
BIDDEFORD, MAINE

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PRESS RELEASE

City of Biddeford Benefits from Federal Funding

Examining the accomplishments of federal funding for National Community Development Week

BIDDEFORD (April 9, 2021) — In recognition of National Community Development Week, April 5 to 9, the City of Biddeford is acknowledging its recent accomplishments with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.

As an Entitlement Community, the City of Biddeford receives CDBG funding directly from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The 2000 Census designated Biddeford as a “principal city” in Maine, which qualified it to become an Entitlement Community and receive direct funds instead of competing for state funds. This funding is used to finance important projects in community and economic development.

During this program year, which began in July 2020, CDBG funds have supported three nonprofit organizations – Seeds of Hope, Apex Youth Connection, and Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA). These nonprofits used funds toward various programs: a Winter Warming Center providing a safe place to stay overnight for homeless persons at Seeds of Hope, the Apex Community Hub in the Bacon Street neighborhood, and SMAA’s Meals on Wheels program that provides meals and care to Biddeford seniors.

The South and Crescent Street sidewalk reconstruction project, now in progress, is 70% funded by CDBG. Public infrastructure improvements like this have been a mainstay of Biddeford’s CDBG program for many years. The current project began last month and is slated for completion by June 30. Enhancements will include ADA curb cuts for better accessibility and new crosswalk pavers for pedestrian use.

More broadly, the City uses HUD funds to rehabilitate multifamily buildings that house low- to moderate-income families. The largest of these programs supports lead-based paint abatement in pre-1978 structures. Financial assistance of up to \$100,000 per property is available. The program also funds training for individuals looking to become certified as lead abatement professionals.

CDBG funding was also vital in responding to COVID. The City received two rounds of funding through the CARES Act. The first round funded a job retention program, which provided support to local small businesses to prevent layoffs wherever possible. Businesses that were not able to take advantage of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) were given priority.

Nate and Amanda Braley, who run the Academy of Dance, said the funds helped them keep eight people employed and hundreds of families happy, providing them a safe, fun place to go.

Roger Basterache of R & W Engraving said, “The Job Retention Program was very much welcomed at a time that... payroll was very difficult to maintain. As a small business owner, it is most important to keep your employees paid on time. This helps keep everybody involved [and] focused, and improves the whole customer experience.”

The second round of COVID-specific CDBG funding will be allocated soon, and the program being developed will support community members experiencing substance abuse issues, mental health issues, and homelessness.

“CDBG funds are a critical resource, supporting Biddeford’s work to provide programs that help the community,” said Abigail Smallwood, the City’s Community Development Coordinator.

For more information, please contact the Planning and Development Department at 207-284-9115 or Abigail Smallwood, Community Development Coordinator, via email, abigail.smallwood@biddefordmaine.org.

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