 - Preserve and improve the condition of owner occupied low and moderate income housing

- Increase homeownership opportunities for lower income households
- **Homeless and Special Needs Priorities**
 - Continue outreach for homeless persons and families in Lower Merion and persons threatened with homelessness
 - Support social service programs and facilities for the elderly and persons with disabilities
 - Improve accessibility for frail elderly and persons with disabilities
- **Non-Housing Community Development Priorities**
 - Improve and expand public facilities and public services which serve low and moderate income families, seniors and youth
 - Improve the infrastructure and general safety conditions in low income areas to increase safety and accessibility
 - Support and expand affordable social, housing, transportation and health services for low income residents
 - Increase viability of the Township's business corridors
 - Provide planning services and develop strategies to implement Housing and Community Development objectives

3. Evaluation of past performance

The Township of Lower Merion prepared a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) for FY 2023 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024). This CAPER was the fourth of the prior five year period and reported the FY 2023 accomplishments of the Township's CDBG Program. The FY 2023 CAPER was to be submitted to HUD in September 2024.

During FY 2023, Lower Merion received \$964,068 in CDBG funds. The Township expended a total of \$1,628,656, which includes funds allocated in previous years to carry out or complete activities proposed in both the current and prior fiscal years. Funds were spent on a variety of activities including: Parks and Public Property, Public Safety, Public Works Improvements, Housing Programs, Public Services, General Administration, Planning and Fair Housing and COVID related activities.

In FY 2023, 100% of all CDBG funds were expended for activities that benefitted low and moderate income persons.

Since the preparation of the FY 2023 CAPER the Township has expended an additional \$1,107,627 through April 30, 2025. Lower Merion met the 1.5 timeliness spending requirements on May 2, 2025.

4. Summary of citizen participation process and consultation process

The Township will conduct two public hearings and will solicit input into the preparation of the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan through Survey Monkey and will examine issues identified through the Township's Comprehensive Plan Focus Groups. The public hearings are advertised in the local paper and via township e-mail, and the Survey Monkey was sent via e-mail, and hard copies were delivered to organizations who requested that option. The public hearings are held at the Board Room in the Township Administrative Building on February 5, 2025 to solicit public input on Township needs, and on May 14, 2025 on the draft 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan and 2025 Annual Action Plan.

Issues on housing, public facilities and services, homelessness and affordable housing will be examined through the responses to the "Survey Monkey" community survey.

In April, 2025 the Township advertised that copies of the draft FY 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan and FY 2025 Action Plan are available to the public for review and comment at the Community Development Office in the Lower Merion Township Administrative Building and at the Ludington, Ardmore and Belmont Hills Libraries for 30 days starting May 12, 2025.

On May 14, 2025 the second public hearing will be conducted to provide the general public with the opportunity to comment on the Plans and proposed 2025 budget.

The Lower Merion Board of Commissioners will be asked to approve the 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan and FY 2025 Action Plan on June 18, 2025 for submission to HUD by August 15, 2025.

5. Summary

Lower Merion's Citizen Participation outreach is designed to encourage broad participation from Township residents. Outreach to persons with disabilities and minorities was made through contact with local agencies that represent the needs of these groups. Information about opportunities to comment on the Five-Year Plan was provided to local agencies directly and to the public through public notices.



TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION, PA FY 2025-2029 CONSOLIDATED PLAN SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES AND GOALS

The Township of Lower Merion, Pennsylvania's FY 2025-2029 Five-Year Consolidated Plan serves as a consolidated planning document, an application, and a strategic plan for the Township's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. The Five-Year Consolidated Plan proposes six (6) priorities to address the housing, community development and economic development needs in the Township of Lower Merion. These priorities and subsequent goals to address them are as follows:

Housing Priority – (HSP)

Priority Need: There is a need to improve the quality and increase the supply of decent, safe, sound, and accessible housing for homeowners, renters, and homebuyers that is affordable to low- and moderate-income persons and families.

Goals: The following housing goals are proposed to address this priority:

- **HSP-1 Homeownership** – Assist low- and moderate-income households to become homeowners by providing down payment assistance, closing cost assistance, and requiring housing counseling certification.
- **HSP-2 Housing Construction** – Increase the supply of decent, safe, sound, and accessible housing that is affordable for owners and renters in the Township through new construction and the rehabilitation of existing buildings.
- **HSP-3 Owner-occupied Housing Rehabilitation** – Provide financial assistance for low- and moderate-income homeowners to rehabilitate their existing owner-occupied housing.
- **HSP-4 Renter-occupied Housing Rehabilitation** – Provide financial assistance for landlords to rehabilitate housing units and support new residential rental development for low- and moderate-income tenants.

Homeless Priority – (HMP)

Priority Need: There is a need for housing and support services for homeless persons and persons who are at-risk of becoming homeless.

Goals: The following homeless goals are proposed to address this priority:

- **HMP-1 Operation/Support** – Support the Continuum of Care and its homeless providers in the operation of housing and support services for the homeless and persons who are at-risk of becoming homeless.
- **HMP-2 Prevention and Re-Housing** – Support the Continuum of Care and its homeless providers in the prevention of homelessness through anti-eviction activities and programs for rapid re-housing.

Other Special Needs Priority – (SNP)

Priority Need: There is a continuing need for affordable housing, services, and facilities for the elderly, frail elderly, persons with disabilities, the developmentally delayed, persons with HIV/AIDS, victims of domestic violence, persons with alcohol/drug dependency, and persons with other special needs.

Goals: The following special needs goals are proposed to address this priority:

- **SNP-1 Housing** – Increase the supply of affordable, accessible, decent, safe, sound, and sanitary housing for the elderly, frail elderly, persons with disabilities, the developmentally delayed, persons with HIV/AIDS, victims of domestic violence, persons with alcohol/drug dependency, and persons with other special needs through rehabilitation of existing buildings and new construction.
- **SNP-2 Social Services** – Support social service programs and facilities for the elderly, frail elderly, persons with disabilities, the developmentally delayed, persons with HIV/AIDS, victims of domestic violence, persons with alcohol/drug dependency, and persons with other special needs.
- **SNP-3 Accessibility** – Promote and assist in making reasonable accommodations and accessibility improvements in housing for homeowners and renters, as well as making public facilities and infrastructure compliant with Federal, State, and local Laws.

Community Development Priority – (CDP)

Priority Needs: There is a need to improve public and community facilities, infrastructure, social services, food program, healthcare, public safety, clearance/demolition, and improve the quality of life for all residents of the Township.

Goals: The following community development goals are proposed to address this priority:

- **CDP-1 Community Facilities** – Improve parks, recreational facilities, trails, bikeways, public and community facilities through rehabilitation, modifications for accessibility and new construction in the Township.

- **CDP-2 Infrastructure Improvements** – Improve public infrastructure through rehabilitation, reconstruction, and new construction of streets, sidewalks, slopes, bridges, curbs, walkways, waterlines, sewer lines, storm drainage, sanitary sewers, retaining walls, lighting enhancements, etc.
- **CDP-3 Accessibility Improvements** – Remove and eliminate architectural barriers and make ADA accessibility improvements to public and community facilities and infrastructure.
- **CDP-4 Public Services** – Promote and where feasible assist providers to enhance public service programs such as subsistence aid, nutrition, transportation, community well-being, etc., including programs for youth, the elderly, disabled, and low- and moderate-income persons.
- **CDP-5 Public Safety** – Improve public safety facilities, equipment, crime prevention programs, community policing, and ability to respond to emergency situations.
- **CDP-6 Clearance/Demolition** – Remove and eliminate slum and blighting conditions through demolition of vacant, abandoned, and dilapidated structures in the Township.

Economic Development Priority – (EDP)

Priority Need: There is a need to increase employment, job training, technical assistance, work force development, and economic empowerment of low- and moderate-income residents in the Township.

Goals: The following economic development goals are proposed to address this priority:

- **EDP-1 Employment** – Support and encourage new job creation, job retention, workforce development, employment, and job training services for the unemployed and underemployed persons, including summer youth employment programs.
- **EDP-2 Financial Assistance** – Support business and commercial growth through expansion, rehabilitation, and new development by means of technical assistance programs and low interest loans.
- **EDP-3 Redevelopment Program** – Plan and promote the development, redevelopment and revitalization of economically distressed areas of the Township.

Administration, Planning, and Management Priority – (AMP)

Priority Need: There is a continuing need for sound planning, administration, management, and oversight of Federal, State, and local funded programs.

Goals: The following administration, planning, and management goals are present to address this priority:

- **AMP-1 Overall Coordination** – Provide program management and oversight for the successful administration of Federal, State, and local funded programs, including planning services for special studies, annual action plans, five-year consolidated plans, substantial amendments, consolidated annual performance and evaluation reports, environmental review and clearance, fair housing, and compliance with all Federal, State, and local laws and regulations.
- **AMP-2 Special Studies/Management** – Provide and utilize funds to assist with the development of special studies, plans, and management activities related to these activities.
- **AMP-3 Fair Housing** – Provide funds for training, education, outreach, to promote affirmatively further fair housing in the Township.

APPLICATION REQUESTS FOR CDBG FUNDING THROUGH LMT
FUND YEAR 51 (2025-2026)

*The Township's CDBG allocation for Fund Year 51 (July 1, 2025 thru June 30, 2026) is estimated to be **\$936,000**. Previous year's fund allocation was \$985,310. The proposed budget is \$ **954,000**, and includes **\$18,000** in Program Income from FY 2024.*

ACTIVITY for Program Year 51 (2025-2026) Prosposed Budget	AGENCY	COMMENTS	LAST YEAR'S REQUESTED FUNDING	LAST YEAR'S FUNDED AMOUNT	2025 REQUESTED AMOUNT	2025 RECOMMEND ED FUNDING
<u>ADMINISTRATION</u>						
CDBG Administration	LMT	CDBG staff salaries, expenses, professional services, advertising	170,000	170,000	170,000	168,700
Lower Merion Affordable Housing	LMAH		15,000	15,000	30,000	10,000
Fair Housing Rights Assistance for Lower Merion	Housing Equality Center of PA	Seminars, workshops, complaints, housing outreach-agency in Montco	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500
ADMINISTRATION TOTAL		20% Admin CAP per HUD \$187,200			\$208,500	\$187,200

APPLICATION REQUESTS FOR CDBG FUNDING THROUGH LMT
FUND YEAR 51 (2025-2026)

ACTIVITY for Program Year 51 (2025-2026) Proposed Budget	AGENCY	COMMENTS	LAST YEAR'S REQUESTED FUNDING	LAST YEAR'S FUNDED AMOUNT	2025 REQUESTED AMOUNT	2025 RECOMMEND ED FUNDING
<u>PUBLIC SERVICES</u>						
Ardmore Avenue Community Center -partially fund staff salaries	LMT Parks & Recreation	Adult and Youth group activities in low to moderate income area	110,000	102,000	110,000	84,900
Mini Bus Program-partial funding for driver's salary	LMT Parks & Recreation	Provides transportation for senior citizens, youth and adults with mental and physical challenges to various cultural, social and recreational trips	10,000	3,500	10,000	3,500
Escort Driver - partially fund driver service	ElderNet	Provides cab rides when volunteers are not available to help the elderly	2,500	2,000	4,000	2,000
Care Management & Clerical Assistance-fund partial salary	ElderNet	Social worker works with elderly & disabled residents	10,000	8,000	15,000	8,000
Senior Center in Ardmore -fund program services	PALM-Positive Aging in LM	Instructional programs-seniors	23,000	8,000	23,000	8,000
Domestic Violence Satellite Office in Bryn Mawr -fund partial rent payment	Women's Center of Montgomery County	Presumed benefit abused victims	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
New Horizons Senior Center-fund partial salary Program Coordinator	New Horizons Senior Center	Presumed benefit seniors	15,500	6,000	15,500	6,000
Neighbors Helping Neighbors on the Main Line -fund Food Security Program	NHN	Food Insecurity	16,950	8,000	32,245	8,000
Box Lunch & a Book-fund materials and food	BLB	Camp programming, community outreach and food insecurity	0	0	10,000	5,000
Meals on Wheels-fund no cost meals	Meals on Wheels	Expansion of number of no cost meals delivered	8,840	8,000	8,840	8,000
JCC-fund program services	JCC	Expansion of Classes for Seniors	10,000	8,000	12,500	8,000
Legal Aid-fund free legal clinics	ELA	Expansion of free legal Services	10,000	8,000	10,000	5,000
Surrey Services-fund job training	Surrey Services	Job Training	10,000	8,000	10,000	8,000

APPLICATION REQUESTS FOR CDBG FUNDING THROUGH LMT
FUND YEAR 51 (2025-2026)

PUBLIC SERVICES TOTAL		15% Public Service cap on allocation - \$140,400. Public Service cap with 2024 Program Income increase - \$159,000		\$265,085	158,400
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APPLICATION REQUESTS FOR CDBG FUNDING THROUGH LMT
FUND YEAR 51 (2025-2026)

ACTIVITY for Program Year 51 (2025-2026) Final Budget	AGENCY	COMMENTS	LAST YEAR'S REQUESTED FUNDING	LAST YEAR'S FUNDED AMOUNT	REQUESTED AMOUNT	RECOMMEND ED FUNDING
<u>PUBLIC WORKS</u>						
Accessibility: Curb Cuts includes engineering , construction and PENNDOT reviews	Public Works	Remaining money from previous years is available and can be used together with current funding.	230,000	150,000	200,000	144,000
PUBLIC WORKS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOTAL					\$200,000	\$144,000

APPLICATION REQUESTS FOR CDBG FUNDING THROUGH LMT
FUND YEAR 51 (2025-2026)

ACTIVITY for Program Year 51 (2025-2026) Final Budget	AGENCY	COMMENTS	LAST YEAR'S REQUESTED FUNDING	LAST YEAR'S FUNDED AMOUNT	REQUESTED AMOUNT	RECOMMEND ED FUNDING
<u>HOUSING</u>						
Res.Rehab Program Soft Costs	LMT	Pays for salary, risk assessor, temporary relocations expenses, lead and roof inspections	15,000	15,000	20,000	20,000
Residential Rehab Program	LMT	Hard construction costs includes lead paint hazards and staff salaries	300,000	232,161	300,000	279,400
Housing Development- Home Purchase Program	LMT/LMAH	Funds to Purchase-Sell a home to low to moderate income families/assist LMAH	165,000	165,000	165,000	165,000
HOUSING TOTAL					\$485,000	\$464,400
TOTAL REQUESTS FOR FUNDING					\$1,625,698	\$954,000
<i>The Township's CDBG allocation for Fund Year 51 is estimated to be \$936,000. Previous year's fund allocation was \$985,310. The proposed budget is \$954,000, and includes \$18,000 in Program Income from FY 2024.</i>						
15% Public Services		HUD imposed funding cap-\$159,000	Cap includes 15% of program income funds from 2024 (\$124,000)			
20% Administration		HUD imposed funding cap- \$187,200				