



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS

Office for ACCESSABILITY

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK
GRANT (CDBG) FUNDS**

UPDATE

2004

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDS FOR ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are available to locales throughout the country, which may be used to increase access to cultural facilities.

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development does not track CDBG funds used specifically to enhance access to cultural facilities. However, enclosed is a copy of the HUD Web site page at www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/contacts/index.cfm that lists each State, Entitlement Cities (cities over 50,00 in population and counties over 200,000) and smaller non-entitled cities, town and counties that use CDBG funds. For your individual States, you may click on the applicable locales for follow-up. The National Endowment for the Arts Web site at www.arts.gov/Accessibility would also link you to the HUD site.

Enclosed are profiles and pictures from four sites throughout the country that recently applied for and used CDBG funds to make access improvements in their facilities and outdoor space. Three of these sites are designated historical landmarks:

- the Sprague Mansion in Cranston, Rhode Island
- the Robert H. Williams Cultural Center in Lexington, Kentucky
- the Elks Opera House in Prescott, Arizona.

The Wellness Garden at the Central Adult Day Center, Lexington, KY, is in an historic district.

The Sprague Mansion

Cranston, Rhode Island

In 2001, the Cranston Department of Community Development received \$40,000.00 in CDBG funds to make the Sprague Mansion accessible in accordance with ADA standards. A ramp for wheelchair accessibility was built in the rear of the mansion, the rear door was replaced with a new wider door, two interior doors were widened to 36 inches, interior floors were modified to provide a uniform floor level, and a first floor bathroom was renovated in accordance with ADA standards to become wheelchair accessible.

The Sprague Mansion was built in 1790, and was the home to two Rhode Island governors. It is now owned by the Cranston Historical Society which converted it into a Living Museum and is open to the public for tours and offers educational programs for school children. The Sprague Mansion is a cherished asset not only for the city of Cranston, but also for the state of Rhode Island. (It is also said to be haunted.)

For further information about the use of CDBG funds contact:

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ROBERT H. WILLIAMS CULTURAL CENTER

Lexington, Kentucky

In 2000 and 2001, \$180,000 in CDBG funds, along with matching funds from the Robert H. Williams Cultural Center, were used for the first phase of renovations to the historic Robert H. Williams Cultural Center. This private, non-profit Center was originally the “Colored Orphan Industrial Home” funded and operated by African-American women in 1892, who were one generation out of slavery. Eventually, older African-American women were admitted as residents in addition to the African-American orphans. It now serves as a community arts center and has been continually owned and operated by African-Americans. The Robert H. Williams Cultural Center is located in a low and moderate income neighborhood and provides computer classes, library services, performing and visual art classes, after-school tutoring, exhibits, lectures, meeting space, summer camps and health fairs.

Since the facility is historic, renovations had to comply with Federal historic regulations. Phase I involved hazardous material removal (asbestos), ADA compliance of the first floor (bathrooms, ramps, mechanized outer door system), weatherization, flooring improvements, painting, electrical rewiring, plumbing work and sprinkler system installation. Many of the features of the building that was constructed in 1913 were preserved (lobby columns, pocket doors, dumbwaiter, windows, interior doors). The renovations required the building to be vacated and the project took approximately one year. The moving back in began in late June. Full operations of the Center will begin this fall. Other phases of renovations will include an elevator for complete building accessibility and ADA compliant renovations to the kitchen located in the basement.

The area around the Center has experienced revitalization. The adjoining property was a public housing development that was demolished under the HUD Hope VI program. The former housing development has been redeveloped as single-family affordable housing.

For further information about the use of CDBG funds contact:

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Robert H. Williams Cultural Center

Lexington, KY

**ROBERT H. WILLIAMS
CULTURAL CENTER**

Serving Since 1892

644









Interior Photos - After Renovation



Entryway





Hallway mural





Hallway mural



Conference Room

Pocket Doors





Restored hardwood floors







WELLNESS GARDEN

Lexington, KY

In 2002, \$14,000 in CDBG funds, along with matching funds from the Central Adult Day Center, were used to transform a vacant area of the Central Adult Day Center property into a Wellness Garden. The Wellness Garden was designed to include fencing, wide concrete paths, landscaping, wheelchair accessible picnic benches and raised flower beds. The project was completed in two months. The Center is a private, non-profit corporation is located in an historic district and the fencing had to comply with Federal historic regulations.

Clients of the Center, many of whom are older, have disabilities and are low-income and underserved, “love” the garden because it allows them to continue gardening and other outdoor pleasures with dignity and independence.

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Central Adult Day Center Lexington, KY

Wellness Garden









Raised flowerbeds



Raised flowerbed



Wheelchair accessible picnic tables



Elks Opera House

Renovation by City of Prescott in
2002/2003 using Community
Development Block Grant Funds

Elks Opera House – Prescott, AZ



1910



2002

Elks Opera House Renovations



Theater Reopening After Renovations

History

- The Elks Opera House opened in February of 1905 as a community theater and meeting place.
- By 2000 the building had fallen into a state of disrepair and The City of Prescott purchased it for \$250,000.
- Major safety and accessibility repairs totaling \$900,000 were completed in December of 2002 using \$427,547 in CDBG funds.

Facts

- The historic theater is 3 stories tall, 14,331 square feet, and seats 600 with a main stage and modern lighting and sound system.
- It has been used continuously since 1905 for live performances, movies, and as a meeting hall.
- The City wished to retain these uses and improve access for the disabled for the community of Prescott, pop. 38,000.

CDBG Funds

- CDBG funds are available to Prescott through the HUD Small Cities Program.
- We received 2 grants for the theater
 - \$225,000 for to eliminate slum/blight in the building.
 - \$202,547 for Removal of Architectural Barriers (ADA compliance).

Slum/Blight

- **The slum/blight grant allowed the City to:**
 - Replace roof deck and repair parapets.
 - Correct electrical code violations.
 - Repair boiler and install heating/cooling system.
 - Remove asbestos fire curtain.
 - Install fire suppressant system.
 - Install smoke vent over stage.



Asbestos Fire Curtain – Removed and Stored for Future Display. There was no existing documentation regarding the fire curtain, so we didn't know it was so elegant!

Remove Architectural Barriers

- The ADA grant allowed the City to:
 - Expand ladies rest room into former men's bathroom and provide ADA compliant stalls, sinks, towels, drinking fountains, etc.
 - Construct new men's rest room fully ADA compliant.
 - Provide handicapped accessible route from seating area to both restrooms (floor was severely sloped).



Top L-R: Ladies' Restroom
Before Renovations

Left: Ladies' Restroom
After Renovations (Note
Accessible Toilet and Sink)



Left: Lobby Before Renovations (No accessible route or bathrooms)

Right: Lobby After Renovations (Accessible ramp leads to new men's restrooms and concession stand)



New Men's Restroom



Accessible Water Fountain



Continued

- Add special seating for wheelchair-bound patrons.
- Provide wheelchair lift to stage area.
- Update existing exterior ADA ramp to code and provide handrails.
- Provide an emergency fire exit that is ADA accessible.



Sharlot Hall Museum Photo

Early 1900's Interior

Right: Theater Seating
Before Renovations

Bottom L-R: Wheelchair
and Companion Seating
Provided



Wheelchair Entrance Ramp



Left: Before Renovations (Note slope is out of compliance with ADA)



Right: After Renovations



Left: Emergency Exit
Before Renovations

Right: Emergency Exit
After Renovations (proper
slope and handrails)



More Information

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On the Web:

- www.cityofprescott.net/Elks%20Opera%20House/index.cfm