

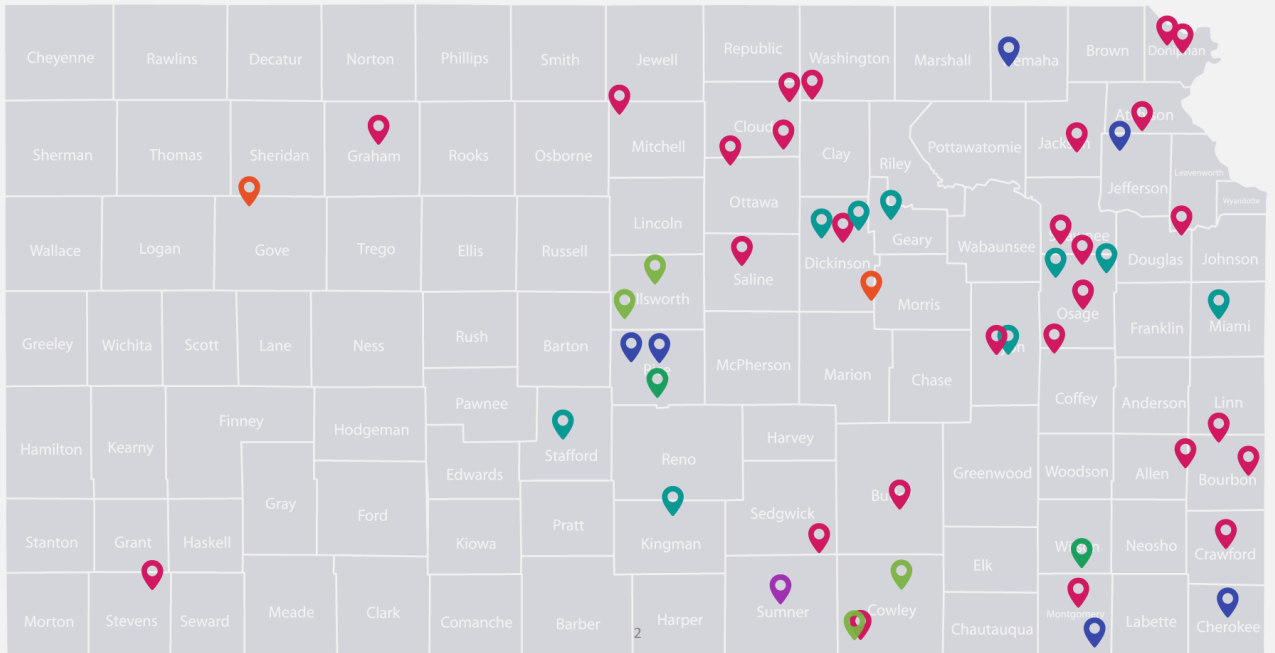
KANSAS CDBG PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS

March 2026

KANSAS
COMMERCE

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2025 CDBG Awards in Kansas



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WHY WE CREATED THE PRE-APPLICATION

Kansas introduced a pre-application process to:

- Screen project concepts for basic eligibility and readiness
- Reduce staff and applicant burden for non-viable projects
- Provide early constructive feedback to communities
- Improve the overall quality of full applications
- Encourage better project planning before the deadline

Goal: Spend less time fixing applications and more time funding strong projects.



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PURPOSE OF THE PRE-APPLICATION

Before the pre-application process:

- Applications submitted with basic eligibility issues
- Projects not financially ready
- Communities investing time in applications unlikely to compete
- Significant staff time spent triaging avoidable issues
- Difficult conversations after the final deadline

Result: Lower quality applications and frustrated applicants.



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WHAT A PRE-APPLICATION IS (AND IS NOT)

What It Is

- Early project concept review
- Advisory feedback from program staff
- Opportunity to correct issues before the full application

What It Is Not

- Not a substitute for the full application
- Not a scoring or ranking process
- Not a funding commitment

This keeps the process supportive rather than competitive.



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PROGRAMS THAT REQUIRE A PRE-APPLICATION

Kansas requires a pre-application for most competitive programs:

- Community Facilities
- Water & Sewer Infrastructure
- Youth Job Training
- Commercial Rehabilitation
- Housing Rehabilitation

Exception:

- Urgent Need



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WHAT WE REVIEW IN A PRE-APPLICATION

- **Eligibility:** We first determine whether the proposed activity is eligible under the CDBG program guidelines.
- **National Objective:** We review how the project will meet a national objective, most commonly by demonstrating a benefit to low- and moderate-income residents.
- **Readiness:** Staff evaluate project readiness by looking at engineering or design progress, environmental considerations, and whether the project timeline is realistic.
- **Community Capacity/Support:** We also assess whether the community has the administrative capacity to manage a CDBG grant and whether there is adequate local match or other leveraged funding available.
- Tailored to specific programs!



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ADDITIONAL ITEMS WE LOOK FOR

During review we also flag:

- Service area and LMI Documentation Issues
- Incomplete Project Scope or Cost Estimates
- Missing Local Match or Leverage
- Environmental concerns
- Potential Duplication With Other Programs

The goal is to Identify Issues Early While They Are Fixable



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2026 PRE-APPLICATION TIMELINE

Key dates for the 2026 program year:

- Pre-Application: Opens February 2026
- Full Application: April 2
- Pre-Application Deadline: September 15
- Application Deadline: October 16

Pre-applications are reviewed as received – we allow 15 days for a response from our team.



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HOW THE REVIEW PROCESS WORKS

1. Community submits a Pre-Application Concept using Microsoft Forms
2. CDBG staff conduct an initial eligibility and project readiness review
3. Team Reviews feedback at weekly staff meeting
4. Staff provide written feedback and technical guidance
5. Community may revise or refine the project approach based on feedback
6. Community submits the full application by the final deadline or if pre-application is approved

This creates a Structured Feedback Loop!

Tracking of Pre-app status is managed through Microsoft Lists.






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PRE-APPLICATION RESPONSES

1. Submit Full Application  Proceed in current program year. The pre-application has received appropriate review for full application submission
2. Needs Revisions (Follow Up)  Proceed if conditions resolved before deadline. Follow up with appropriate CDBG team member to provide feedback. **re-submission required?**
3. Ineligible for CDBG  Consider delaying to future year or revising the project, the project is not eligible to receive CDBG funding in present state



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2025 RESULTS

- 80 Pre-applications received
- 12 were immediately denied for ineligibility
- 33 were approved for full applications
- 35 responses included technical assistance and/or corrections

Overall, we ended up receiving 40 applications in categories that required pre-applications.

Applicants appreciate knowing early if a project needs work



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EARLY ANALYSIS

Initial outcomes have been encouraging:

- Higher quality full applications
- Fewer ineligible or incomplete submissions
- More targeted technical assistance
- Improved relationships with communities
- Better use of staff time

Applicants appreciate knowing early if a project needs work!



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PRE-APPLICATION CHANGES

March 2026

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PITFALLS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Things we learned quickly:

- **Expectation Management:** Applicants sometimes assume approval means funding
- **Timing:** Some communities wait too late to submit concepts
- **Staff Capacity:** Pre-application review requires dedicated staff time
- **Scope Changes:** Projects often evolve between stages

Clear communication is essential!



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CHANGES FOR THE FUTURE

Challenges We've Seen:

- Pre-applications rolling in continuously made it difficult for staff to manage reviews in real time
- Some communities submitted very late, leaving little time for feedback or revisions

Proposed Updates for Next Year:

- Establish a single pre-application deadline for all programs
- Implement a month-long review period for staff to provide feedback
- Ensure communities have ample time to make revisions before the full application deadline

Goal: Improve staff efficiency, provide more consistent guidance, and give communities clear timelines to refine projects.



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Thank you!

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Questions?

