

Public Facilities and Improvements with Community Development Block Grant Funds: Introduction

In this tutorial we'll discuss how CDBG grantees, including entitlement and state grantees and their subgrantees and subrecipients, can use CDBG to support Public Facilities and Improvements projects that are integral to the quality of life for community residents.

This presentation is divided into four modules that will walk you through the main aspects of planning and implementing public facilities and improvement projects. They are: Project Selection, Planning & Design, Procurement, and Construction. Each section focuses on the importance of the stage in the overall project implementation and contains specific how to's to guide you through the process.

At the end of each module are learning checks to test your knowledge. Click on the cap icon at the bottom of your screen to take a short quiz, then move on to the next module. Thanks for watching. To continue viewing, please click the Project Selection video below.

Public facilities and improvements with Community Development Block Grant Funds: Project Selection

CDBG funded Public Facilities and Improvements can be an important part of a community development strategy.

The CDBG program identifies publicly-owned facilities and infrastructure such as, streets, playgrounds, and underground utilities, and buildings owned by non-profits that are open to the general public, as Public Facilities and Improvements.

Nationwide, CDBG investment in Public Facilities and Improvements is significant. Annually, nearly one-third of all CDBG dollars and more than one half of State CDBG dollars are devoted to public facilities and improvements.

Safe and accessible infrastructure is essential to quality of life and to building communities that support community diversity and stability.

In today's world, our communities face increasingly complex challenges, from economic or social shocks and stresses to natural disasters. These challenges demand that communities be resourceful.

Communities can do more with less by designing projects to maximize the benefit you receive from the investment.

A CDBG grantee will want to explore the potential to design infrastructure investments that extend the reach of your CDBG funds by directly benefiting individuals and the larger community while also achieving other objectives.

For example, a Midwest community bought out properties in a floodplain and developed an area on its riverfront to serve as a floodwater retention area during storms. The area also includes a natural amphitheater used by the community for outdoor concerts and festivals.

Another example is a New England town that completed a multi-year, phased project to comprehensively improve the streets and underground utilities in a lower income neighborhood adjacent to a Superfund site. The storm drainage component of the project eliminated frequent flooding

of yards and basements of homes and, by incorporating state-of-the-art storm drainage standards, improved the quality of water discharged into the nearby wetlands resource area. New water mains also reduced the risk of contaminant infiltration – an important improvement given the project’s location downhill from the Superfund site. The project also connected the neighborhood to an adjacent business district with new sidewalks. These combined improvements have resulted in economic, social, and physical benefits for the community.

In addition to designing projects with multiple benefits, investments in public facilities and improvements can be strengthened by working with partners and leveraging non-CDBG resources. In fact, public facilities and improvements projects rarely occur without the use of one or more partners or sources of funding.

Combining multiple funding sources will often enable a project to move forward or to expand in such a way to provide a wider range of benefits to the community.

Furthermore, partnerships and coordination, such as those related to utilities and roadway projects, help the construction process proceed more smoothly and to save money. Imagine a project to replace water and sewer lines on a street. If the grantee were to coordinate with a natural gas company planning to replace gas lines, their coordination would allow for the road to be opened only once. This would minimize disruption to neighboring properties, pedestrians, and vehicular traffic and would save costs.

We’ve discussed why project selection is important. Now let’s discuss how to select a project.

A key concept in sound project selection is to find the best projects that need funding – not funding that needs a project. This is more than a play on words. Grantees can use modules within the eCon Planning Suite and toolkits to help identify their community development needs and make data-driven, place-based investment decisions.

A needs determination should be based on data. Data may come from the American Community Survey or other federal sources, local sources, surveys, studies, and planning documents, such as a capital improvement plan or a consolidated plan.

When assessing needs and considering potential activities, you may ask:

- How do the needs of the project area compare to the rest of the municipality and region?
- Are there gaps in the availability of and accessibility to facilities and improvements when compared to a larger area?
- Is there a clear relationship between the problem or existing condition and the project’s outcome?
- Why is this project in need of funds more than other potential projects?

Community engagement is important at all stages of public facilities and improvements projects, but especially when determining needs.

Grantees are encouraged to conduct outreach beyond the mandatory public hearings and seek to engage with property owners and individual community members. You can do this by conducting surveys, meeting with people in small groups and involving community organizations in planning.

By involving stakeholders in the project selection process, your project can become more responsive to community needs. Greater community support also will help you deal with any unforeseen issues or setbacks later on.

One of the first steps in selecting Public Facilities and Improvements projects is to identify whether potential projects are eligible for CDBG funding.

Acquisition, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, and installation of public facilities and improvements are eligible activities.

Examples of public facilities include centers for seniors, persons with disabilities, youth, and child care centers, community centers, homeless shelters, housing for people with special needs, libraries, health clinics, and neighborhood fire stations. Parks and recreational facilities are also public facilities as are buildings owned by non-profit organizations that serve the public.

“Improvements” in the phrase Public Facilities and Improvements are often referred to as infrastructure projects by state and local governments. A few examples include streets and sidewalks, water and sewer improvements, utility lines, flood and drainage systems, and tree planting. Such improvements can also include public art installations and aesthetic improvements like decorative street lighting, benches and planters.

You will need to keep in mind several things as you consider potential public facilities and improvements activities as there are several restrictions.

- Maintenance and repairs of publicly-owned streets, parks and other facilities are ineligible activities. Sometimes there is a gray area between what is considered maintenance or repairs versus construction or rehabilitation. The regulations specifically state certain items are ineligible in 570.207(b)(2)(i), for example, pothole repairs. Generally improvements with a useful life of less than five to eight years are considered repairs and not new construction. For example, road sealing is considered maintenance, while a new asphalt overlay is considered construction.
- Clearance, demolition, and removal of buildings and improvements are eligible activities. This includes movement of structures to other sites and remediation of environmental contamination..
- CDBG cannot cover facility operating costs.
- The purchase of construction equipment is generally ineligible. However, purchasing equipment for use as part of a solid waste disposal facility’s operation is eligible.
- Buildings used for the general conduct of government cannot be assisted, but CDBG funds can be used at these properties to remove architectural barriers to provide access for people with disabilities.

- In mixed-use facilities, CDBG may be used if CDBG activities will function in a separate and distinct area and costs associated with these activities can be separated out from the overall facility.

Here's a tip: In the case of less common projects or particularly complicated projects, consult with your HUD field representative or State program staff to ensure that your project is eligible.

Examples of less common projects include construction of:

- Tornado shelters
- Sewer pump stations
- Program facilities by non-profits, including shelters and group homes
- Facilities to host Job Training,
- Shared Workspace and Incubator Sites, including microenterprises, and
- Privately-owned utilities

The installation of broadband infrastructure is an eligible CDBG activity that promotes economic development and financial security by connecting individuals to jobs, schools, financial institutions, and healthcare providers, and helps communities prepare for and respond to natural disasters or other emergencies.

While broadband installation is an eligible CDBG activity, remember you must also meet a national objective. For grantees interested in pursuing installation of broadband, be sure to consult your local HUD Field Office when determining the appropriate national objective.

Once you have determined whether an activity is eligible, you will need to document how it meets one of the three National Objectives:

- Benefit to Low- and Moderate-Income Persons
- Prevention or elimination of Slums and Blight
- Addressing an urgent need that immediately threatens the health and welfare of the community and for which other financial resources are not available.

The most frequently used national objective for public facilities and improvements is Benefit to Low and Moderate Income Persons on an area-wide basis.

When qualifying public facilities and improvements activities on an area-wide basis, it is essential to properly identify the service area. Another consideration is that, on the whole, activities cannot provide benefit to moderate-income persons to the exclusion of low-income persons.

Public facilities and improvements activities can also meet the low-mod limited clientele, low-mod housing, low-mod jobs, urgent need, or elimination of slums and blight national objectives.

For more information on how to qualify public facilities and improvements activities, please refer to the CDBG 101 video product on the Explore CDBG section of the HUD Exchange website.

During project selection, grantees will also need to consider the amount of CDBG and other funds that are required for the project. Some questions they may ask are:

- What proportion of our annual CDBG budget will we need to set aside for this project?
- Will this project require multiple years of funding?
- What other resources are necessary for this project?
- Should we consider seeking a Section 108 loan to finance the project?

Throughout the project selection process, grantees should look for projects that can leverage other funding and to create partnerships that can contribute resources to the project.

Keep in mind that you can offset some of the costs of CDBG investments through assessments on properties owned by persons who are not low and moderate income and by charging modest fees for use of CDBG-funded facilities.

A starting point for identifying partnership opportunities is for grantees to consider how their project relates to the larger community environment. Grantees should explore governmental, private, and philanthropic funding, and their ability to build partnerships that advance their goals.

Some potential public funding sources include local and regional government funding, State programs, the Federal Communication Commission's "Lifeline" Program, Dept. of Agriculture, Dept. of Commerce, Dept. of Transportation, Dept. of Labor, EPA, and FEMA.

Furthermore, CDBG can be paired with private funds, such as developer contributions, non-profit agency matches, and foundation grants.

The best public/private and Federal, State, and Local partnerships build from a common goal. Partnering with other municipal departments, utility companies, nonprofit service providers, and business owners can enhance your investments in public facilities and improvements. Here are some examples:

Example 1: A town uses CDBG funds to reconstruct sidewalks and install ramps accessible to persons with disabilities along the town's main street. The funds are used to leverage a local real estate developer's investment in the redevelopment of a property near main street as an independent living facility, allowing residents a safe path of travel to the nearby business district.

Example 2: A city uses CDBG funds to replace an aging water main near a blighted vacant site, facilitating a private investor's redevelopment of the site as a mixed-use development that attracts new residents and businesses to the area.

In both cases, the value of the CDBG investment is compounded by private investment and results in economic and quality of life benefits to the surrounding community.

Finally, as you select your projects, be mindful of the project timeline. Ask yourself, "What is the timeline for the activity?"

Remember, entitlement grantees need to keep an eye on timely expenditure requirements and State CDBG grantees need to be mindful of timely distribution of funds. Keep in mind that subgrantees and subrecipients often face even shorter timelines to complete their grants than grantees as it takes time for the state or entitlement to conduct a competitive award process.

All grantees should be mindful of these timelines when considering projects that will require a lengthy planning process or involve pre-development work such as land acquisition, demolition or site preparation.

One way grantees can manage large projects to ensure timely expenditure of funds is to divide it into multiple phases. Entitlement grantees can plan to use CDBG funds over multiple awards, ensuring that they spend funds from each award in a timely way. For units of general local government participating in the State CDBG program, phasing Public Facilities and Improvements projects is trickier as funding is not always assured from year to year. In these cases, it is important to ensure that each phase of work can stand as a complete project on its own.

Here's a tip: Always make sure you build in extra time in your schedule to make sure you can meet timely expenditure requirements even if the project runs behind schedule.

Thanks for watching! To continue viewing, click the Planning and Designing the Project video below.

Public facilities and improvements with Community Development Block Grant Funds: Planning and designing the project

During the project selection phase, grantees consider several critical questions including how to maximize project benefits, work with partners, and leverage CDBG funding. With answers to these questions, you are now ready to refine the details of your project through planning and design.

Public Facilities and Improvements projects are often complex and involve multiple players. Everyone needs to have a clear understanding of the scope of work, how it will be funded, and who will do what. Since these projects, by their very nature, affect the community whether they live in the project area or will benefit from the facility, continued engagement with the community helps to ensure their needs are met.

During this stage the grantee works with partners to complete the design, establish roles, secure funding commitments and establish an overall schedule in preparation for procuring a contractor.

Careful planning and design is essential to project success. The more you can discuss early on in the planning and design process, the more smoothly construction will go.

We have discussed why project planning and design is important. Now, let's discuss how to plan and design a successful project.

During project planning, it is the grantee's responsibility to assemble the project team best suited to undertake the project with the available funding.

Partners need to agree on issues such as the overall scope of work and how various sources of funding will be utilized – and at what point in the project, as well as what will happen in the event of cost overruns.

Selecting the project architect or engineer is a key milestone in any public facilities and improvements project. Carefully crafting selection criteria will go a long way towards ensuring that the architect or engineer is able to deliver a quality project on time and on budget.

In addition to experience designing projects comparable to yours, particular attention should be given to the experience of the architect or engineer with CDBG and cross-cutting requirements. This will help avoid delays or cost overruns due to a misunderstanding of program rules and regulations.

Once an architect or engineer is hired, regular check-ins with the community during the planning and design process are mutually beneficial. Community members can alert the architect or engineer to details and uses of the site which they and the grantee may not be aware of and may need to accommodate in their design.

One way to do this is to host a site-walk. Pick a time convenient to the neighborhood residents, for example Saturday morning if most people in the area are at work during the week. Walk the project site with printouts of design plans to give the community an opportunity to see how they may be individually affected by the project prior to finalizing design and moving into construction.

Involving the community in the design process fosters a sense of ownership among stakeholders. And keeping neighbors and the general public aware of the planning timeline and critical project milestones maintains their interest and investment in the project. Remember that these people are the primary users of the improvement, so their ideas matter.

In addition to meeting with community members, before the design is finalized, grantees will want to confer with public safety responders to ensure that the project is designed for adequate access to the project area during construction and upon completion.

During project design, grantees and partners must define the project budget, secure other sources of funding and scale the scope of the project to funds available. Along with producing plans, the architect or engineer is responsible for preparing a cost estimate that will be used for analyzing construction bids. The architect or engineer should also recommend cost control measures to employ. Sometimes this involves dividing work into multiple phases. Another technique is for the architect or engineer to identify a base scope of work and alternate work that can be incorporated into the project if enough funds are available. Whichever technique you use, the scope of the project and anticipated costs must be clearly defined prior to procuring a contractor.

Also, you will need to determine who is going to carry out construction, whether you will use outside contractors, municipal employees, or a combination of the two. When using municipal staff, you will need to define specific roles and what, if any, positions you will need to fill, and what professional services you will procure. Remember that you can increase community benefits by hiring local contractors, including those certified under Section 3.

In addition to assembling the project team, during project planning, you will need to determine what approvals are needed or are important and build them into the project timeline. Typically, grantees need to secure:

- HUD/federal environmental review clearances, and
- Permits issued by federal, state, regional and local environmental and land use regulatory bodies.

Understanding environmental review and permitting requirements is a critical step in project planning as they can impact the budget, timeline, and the overall viability of the project.

Grantees should consider the anticipated level of environmental review and permitting and be sure to adjust their pre-development timeline and expectations accordingly.

Here's a tip: Start the environmental review process early. If possible, one way to get a head start is by completing a draft of the Environmental Review Record, or ERR. For some State programs, units of general local government are required to complete this process before submitting a competitive application in order to demonstrate a readiness to proceed upon receipt of funding.

Thanks for watching! To continue viewing, click the Procurement for the Project video below.

Public facilities and improvements with Community Development Block Grant Funds: Procurement for the Project

Your project is now designed and it is time to move on to construction procurement – a milestone that has great influence on a project's success.

Procuring the contractor is typically the responsibility of the grantee. For activities that involve nonprofit-owned facilities, the nonprofit subrecipient usually conducts procurement.

The overarching objective when selecting a contractor is to ensure that the contractor will complete a high quality project within the budget, on time, and with minimal disruption to the surrounding community.

The procurement process for all contractors should be geared toward, delivering on a timely basis the best value product or service, while maintaining the public's trust and fulfilling public policy objectives.

In short, the grantee should assemble a team that is the most efficient, capable, and reasonably priced, using a transparent and competitive procurement process.

Part of the purpose of a competitive procurement process is to demonstrate transparency. There are many layers of procurement rules – federal, state and sometimes local rules – and grantees must follow all those applicable to their situation. In all cases, the **stricter** procurement regulations govern.

Be sure to adhere to the law and maintain complete and accurate records of the procurement process.

In this section we will focus our discussion on procuring the construction team. While you will likely need to procure other team members, such as a project architect or engineer, for simplicity we are focusing on securing the general construction contract as it is the most complicated and arduous process.

As a rule, grantees should be wary of low bidders who are incapable of completing or delivering a quality project. To the extent allowed by federal, state, and local procurement requirements, include provisions

in your procurement process that will incorporate experience and qualifications in selecting the contractor.

We have discussed why procurement is a critical component of your project. Now, let's discuss how to procure a contractor for your project.

The first step when procuring a contractor is to determine the procurement method and type of contract that is applicable to the project. There are several procurement methods, including sealed bid, competitive proposals, small purchase, and micro-bids.

The nature of the project and its expected cost determine the procurement method. Usually, a sealed bid is used for procuring construction contracts, a competitive proposal is used for professional services, and small purchase and micro-bids are used for either specific goods or services below a certain dollar amount. That dollar amount may depend on state or local requirements.

For a variety of reasons, projects sometimes fail to generate competitive bids. If a compelling reason exists to make a single source award rather than re-bid a project, grantees need to document it in the project file and provide a reasonable justification for a non-competitive procurement. It is advisable to discuss the situation with your State Program or HUD field office staff in these cases.

Beyond the method of procurement, grantees may also use different ways to structure compensation or the method of payment for a contract. These include:

A Lump Sum/Fixed Price Contract. The advantages of this type of contract include:

- The job will be finished within stated cost and is therefore more predictable.
- The contractor gets paid the full amount and has an incentive to work efficiently.

Some disadvantages of a Lump Sum/Fixed Price Contract are:

- Prices can be inflated. It is hard to estimate exact costs and contractors may add extra money to their bid to mitigate against errors or unknown conditions.
- This type of contract may also require greater oversight by the grantee to ensure that the contractor is not cutting corners.

Two other types of contracts are a Time and Materials contract and a Unit Price contract.

Grantees may use a time and materials contract only after a determination that no other contract is suitable for the project. Time and Materials contracts can help keep costs manageable though with these contracts, there is a disincentive for the contractor to work in a timely manner since he or she is being paid at a set hourly rate. To mitigate this risk, grantees must provide careful oversight during construction and include a ceiling price in the contract that the contractor exceeds at his or her own risk.

The last type of contract we will discuss is a Unit Price contract. An advantage of a Unit Price contract is that it is based on estimated quantities of materials so the grantee has a sense of the overall cost. However, the grantee is only charged for the actual amount of material used. These contracts are best suited to public works and road projects with repetitive and easily quantifiable tasks.

A disadvantage is that quantity estimates can be unpredictable, which may result in fewer accomplishments than expected, especially if there is a limited budget for the project. Usually, grantees specify a cost ceiling within the contract to mitigate the chances of major cost overruns.

When procuring for construction, a well-structured bid process will help ensure that you hire the best available contractors. For a successful bid process, consider the following:

- Are there particular things that every contractor should have; that is, what are the pre-qualification requirements?
- Will you hold pre-bid meetings? If so, will they be mandatory or optional?
- What is the schedule? Time the procurement to maximize your ability to work in the warmer months if winter weather is a concern in your area.

You will want to ensure your bid documents are complete. In addition to specifying how you will determine an award, make sure to include:

- All terms and conditions
- Technical specifications and drawings
- Bid bond requirements
- Basis for Payment-
- CDBG rules and regulations
- Federal, State or local licensing or certification requirements
- Disabled, Minority and Women Business Enterprises and Section 3 requirements
- Include all applicable federal and state prevailing wage rates and labor standards provisions, including the appropriate Davis-Bacon Wages

To increase benefits to the community, when advertising the bid opportunity, ensure wide dissemination of the notice and that you are reaching Disabled, Minority and Women Business Enterprises and local contractors, including certified Section 3 contractors. Often, grantees will advertise in local newspapers, construction publications, state and local websites. Make sure to advertise far enough ahead of time so contractors have time to prepare their bids.

Sometimes adjustments to the bid materials are needed during the bid period. Be sure to check for any modifications to wage rates and issue clarifications and addenda as needed.

Once bids have been opened, there are still several steps required to complete the contractor procurement process. You will need to:

- Check the completeness and accuracy of the bid
- Ensure the bid's cost reasonableness by comparing to the architect's or engineer's estimate and other bids
- Check references and contractor debarment status and document your procurement files

- Ensure the contractor does not have any conflicts of interest
- Select bid alternates, in case there is an issue with the primary bid award
- Issue a Notice of Award and solicit a Contractor's Acceptance of Award
- Execute a contract
- Obtain bonds and insurance certificates
- Approve the contractor's schedule
- Notify public safety agencies, the community and owners of adjacent properties that work will begin soon
- Verify that the contractor has obtained the required permits , and
- Issue the Notice to Proceed

This may sound like a lot to do, and it is. A well-organized and thorough checklist can help you stay on track and ensure you complete all tasks.

Thanks for watching! To continue viewing, click the Construction: How to Successfully Complete Your Project video below.

Public facilities and improvements with Community Development Block Grant Funds: Construction – how to successfully complete your project

Prior to breaking ground, the grantee should establish a clear chain of command to ensure proper oversight of the project.

Project roles can vary, however, the grantee typically acts as team leader, and is responsible for enforcing all federal requirements and monitoring the budget and all work.

The project architect or engineer monitors the contractor's work to ensure that it meets the technical specifications, payment requests are accurate and the work is of good quality.

Sometimes, grantees can hire a separate inspector or Clerk of the Works to oversee day to day construction. This inspector is responsible for being on site daily, keeping a journal of site conditions and activity, and communicating with the grantee and project architect or engineer when issues arise.

There are numerous considerations for effective project management during construction. The grantee or its agent must ensure that:

- The project progresses in an efficient and effective way. This includes financial oversight and inspections of the work.
- The project complies with all applicable regulations, and adequate records and documentation are kept. For example, job site notices must be posted and wage reports reviewed and filed.
- The project stays on schedule and within budget. The contractor should update the schedule frequently, and the grantee should check in with the inspector to forecast expenditure of funds.

- Communication with team members and the public is regular and ongoing. Grantees should make every effort to notify the community of project milestones, through distributing leaflets door-to-door or by posting regular project updates to their website.

Grantees are responsible for the financial accountability, project management, and compliance matters of their Public Facilities or Improvements project. Procedures to ensure financial accountability should include:

- Reviewing and approving the contractor's schedule of values or unit pricing; discussing inconsistencies in values with the Project architect or engineer.
- Ensuring written approval of Work Change Orders; all change orders must be signed by the contractor and grantee.
- Ensuring that contractor Payment and Performance Bonds and Insurance Certificates remain current.
- Manage Federal Labor Standards Compliance tasks; monitor for Davis-Bacon compliance; Review certified payrolls, verify information through job-site interviews, and ensure contractor compliance.
- Ensure that you have documentation of payments and other required sign-offs.
- Retain records and all applicable documentation in accordance with regulatory requirements. It is good practice to retain permanently a full set of drawings that document the project as completed, also known as "as-builts", in the Public Works or Building departments.

The grantee should regularly oversee the project's progress by making frequent inspections at the work site. During these visits, you should:

- Discuss the project with your inspector in order to be aware of current or pending issues. Best practice dictates that the grantee or inspector maintain a Project Log that records daily activity on site and construction progress.
- Signage and postings are an integral component of the job site and for significant projects within the community a project sign that describes the project, funding sources, and key players may be posted.
- Additionally, labor standards compliance, Equal Employment Opportunity, worker/site safety postings, and detour or warning signs need to be maintained and visible at the site.
- During site visits, the grantee should examine the work site to ensure that conditions provide for adequate worker and site safety.

Prior to issuing final payments to the contractor, in addition to securing all authorized signoffs, be sure to obtain:

- As-built drawings and other end-of-project considerations (suppliers for replacement parts, operating and maintenance manuals, etc.)

- Manufacturer warranties
- Certificate of Completion
- Lien waivers from subcontractors and materials suppliers
- Also, resolve any Federal Labors Standards and wage rate issues prior to final payment

Project completion signifies the symbolic turnover of the project to the community. A ribbon cutting or dedication is one way to both thank the community for its efforts and patience during construction and to illustrate the benefits of CDBG investment.

Recording accomplishments is a key component to closing out activities. Key steps include completing required reporting to funders and documenting a project's impact such as before and after photos, and statistics that describe the project accomplishments.

Here's a tip: Program Managers can create short project descriptions with key details and photos. This will be useful for elected officials and partners who want to publicize the accomplishments. Check out the CDBG Project Profiles Website on the HUD Exchange for examples and to create a project profile for your own project.

Measuring a project's impact can assist with future public facilities planning by helping grantees better understand conditions that enable projects to succeed. Metrics relating to impacts also provide useful information to HUD and elected officials to demonstrate the valuable role of CDBG funds in community infrastructure investments.

Grantees should measure the impacts of their investments. For example, you may want to measure the linear feet of roadway replaced, or the number of persons with new or improved access to water and sewer. Furthermore, grantees may want to describe the outcomes of their improvements, such as greater pedestrian traffic in a business district or fewer children with elevated lead levels from contaminated drinking water.

Thanks for watching! To continue viewing, click the Summary video below.

Public facilities and improvements with Community Development Block Grant Funds: Summary

This video tutorial has shown how communities can plan and implement public facilities and improvements projects to build stronger communities.

Public Facilities and Improvements projects can have a positive impact on the surrounding community – but the construction of projects can be disruptive and can reshape neighborhoods in unanticipated ways. It is important for grantees and project architects or engineers to view community members as resources and partners in a project, since ultimately they will be the most affected and have the best understanding of community needs and wishes.

Public Facilities and Improvements projects are often complex, with multiple stakeholders, funding

sources, and partners. Large construction projects can be costly and lengthy, and setbacks are almost inevitable. Grantees should give careful oversight of projects to navigate the regulatory pathways and execute the overall construction plan.

Finally, it is important to remember to celebrate accomplishments. Public Facilities and Improvements projects typically require tremendous effort and substantial amounts of funding, but the results can have a lasting impact on the community. Acknowledging accomplishments – both along the way and upon project completion - honors the efforts of all involved and promotes future investment.